



Strathcona  
GIRLS GRAMMAR

A Special Centenary Edition

# STRATH COURIER



## Unstoppable Women

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

AND THE WOMEN WHO HAVE  
SHAPED STRATHCONA





# Building unstoppable girls for 100 years.

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**Strathcona**  
GIRLS GRAMMAR

100

CELEBRATING  
100 YEARS

**1924 — 2024**



## Lorna Beegan

PRINCIPAL

As Principal of Strathcona Girls Grammar, I have the privilege of witnessing the transformative power of education, particularly for young women.

This power gives us hope and optimism as we celebrate 100 great women over the last century; we honour their remarkable achievements and reflect on the evolving landscape for women, particularly here in Victoria. We take immense pride in the achievements of our school's community over the last century, a testament to the transformative power of education.

A century ago, in the 1920s, when Strathcona was founded, Victoria was undergoing significant change. The decade marked by the aftermath of World War I was filled with social and cultural shifts that would shape the future for all. In 1924, women in Victoria were advocating for greater rights and opportunities. It was a time of burgeoning liberation, with women entering the workforce in more significant numbers and demanding a voice in public and private spheres. It was a perfect time to open a school devoted to educating the future women of Australia.

One hundred years later, some things have changed exponentially, and some have changed at glacial speed. We draw inspiration from the pioneering members of our Strathcona community who grace the pages of this edition of *Strathcourier*. Selecting 100 women who would pave the way for future generations was no easy feat. Their stories tell of the manifold advantages of a girls' school education, providing an environment where young women can flourish academically, socially, and personally. At Strathcona, they have embodied our core values of courage, respect, integrity, compassion, and empowerment — which continue to be the driving force behind the achievements we celebrate.

In the words of John Dewey, *'School is not a preparation for life but is life itself.'* This philosophy resonates deeply within the walls of Strathcona, where we are committed to ensuring our students are well-prepared for the ever-changing world ahead.



The rapid advancements in automation, artificial intelligence, robotics, globalisation, and climate change are reshaping the workforce from predictable and linear to networked, collaborative, and dynamic. This new paradigm replaces the traditional career ladder with more flexible and gig-based work opportunities. We believe that continuous learning and adaptation within the workplace are essential, fostering value by developing new knowledge and innovation. Our commitment to these values and our students' preparedness for this reality is unwavering.

As we prepare our students for this future, we must equip them with the skills to navigate multiple career changes and life skills essential for innovation and automation. Students today need to identify their strengths and passions, embrace lifelong learning, and make informed decisions about their studies and careers. *The Foundation for Young Australians' New Work Order Series* emphasises the importance of dreaming in clusters rather than focusing on a single dream job. These clusters — Artisans, Generators, Coordinators, Carers, Technologists, Informers, and Designers — group related occupations based on similar skills, tasks, and work environments.

This edition of *Strathcourier* focuses on these clusters, highlighting the remarkable women who have graced Strathcona over the past century. Our girls' school is perfectly poised to ensure that everything we offer, from academics to co-curricular activities, combines to create unstoppable women ready to tackle the world in innovative and diverse ways.

Looking ahead to the next 100 years, I envision a future where women are truly unstoppable. With an agile and adaptive education, they will be equipped as girls and women with the confidence to face and overcome challenges. We cannot be naïve; there is still much to be done for gender equity, pay gaps, crimes against women, and the misogyny prevalent on social media. The need for equal representation of women in parliament, and the glass ceiling smashing to see more women in executive roles, are critical areas of focus. I hope readers in 100 years will acknowledge and celebrate that much has changed in this regard for their contexts.

As we celebrate the century's accomplishments, we must also reiterate our commitment to shaping a future where every girl and woman can thrive without limitations. This commitment is the driving force at Strathcona. Education is the cornerstone of this vision — together, we can ensure that the next 100 years are marked by progress, equality, and the unstoppable force of women empowered to change the world.

At Strathcona, we are committed to preparing our students for their futures, nurturing their potential and instilling in them the belief that they can achieve anything — with hard work, determination and perseverance. As we honour the great women of the past, we also look forward with hope and determination, knowing that the best is yet to come.

To discover more about the new work mindset shaping the careers of our unstoppable women, visit [fya.org.au/resource/new-work-order-research/](https://fya.org.au/resource/new-work-order-research/)

# The Artisans

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN THE CREATIVE ARTS

The Artisans cluster is where skill and craftsmanship meet creativity and precision. This section is dedicated to unstoppable women who turn their manual expertise into art, working in construction, production, and technical customer service. These talented professionals, including electricians, carpenters, and landscape gardeners, combine attention to detail with problem-solving prowess to create, maintain, and innovate. Celebrate the hands-on super women who build and shape our world with their exceptional skills and firm passion.



IN MEMORY OF  
**Shirley  
Bourne OAM**



Shirley Bourne OAM commenced her journey at Strathcona in kindergarten where she remained until 1939. Shirley lived with her sister in Wattle Valley Road, just a short walk from the original Strathcona campus. She recalls Strathcona to be a school that was ahead of its time, because the two Principals were women who had fresh ideas and were different in personality, yet worked together extremely well. From a young age, Shirley enjoyed sketching and Strathcona's admin building was once home to one of Shirley's Australian bush paintings.

Shirley studied at the National Gallery Arts School in Melbourne and worked as an assistant in William Dargie's studio. After winning the Dora Wilson travelling scholarship in 1952, Shirley travelled the globe for her painting including the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Mexico and Guatemala. She held a number of solo exhibitions across Australia, exhibited many portraits in the Archibald Prize, and the McClelland Gallery in Langwarrin staged a retrospective of her life's work in 1979.

She was lucky enough to paint many portraits of significant figures and places in history including Roland Wakelin, Sister Vivan Bullwinkel, Professor A.D. Hope, and the Duchess of Richmond and Gordon.

Along with judging many art prize competitions, Shirley won many awards including the Cato Prize (Landscape), the Yorick Prize (Still life), the Camberwell Rotary Prize (Landscape) and the Dick Ovenden Memorial Prize (Landscape). She was a Fellow and Honorary Life Member of the Victorian Artists' Society, and was awarded the Society's plaque for Twenty Years Exemplary Teaching Service.

Shirley taught at the Malvern Artists' Society since 1965, where she is also an Honorary Life Member, and at the Victorian Artists' Society since 1966. She was a guest teacher at Fremantle Arts Centre in 1977 and was a member of the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors and a Chairman of the Twenty Melbourne Painters Society. Shirley was also a judge for the very prestigious A.M.E. Bale Scholarship, a Soroptimist, and pursued other interests as varied as astronomy and heraldry as well as serving on the Council of Boroondara (Richmond) Free Kindergarten.

Dr Norma Redpath OBE followed her elder sister Jean to Strathcona commencing in 1932 until 1942. An iconic image of Strathcona girls cheering at Glenferrie Oval in 1937 captures Norma's vibrant school spirit. Reflecting on her early years, Norma cherished the drawing and craft materials provided by Miss Gregory, as well as the nurturing environment that instilled in her a lifelong passion for creativity and the groundwork for her future artistic voyage. Norma believed her mother's own restricted upbringing motivated her to ensure her daughters had the freedom and courage to pursue their aspirations. Norma herself embraced this philosophy, finding endless doors to new opportunities.

Norma spoke in 1988 on the Strathcona motto "*Bravely, Faithfully and Happily*," a statement she felt encouraged resilience and a visionary spirit. She credited Strathcona for instilling in her a unique blend of pride and self-confidence, which propelled her throughout her career. Norma's academic passage in art began at Swinburne Technical College, followed by the National Gallery of Victoria Art School and RMIT, where she studied sculpture from 1949 to 1951. Her contemporary sculpture style led her to Italy in the mid-1950s, where she studied at the Università per Stranieri in Perugia and the Accademia di Belle Arti Brera in Milan. During the 1950s, Norma travelled extensively in Europe immersing herself in the rich artistic heritage of Italy and in 1974, she married Italian naval architect Antonio de Altamer.

Norma's career also included teaching, and she formed part of the renowned Centre Five group of sculptors who championed modernist sculpture in Australia and its incorporation into architecture and public space. Her work, characterised by its fusion of classical and modernist elements, reflects a deep engagement and interest with both landscape and architecture. Norma's sculptural career is remarkable, and her notable works include the mural at the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne (1958), the fountain at the Secretariat Building in Canberra (1965-69), and the Landscape Caryatid at the State Bank Centre in Melbourne (1980-85). Her work is now prominently represented in both national, corporate and private collections globally.

Norma received an Italian Government Scholarship in 1961 and in 1970, was given an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for her contributions to contemporary sculpture. In 1972, Norma was awarded a fellowship in the Creative Arts from the Australian National University and in 2006 Swinburne University awarded her an honorary doctorate.

Throughout her career Norma won numerous notable awards for her work. Her then studio and home in Carlton is now owned by the University of Melbourne and serves as a creative space for artists and academics. It is managed by the Centre of Visual Art, and residences of varying lengths are offered to artists, writers and researchers to develop new work. Norma Redpath's legacy as an artist and public servant is profound and her work continues to inspire and engage audiences. Norma stands out as a testament to the power of artistic vision.

## IN MEMORY OF Dr Norma Redpath OBE SCULPTOR





# Hannah Northam

SCULPTOR

Hannah Northam is a successful sculptor working from her studio in Harborne, England. Hannah's creative journey began early on in life with her mother being an accomplished artist who taught art in Melbourne high schools. Hannah's passion for creative activities was further encouraged during her time at Strathcona, from which she graduated in 1976.

This early enthusiasm led her into photography, working in professional studios that honed her discerning eye for visual aesthetics. Transitioning into the world of advertising, Hannah took on the role of Account Manager, where she applied her expertise in design and visual communication to enhance brand narratives and campaigns.

While photography and advertising shaped the early part of her career, it is in the world of sculpture where Hannah has made her most profound mark. For nearly four decades, she has honed her ability to craft elegant figurative and abstract pieces, using diverse materials such as bronze and stone. Her works range from large-scale installations to more intimate sculptures, each imbued with a quiet sense of balance, rhythm, and truth. The tactile nature of her art allows her to play with form and texture, breathing life into the raw materials she uses.



Hannah's talent for restoration and posthumous portraiture is particularly renowned. One of her most notable achievements is the creation of the first-ever 3D portrait of the landscape architect Lancelot Capability Brown, referenced from a painting in the National Portrait Gallery. This bust was showcased at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show — an accomplishment not only highlighting her technical mastery but also her ability to capture the essence of historical figures through art.

A significant aspect of Hannah's practice is her work on commissions, where she enjoys the collaborative process of consulting with clients throughout the various stages of creation and production. Her sensitivity to the client's aspirations and her ability to build dialogue ensures that the final piece is both personal and deeply informed. This approach has garnered Hannah a reputation for delivering pieces that resonate with meaning and artistry.

Hannah also shares her knowledge, teaching in small groups and contributing to sculpture workshops, believing art education should be accessible and inclusive. She is currently Vice President of The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists.

From her beginnings in photography to her respected position in the world of sculpture, Hannah's career reflects a continual evolution of her artistic expression. Her works, whether large or small, remain a testament to her skill, creative vision, and enduring passion for form and texture.

For Hannah, lending her artistic skills whilst leaning on happy memories of her school days, made the creation of *'The Conversation'* Centenary sculpture so very personal and meaningful, as well as a special and privileged opportunity. Hannah feels she has come full circle with this sculpture, building a warm and long-lasting connection as her contribution and personal legacy towards the next 100 years of Strathcona.

# Janine Gallizia

## ARTIST & AUTHOR

Janine Gallizia first began at Strathcona in 1983 and completed Year 12 in 1989. Looking back at her goals then she would never have imagined the life path she has since travelled!

Since leaving Strathcona Janine has developed an incredibly successful career as a professional artist, working mostly with watercolours across the globe. At the age of 36, Janine achieved the title of Master of Watercolour, a remarkable achievement that usually is awarded close to 60 years of age.

Janine has had a huge passion for travel in her work, visiting every continent numerous times, exhibiting in the most prestigious invitation-only art shows for 20 years. Janine loves what she does and is successful is selling her work around the globe. Internationally, Janine has worked as one of the world's leading international judges, curators and teachers, speaking internationally to help young artists find and develop their art and personal pathways through art and business.

In 2015 life happened, and Janine crashed into a severe burn-out that lasted three years. In the same year, many life changes occurred which led her to re-imagine her life. In 2024 Janine still has a successful international art career, but during her five-year health crash she

studied and got herself well again. During this period Janine learned things beyond her imagination and after 10 years of studying she published a book titled, *Get Well Fast; the Ultimate Health Reset of all Disease*, based on the work of seven Nobel Prize laureates, outlining the actual mechanism of cancer, why it occurs, what it is and what to do about it. Janine now gives conferences and shares this knowledge all around the world.

Through all that Janine has achieved and learnt along her journey she encourages individuals to feel that you do not need to be only good at one thing. Life will help you discover your many talents; follow its lead and develop them all. You will succeed at all you do, as long as you follow your heart and instincts, and in turn you will also thrive with passion and happiness! Life will test you. It tests everyone, but it is all about how many times you take these tough challenges on board, smile at life and push on. Because brighter days will *always* follow.

Janine believes that Strathcona is a place that builds you up to be unstoppable — that it is not just a word, you just need take it and run with it.







## Stephanie Edge

WINEMAKER

Stephanie Edge (nee Graumenz) completed Year 12 in 1990 at Strathcona and is a living testament to the power of perseverance, vision, and leadership. In a world where women are continually breaking barriers and redefining success, her journey was anything but ordinary. Stephanie's parents envisioned a career for her in secretarial work, utilising her skills in typing and languages. However, her spirit of adventure and determination to carve her own path led Stephanie on an extraordinary journey that would ultimately shape her into a global leader in the wine industry.

After graduating from Strathcona, Stephanie embarked on a six-year backpacking journey around the world, travelling through Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East. This period of exploration was a profound learning experience and taught her the intricacies of communication, negotiation, and the importance of cultural understanding. These lessons became the foundation upon which Stephanie built her career.

At the age of 30, after completing her Bachelor of Agricultural Science in Oenology from the University of Adelaide, Stephanie began her career at E & J Gallo Winery in California. Despite entering the industry later than many of her peers, Stephanie quickly made a name for herself with her innovative approach to winemaking. Over 12 years, she rose to the position of Senior Winemaker, earning a reputation for creating award-winning wines and for her ability to turn challenges into opportunities.

Stephanie's career took her to Europe, where she started her own winemaking consulting business. For two years, she helped first-class wineries achieve their desired wine styles. Her international experience gave her a unique perspective on winemaking, further enhancing her skills and broadening her influence in the industry.

In 2023, Stephanie assumed the role of Vice President of Group Winemaking at Constellation Brands, one of the largest wine companies in the world. Based in Napa, California, she leads a centralised team that oversees new product development,

research and development, bulk supply and winemaking across five wineries in Tuscany, Italy. Her strategic vision and leadership have been instrumental in driving continuous improvement, streamlining operations, and implementing cost-saving initiatives, resulting in substantial financial benefits for the company.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Stephanie is deeply committed to empowering women in the workplace. She serves as the Executive Sponsor to Constellation Brands' Women's Business Resource Group (WISE), sits on the Executive Leadership Board for UC Davis's Education Committee, and has been coaching and mentoring women for over 20 years. Her dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion has made her a driving force behind initiatives that elevate and advance women within the organisation.

As Strathcona celebrates its centenary, Stephanie Edge exemplifies what it means to be an unstoppable woman. Her journey from a curious young girl with a passion for typing and languages to a global leader in the wine industry is a powerful reminder that with courage, determination, and a willingness to embrace the unknown, anything is possible. Strathcona influenced her to be the leader she is today, providing her with the discipline, structure, and broad education that laid the foundation for her remarkable career.

# Tegan Ruta

## FLORIST



Tegan Ruta graduated from Strathcona in 2010. She is forever grateful for the dedication and support she experienced from Ms Moor and Mr Biviano from the Arts Department who challenged her creativity and guided her with her career choices. With Mr Biviano's support and fine art acumen, Tegan finished her final year at Strathcona being accepted into the NGV's Top Arts. Upon finishing her tertiary education, she went on to study a Bachelor of Visual Communication at Monash University.

Tegan then went on to enjoy a gap year exploring Europe. After returning home and applying for graphic design jobs, whilst also taking on freelance work, she had the fortuitous experience of working casually for a big events company in Melbourne. From this moment Tegan was hooked on working with nature every day, the fast pace and the constant variety of work.

Tegan balanced casual work in flowers with working as a graphic/textile designer for the Melbourne based homewares company Sage & Clare for a couple years and then took the leap in 2019 to work full time in flowers working for several big Melbourne event florists.

In 2019 Tegan also started her own business, Honesty Flora. The 2020 pandemic forced Tegan to focus full-time on Honesty Flora, whilst events were paused by lockdowns for the next couple of years. There is a silver lining to everything, as this allowed Honesty Flora to grow and become what it is today. With colour at the forefront, Honesty Flora's tonal arrangements maintain a unique beauty whilst showcasing an interesting variety of flowers. Tegan believes that flowers have a special way of healing, are the perfect way of celebrating life's special moments, and can say the things that often we as humans struggle to articulate into words.

Tegan's floral love can be traced back to childhood, where she spent a lot of time with her grandma and mum in the garden. To keep Tegan entertained her Nanna would let her pick flowers to decorate the house.

Honesty Flora's clients include but are not limited to Adidas, Nike, Melbourne Fashion Week and Melbourne Food & Wine Festival. She has created flowers for over 100 weddings including some interstate and for several former Strathcona students.

This year Tegan is looking forward to setting up her new studio in Collingwood with her partner and working on large-scale events for some exciting clients.



# Keely Simpson-Bull

## MINING ENGINEER

Keely Simpson-Bull completed her time at Strathcona in 2014 and is now a motivated mining engineer living in Western Australia, who enjoys playing sports, collecting rocks and watching trains.

Since leaving school, Keely studied engineering with honours at Monash University. During study she was an active member of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, who then supported her with scholarships to pursue a degree in mining engineering. Keely was attracted to this particular field of study from a foundational love of Earth science and geology — Keely already had a significant rock collection from childhood by this point!

Keely was lucky enough to work on oil/gas rigs with Exxon Mobil in the Bass Strait, and in underground copper/uranium mining at BHP's Olympic Dam during her study. Once graduated, Keely moved to Western Australia at the beginning of 2020 to commence work with iron ore miner Rio Tinto.



During her first two years of the graduate program, Keely rotated through many mine operations critical roles — with one of her favourites being blast crew, working closely with explosives.

Since Rio's graduate program, Keely has enjoyed being directly involved in the scheduling and execution of large and complex supply chains. During her role as train scheduler, she was part of a team responsible for planning and optimising the movement of ore on autonomous trains across the world's largest privately owned rail network.

Currently, she is in a production scheduling role at BHP's Mt Whaleback Mine in Newman, WA. Her goal is to produce optimal, safe, and realistic production plans for all truck/excavator movements every week.

Keely has always worked shift work and FIFO, a very different style of work compared to the usual 9-5. Most FIFO rosters are 8 days on, 6 days off or 14 days on, 7 days off. Rostered work allows her more time to explore the greatest state in Australia — 'West is best'!

Keely regularly enjoys 4WD, camping, and fishing across Australia with her fiancé.

Working away from home on a mine site can be challenging for a variety of reasons, but something she consistently practises is to operate with integrity and have conviction in her work. In Keely's experience, imparting a self-assured confidence into girls is something that underpinned all of her education at Strathcona. Upon reflection, Keely believes one of the most important aspects of her education was the development of critical thinking ability. This has made it much easier for her to succeed in a reactive and dynamic environment, particularly one where consistent negotiation and optimisation is required.

Beyond education, Keely believes that by taking part in the extracurricular opportunities that Strathcona offers has made her a well-rounded person. It is her memories and experiences of exchange programs, GSV carnivals, and the camaraderie she experienced during this time that shaped her into an unstoppable woman.

# The Carers

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN HEALTH

The Carers cluster showcases our unstoppable women in medical, care, and personal support services, who tirelessly work to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of others. Whether they are general practitioners, social workers, or fitness instructors, these extraordinary women blend empathy with expertise, making a profound difference in their communities. Follow along the inspiring stories of those who care, heal, and support with unmatched devotion.

IN MEMORY OF  
**Betty  
Allender**



Betty Allender was born in 1911 and was a foundation student when Strathcona began a century ago in 1924. In her final years at Strathcona, Betty was the School Captain in 1928 and 1929 and wrote in the 1928 *Strathconian*.

Following her time at Strathcona, Betty gained honours in the Church Missionary Examination in 1928. Betty trained as a nurse at the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne and graduated in 1936. In 1940, Betty enlisted at her Surrey Hills residence where her and her mother resided. Betty left with the first nurses to leave Australia, and worked in Palestine, Syria, Egypt and Northern Africa including Tobruk.

Betty's story is representative of the many women who served in diverse capacities such as the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), and the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS). On the entry of Japan into the war, Betty served in one of the main general hospitals in the Northern Territory. Betty rose to the rank of Captain and then in 1946 was discharged from the army.

After the war, Betty resided at Deniliquin, NSW where her brother Peter worked in a bank. She also had an older sister named Dorothy. Betty nursed at the West Deniliquin Hospital where it is reported she acted as a model for the 1949 Hospital Auxiliary's Annual Apron Parade in the Town Hall. She modelled the outstanding prize-winning apron of white voile with beautiful embroidery.

As we celebrate 100 years of Strathcona, we remember not only the global events that have shaped history but also the personal stories of our alumnae like Betty who lived through these times. Betty's journey as a nurse during World War II, from the deserts of the Middle East to the aftermath of the Bombing of Darwin, highlights women's critical roles during wartime — roles that often go unrecognised.

Betty's story shows us again that Strathcona girls were 'unstoppable' from the start. Betty passed away in Prahran in 1971 at the age of 60.





IN MEMORY OF  
**Lysbeth  
 Turnbull OAM**

Lysbeth Turnbull OAM (nee Thomas) commenced her journey at Strathcona in 1929 where she remained until 1936, laying the foundation for a life marked by resilience and compassion. Lysbeth's daughters and sister all also attended Strathcona.

Lysbeth always had a spirit of service and commitment to others, and her lifelong devotion to the Girl Guides movement was where Lysbeth's impact truly illuminated.

Born in 1920, Lysbeth embarked on her Guiding journey in 1932 at the age of 12, as a foundation member of the 1st Hartwell Guides. Her passion for Guiding grew as she held roles of leadership, becoming a Junior Leader and later leading the Brownies at Hartwell until 1944.

When war broke out, Lysbeth's dedication remained strong. Lysbeth and her parents moved to Upwey where she continued travelling to Hartwell for Pack meetings until being asked to take over the 1st Victorian Post Brownies whose members were afflicted with illnesses such as polio. Her commitment saw her traveling from Ferntree Gully to Frankston and then to Mt Eliza, tirelessly imparting the values of Guiding to those in need.

Lysbeth's dedication then saw her join the Guide International Service (G.I.S.) in 1947, travelling to Germany where she was responsible for finding and distributing food and clothing and to improve the living conditions of displaced persons. Her experiences there were a testament to the transformative power of Guiding, as she and her colleagues worked tirelessly to alleviate suffering and restore hope.

In 1949 Lysbeth returned home, married and later had two daughters while remaining steadfast in her commitment to Guiding. Her leadership extended across various districts where for three years Lysbeth represented the Girl Guide Association on the 'Good Neighbour Council' which organised camps for migrant children at Somers and Point Lonsdale.

In 1977 Lysbeth was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal and Lysbeth was recognised in 1992 where her expertise and dedication earned her the prestigious Medal of the Order of Australia. Her nomination to the Women Shaping the Nation Honour Roll in 2001 further emphasised her profound influence on Australian society. Even in her later years, Lysbeth remained an active member of the Outer Eastern Guide Trefoil Guild, embodying the ethos of service that has defined her life. In 2006 Lysbeth was awarded her Girl Guides 70-year service badge by Victorian State Commissioner Ellen Boyd.

Forever at the service of others, Lysbeth Turnbull OAM shows us what a woman can achieve in their community and beyond.

IN MEMORY OF  
**Beth  
Smallwood**



Beth Smallwood (nee McLaren) spent her early years at Strathcona, starting in 1929 and later moved schools during her secondary years. She loved Strathcona and everything associated with it.

Beth grew up profoundly conscious of the impact of the Great Depression and remained frugal all her life. Beth was an only child, and her sense of duty was powerful. After the passing of her fiancé following World War II, Beth spent much of her adult life caring for her parents Charles and Bessie.

Tragically in her 40's Beth lost her hearing. It may have been because of a viral infection, although it is hard to know, it was not something Beth ever spoke about. Beth retained about 5 per cent hearing in one ear and nothing at all in the other. It would be an extraordinary misfortune for anyone, for Beth, however, it would help her find purpose.

Beth became an early recipient of a cochlear implant, leading to a noteworthy meeting with bionic ear pioneer Professor Graeme Clark. In 1994, she made a significant bequest to the University of Melbourne for the establishment of a foundation chair in audiology and speech science within the medical school's Department of Otolaryngology. According to the university, it was the first full chair in this discipline in Australia. The chair is now named for Professor Clark.

When Beth left Strathcona she maintained limited contact with the school until the 1990s when she made an appointment to see the new Principal, Ruth Bunyan. While waiting in the foyer, she glanced

through a book situated on a side table. In it she found a photograph of a bridge her grandfather, Henry McKenzie, had built in Tasmania. This book, and meeting, led to a longstanding friendship with Ruth Bunyan and renewed interest in Beth's old school, resulting in the establishment of the Beth McLaren Smallwood Scholarships at Strathcona in the late 1990s that is still in place today supporting girls with hearing impairment.

In 2012 following her passing, Ruth Bunyan and Robert Evans, Executors of Beth's will established the Beth McLaren Smallwood Foundation.

Beth's estate generates a substantial income, enabling the Foundation to provide scholarships and programs for students with hearing impairment at carefully selected schools with departments dedicated to the education of children with hearing impairment across Victoria. Some are independent schools – others are government schools or specialist organisations such as Taralye, which offers family-centred support for children who are deaf.

The foundation now aims to ensure that the funds are dispersed in a way that honours Beth's determination to make a difference, through education, for the better. It is a happy ending to the story of a woman who confronted adversity with grit, fortitude and ultimately, generosity — a story that began in the early years of Strathcona Girls Grammar's history.

# Val Johnston

## TEACHER & HUMANITARIAN

Val Johnston (nee Hutchison) completed her schooling at Strathcona in 1947 and found her way to the jungles of north-east India just five years after, setting herself up for a lifelong journey of education and humanitarian work.

At Strathcona, Val quickly found herself inspired by Principal, Miss Dora Featherstone and had a passion for Biology. Val credited her appreciation of classical music to school assemblies when each assembly included a recording of work by a major composer. Later, while Val was a university student, she was invited to enter a competition at Strathcona to compose a school hymn. Val's winning entry, *Divine Instructor*, is sung at Strathcona to this day, now with a new melody composed by former staff member Gary Bradley.

An aspiring missionary, Val won a place at the University of Melbourne to study both sciences and arts and then became a university-qualified teacher, teaching Biology and French at Melbourne Girls' Grammar. Val headed to Assam in 1952 but she wasn't there to be a tourist. She had come to work.

Val and her fiancé, John Johnston, were among 15 probationer missionaries who travelled to India by sea. They arrived in November 1952, travelling to Calcutta (now known as Kolkata). John was posted to Upper Assam, while Val was sent to another part of Assam without running water or electricity, and bamboo hut accommodation. It was a full day's journey apart, but the Baptist Missionary Society would not permit them to marry until each of them had passed exams in the new language they were required to study: Bengali. Fortunately, Val learnt fast and as her Strathcona schoolmates and teachers well knew, she was the kind of girl who seldom hesitated to try her hand at something new.

Val and John were also posted in Pakistan, then in 1958 were asked to return to India to work in Mission schools and orphanages, now under Indian administration, with no foreign funding. Val was already familiar with the Mount Hermon boarding school in Darjeeling, having been seconded there for a year in 1953.

John became Principal of Mount Hermon in 1978, and during their many years there Val worked alongside him, juggling full-time teaching with raising their five children. She played a key role in running a teacher training college of Anglo-Indian boys from Kolkata, which was re-established on the Mount Hermon campus. Many graduates would go on to head major primary and secondary schools throughout India, and still do today.

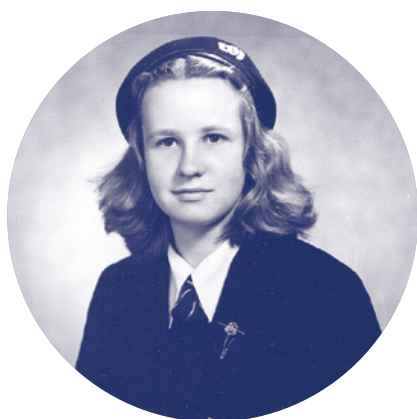
The couple returned to Australia in the 1990s, yet India kept calling them back. In 1996 John was asked to "rescue" an Anglo-Indian orphanage in Coonoor, South India, that was about to close. One of Val's projects was the establishment of an infirmary and boarding infrastructure. In the late 1990s through to 2007, they were granted a consultancy visa and by request returned to assist three more ex-mission schools. Val was also marginally involved in helping set up a barefoot teaching program for children of the brickfields and slums of Kolkata. They returned to retire and settle in Australia, and sadly, John passed away in 2017.

Val's memoir in verse, *Come Walk with Me*, is a collection of her writings over many years. Published in 2015, it reflects Val's long spiritual journey, her profound Christian faith, her respect for people of other faiths and her unwavering love for India, a country she came to see as her true home.

After a remarkable life, Val Johnston was awarded the Strathcona Medal in 2005 for service in Education and Humanitarian work.







IN MEMORY OF  
**Judith  
Newnham  
OAM**

Judith Newnham OAM (nee Cone) embarked on her journey at Strathcona in 1941 when Miss Sweetland was Headmistress, where she laid the foundation for a remarkable life dedicated to serving her community. Completing her education at Strathcona until her final year in 1947 Judith was Arnold House Captain and prefect. From there she stepped into the world armed with knowledge and a spirit of unwavering determination and went on to Pharmacy College.

Venturing beyond the school gates, Judith's journey begun with the Australian Red Cross (ARCV) in 1967, marking the beginning of her illustrious journey in humanitarian action. Volunteering as the secretary of the Mordialloc Unit from 1971 to 1974, she plunged into the field of first aid, earning certifications and qualifications that would become her tools in years to come.

In 1974, Judy's journey led her to New South Wales, where her commitment to community service flourished. Joining the Hills Detachment NSW in 1975, she became an integral part of various initiatives, from assisting at the Psychiatric Hospital in Paramatta to teaching first aid in schools and for organisations like the Girl Guides.

Returning to Victoria in 1980, Judy rekindled her association with the Mordialloc Unit, showcasing exceptional dedication and expertise in first aid. Her expertise earned her an instructor's certificate, marking her as a leader in the field. In 1981, she spearheaded the establishment of the Southport Red Cross unit in South Melbourne, embodying her attitude of identifying needs and taking proactive steps to address them.

Judy's contributions during the Ash Wednesday bushfires of 1983 earned her a Letter of Commendation, a testament to her selfless service during times of crisis. Her commitment to first aid education led her to become ARCV's first full-time paid First Aid Instructor in the same year and in this position saw her travel through Victoria and internationally to Papa New Guinea running first aid training courses for P.N.G Red Cross. In 1985 Judy completed her teacher training at Hawthorn Institute of Education.

In subsequent years, Judy's influence expanded as she ventured into writing, co-authoring the new First Aid Manual and crafting accompanying guides. Her expertise garnered recognition, with roles such as Regional Chairperson and membership on advisory committees highlighting her leadership within ARCV.

Acknowledgment of Judy's exceptional service came in 2005 when she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. Her tireless efforts, extensive knowledge, and unwavering dedication to first aid, the Australian Red Cross and service to her community makes her a truly Unstoppable Woman.



## Professor Winifred G Nayler

**MEDICAL RESEARCHER**

Professor Winifred G. Nayler (nee Millott), often known as Gwen, graduated from Strathcona in 1947, and her connection to the school runs deep, with both her sister and nieces also attending. From an early age, Winifred was a passionate student of science, a passion encouraged by her father. This passion eventually led her to become one of Australia's most innovative cardiovascular scientists of the 20th century.

Winifred began at the University of Melbourne, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in 1951, Master's of Science in 1953, and Doctor of Science in 1957. Her early career as a clinical biochemist at the Austin Hospital in Melbourne drew her into heart research, leading her to the Baker Medical Research Institute, where she worked from 1955 to 1972. Winifred's groundbreaking work in myocardial metabolism and cardiovascular pharmacology laid the foundation for her later contributions to the development of beta-adrenergic receptor antagonists and calcium channel blockers—drugs that have become essential in the treatment of high blood pressure and angina.

Despite the challenges of being a woman in a male-dominated field, Winifred's talent and determination propelled her to leadership roles. In 1966, at just 36 years old, she became the Associate Director of the Baker Institute, a position that attracted attention not only for her scientific achievements but also for her defiance of traditional gender roles.

In 1973, Winifred moved to the United Kingdom, where she became a Professor of Cardiac Metabolism at the University of London's Cardiothoracic Institute, where she contributed to research, and mentored many future leaders in the field. Winifred's work led to her being shortlisted for the Nobel Prize in Medicine.

Inspired by the 1976 ISHR World Congress held in Japan, the local section of the ISHR was founded in order to represent and bring together cardiovascular researchers in this region of the world. Winifred was instrumental in founding the section and organised the 1986 World Congress in Melbourne, later becoming President of both the Australasian Section and the World Body.

Throughout her career, Winifred published over 450 research papers and books, including the influential "Amlodipin" in 1993, which highlighted the development of calcium antagonists as a major advance in cardiovascular therapeutics. Her work earned her numerous accolades, including the Strathcona Medal for Medical Research in 2007 and an Honorary Doctorate from Monash University in 1994.

After retiring in the mid-1990s, Winifred returned to Australia, where she continued to lead a research team at the University of Melbourne's Austin Hospital until her full retirement. Winifred now lives in the UK, is aged 94 and remains well, with sharp mind and wit. Winifred remains an inspiration to current and future generations of scientists. Her legacy is a reminder of the importance of perseverance, curiosity, and innovation in the pursuit of scientific discovery.

# Dr Barbara Martin

DOCTOR



Dr Barbara Martin graduated from Strathcona in 1951 and went on to study medicine at University of Melbourne, a very different atmosphere from Strathcona, as at that time, only 20 of the 160 students were women. Barbara went into medicine because of a call to work in the mission field — the missionary call came first, medicine second.

After graduation in 1957, Barbara spent two years at the Alfred Hospital and then a further two years at the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women. She was then encouraged to do her membership exams for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in England. Prior to leaving for England in 1963 she met Catherine Mackenzie, the co-founder, along with her sister, Dr Helen Mackenzie, of Il Sin (Daily New) Women's Hospital in Busan, Korea. From Miss Mackenzie, Barbara learnt of a need of a doctor for the following year for Dr Mackenzie's furlough and so, after obtaining her specialist qualifications, she went to Korea in 1964. She was convinced that this was the place of God's calling and she served there for 32 years until late 1995. For Barbara this was a very special time in her life during which she trained many doctors in obstetrics and gynaecology, and nurses in midwifery.

Barbara developed a particular interest in trophoblastic disease, a complication of pregnancy that can become malignant. This led to the establishment of a special clinic which became the leading centre for treatment of this disease in Busan and Kyung Nam province. She was the only expat on staff, so she moved out of the hospital compound and into the community — a very positive move. In her last two years, after training in the UK, she commenced a palliative care service. Aged 62, Barbara returned to Australia where she continued working in palliative care for a further 16 years, until she retired in 2012.

Barbara was honoured to be awarded the Silver Medal for Philanthropic service by the Red Cross Association of Korea in 1993 and in 1995 to be made an Honorary Citizen of Busan.

Barbara reflects positively on her time at Strathcona as a time of good preparation for life. She remembers with gratitude that — as the sole physics student in Year 12 — a teacher was employed for her. She was honoured to be chosen as House captain when Findlay House was established in 1950. In her talk at the Strathcona Foundation Day service in 2012, she interwove quotations from Dr Seuss's *The Places We Go* which highlighted her theme of being open to possibilities in our lives and to being able to deal with changes and challenges.

Barbara was the recipient of 2011 Strathcona Medal for her contribution to medicine and service in obstetrics, gynaecology and palliative care in South Korea.





## Emeritus Professor Ruth Grant AM

EDUCATOR

Emeritus Professor Ruth Grant AM completed her studies at Strathcona in 1958 as School Prefect and House Captain of Arnold.

After school, Ruth completed a number of qualifications including a Master of Applied Science (Research on Manipulative Therapy), Graduate Diploma of Advanced Manipulative Therapy, Bachelor of Physical Therapy, and a Diploma of Physiotherapy.

In a career spanning three continents, Ruth has held academic and professional practice appointments in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. She has considerable expertise in accreditation in the health sciences. Her accreditation experience includes discipline reviews in the health professions, accreditation of flexibly delivered postgraduate general practice medical programs for the US DETC Accrediting Commission (Washington DC), and the accreditation of physiotherapy schools in Australian universities.

Ruth joined the South Australian Institute of Technology as a half-time lecturer in 1981 and was appointed as a senior lecturer in 1982, before becoming Head of School in 1983.

In 1989, Ruth became the first female professorial appointment in the 100-year history of the South Australian Institute of Technology and was appointed first Dean and later Pro Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences at University of South Australia and inaugural President of the International Society of Educators in Physiotherapy. Ruth also has the distinction of being the first person outside of Hong Kong to be appointed Honorary Adviser to the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association. Until December 2007, she was Chair of the Australian Physiotherapy Council.

In 2011, Ruth was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to physiotherapy, to education and to the advancement of clinical health sciences in Australia. In 2017 Ruth was awarded the Strathcona Medal.

Ruth retired from the University of South Australia in 2002. Prior to her retirement, she was Pro Vice Chancellor of the Division of Health Sciences and Vice President, Health Sciences with academic leadership and strategic management responsibility for a very large multidisciplinary health sciences faculty.

She was also awarded the title of Professor Emeritus in recognition of her outstanding contribution through research and practice in her profession both nationally and internationally, and for her contribution to the University of South Australia. Ruth now chairs the University's Successful Ageing Seminars.

Ruth worked as a consultant for 15 years and is now experiencing the many joys that retirement brings including a desire to learn Mandarin!



# Margaret Waterhouse OAM

## HUMANITARIAN

Margaret Waterhouse OAM (nee Macknight) started at Strathcona in the late 1940s, not long after the end of World War II, and completed her matriculation there in 1957. Her parents had chosen the school because her cousin Barbara Martin (also later to be a Strathcona Medalist) was flourishing there. Margaret later cemented her connection with Strathcona by sending both her daughters to the school.

Two Strathcona teachers in particular influenced Margaret's life direction and passions. English teacher Margaret Drake – who oversaw the school's annual stage productions – awakened Margaret's love of literature and appreciation for the power of well-crafted words to inspire and influence action. Teacher Hyrell Waten was vigorously and at times controversially involved with political activism and brought a fresh and challenging perspective to issues of social justice and social exclusion. They challenged Margaret to expand the expression of her faith through her involvement in various church youth groups – with their focus on recognising one's own privilege and giving back to the community.

From her late teens Margaret was actively involved in groups aiming to educate the community about human rights and bring about

justice for marginalised people. While completing her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Melbourne she became actively involved in the work of the Howard League for Prison Reform and later the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). For more than forty years from the mid 1960s, she was deeply involved in the work of Amnesty International, focusing on the plight of prisoners of conscience. Her roles included President of the Victorian Chapter and many years of visiting schools and other groups to talk about the work of Amnesty and encourage others to become involved. Her burgeoning interest in the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people found expression in her work for the then 'Aboriginal Awareness Program' of the Anglican Church – a role in which she liaised closely with Aboriginal people, spoke to parish groups about reconciliation, and advocated on these issues with local and national church authorities.

Margaret was awarded the Philia Prize by the World Conference on Religion and Peace in 1998, and a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2003 for service to the community, particularly as an advocate for human rights and reconciliation. She was awarded the first Strathcona Medal in 2004 for her service to advancing reconciliation.



Jillian Wells OAM (nee Barraclough) graduated from Strathcona in 1971. After completing her schooling at Strathcona, Jillian commenced her nursing training at the Alfred and Midwifery Royal Women's Hospitals. She continued as a nurse working at Dimboola Hospital and Winston Private Hospital and later became a court network support worker.

Jillian was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) at the age of 24. Following her diagnosis, and after having two children, Jill established 'Cure MS'. The group's primary aim was to raise funds to support research into the cause of MS. It was a unique and dynamic group renowned for its energy and significant successes not only in fundraising but also in increasing awareness of the disabling disease.

In 2010, the Cure MS Committee agreed to transfer its activities and role to Monash University. Cure MS raised \$3 million over 15 years with proceeds donated to Monash University's Stem Cell Laboratory. As recognition of the contributions, Monash University agreed to name a post-doctoral fellowship the Cure MS Fellowship in Neurological Diseases. This allows one post-doctoral fellow the opportunity to work with leading neuroscientists for two years and to be fully dedicated to this project.

The activities of the Committee and Jill Wells as president, were recognised in an award from the Government of Victoria.

In addition to her work for Cure MS, Jill has taken an active role in providing a range of interventions for people with long-term disabilities.

This has included contributions to the Peer Support Guide published by DHS, mentoring individuals with disabilities to undertake leadership programs and volunteer activities for Victorian Government departments and agencies, to name a few.

Jill has since served on several council committees for disability access and has spoken to community groups and businesses, including Price Waterhouse Cooper and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, about access and employment.

Jill has been a board member of Uniting Care Community Options (UCCO), who provide a range of community-based services for the elderly, people with disabilities, the vulnerable and disadvantaged, and their families and carers. Jill was a Member of the Board of Governance of LifeAssist for many years also. Additionally, she was Chair of the Participant and Quality Subcommittee. Jill represented service users on the Board and has been a passionate advocate for the rights and conditions of people living with a disability.

Jill was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) by the Australian Government in 2015 for services to medical research and community organisations and received the Strathcona Medal in 2022.

## Jillian Wells OAM

PHILANTHROPIST





Associate Professor Heather Cleland graduated from Strathcona in 1973 and is now a Melbourne Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon. Thanks to a solid educational foundation provided at Strathcona, she completed a medical course at Melbourne University and went on to gain a Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

Her surgical career has now spanned 35 years, and has included leadership positions as Director of the Department of Plastic & Maxillofacial Surgery at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, and Head of Victorian Adult Burns Service at the Alfred Hospital. This service cares for all adult Victorians with severe burn injury and is an Australian leader in burn care and research, having played a key role in response to mass casualty disasters such as the Bali Bombings and Black Saturday bushfires.

Under her leadership, the Victorian Adult Burn Service has established a reputation for quality care and become an international centre of clinical and research excellence which attracts trainees and international fellows. Her strong emphasis on training and research as key components of surgical practice has been recognised by various awards, including the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons ESR Hughes Award and Emeritus Membership of Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons. Heather volunteered for Interplast for many years, providing Reconstructive Plastic surgical services and training across the Asia-Pacific region.

She has been involved in various collaborative initiatives to progress burn care, prevention initiatives, and improve outcomes for people suffering severe burn injuries, through involvement in professional, and public health organisations. This work has been recognised by a Paul Harris Fellow Award from Rotary International, in addition to the Strathcona Medal in 2009. She is currently Clinical Director of the Alfred Skin Bioengineering Laboratory, which has developed a novel and world leading patient-specific skin graft substitute, currently in clinical trial for treatment of patients with extensive skin loss.

Heather's other achievements include the establishment of the internationally recognised Burns Registry of Australia and New Zealand. This clinical quality registry provides data to support researchers across Australia and New Zealand looking into causes, prevention and treatment of burns in children and adults, and monitors and benchmarks quality of care between units to support delivery of best practice specialist treatments for all Australians.

Heather believes that good humour, patience and strong collegiate relationships form the basis of a happy and successful working life. The supportive and respectful educational environment provided at Strathcona, with its emphasis on persistence and integrity has informed and underpinned her professional life, and she remains profoundly grateful for the opportunities it has provided.



## Associate Professor Heather Cleland

**PLASTIC &  
RECONSTRUCTIVE  
SURGEON**



## Jenika Graze

**PALLIATIVE  
CARE NURSE**

Jenika Graze completed Year 12 at Strathcona in 1981 and has had a long family connection with the school. All three of Jenika's daughters have attended Strathcona, and Jenika hopes that they too are challenged to pursue a life of service.

After completing her Bachelor of Arts (Psychology/German major) at the University of Melbourne, Jenika's aim was to make a difference in the world. After feeling that she did not have enough life experience to embark on her chosen career of social work, Jenika embarked on a nursing course and discovered the field of cancer nursing and palliative care. During this time, she spent six months volunteering in Benin, Africa.

On her return, Jenika completed her graduate nurse year, with her final placement being in an oncology, haematology and palliative care ward. It was here that Jenika realised that this satisfied her desire for holistic care — psychosocial support combined with practical skills.

Since then, Jenika has worked in palliative care, mostly in the community setting but also in hospitals, aged care facilities, and hospices. She has always felt very privileged in the life that she has led, and the education provided to her at Strathcona, and wanted to share that her learning and care with others.

Between 1996 and 2007, Jenika and her husband (with their four children) worked in Kathmandu, Nepal where she volunteered in the vaccination clinic at the local mission hospital, worked with a women's group educating women who came from remote villages, supported Hospice Nepal in nurse training, helped set up a community visiting service and developed a palliative care training course. In 2018, Jenika returned with 16 syringe drivers donated by her current workplace and trained the nurses in their use. Jenika is thrilled to report that all these initiatives continue to flourish in Nepal today.

Jenika currently works at Eastern Palliative Care in Melbourne, where she is a community palliative care nurse, and assists with the education program. Jenika recently took an extended leave to return to Pokhara, Nepal to assist with build capacity in their palliative care services. Jenika feels fortunate to have had such a rewarding and stimulating career, with many opportunities to use her skills.

In 2006, Jenika was the recipient of the Strathcona Medal for her service to palliative care nursing in Nepal.

Jenika's time at Strathcona helped shape her into who she is today. At Strathcona her values of compassion, honesty and social justice were nurtured. From Mr Lyall who noticed each student, to the teachers who helped her strive for her personal best, have a go at everything, and treat others how we would like to be treated. Jenika's Christian faith was deepened in her time at Strathcona through many incredible role models, both staff and students. Jenika continues to care deeply for others, and tries to make a positive difference wherever she is, both in her professional and personal life.



**Penelope  
Foley**  
YOUTH  
HUMANITARIAN

Penelope Foley completed Year 12 at Strathcona in 1984 along with her twin sister Clare. Penelope's mother was also a staff member at Strathcona.

Penelope has completed a number of degrees including Bachelor of Arts (History, Geography and Philosophy), Diploma of Education and a Master in International Development Studies.

In 1987 Penelope attended a Uniting Church Youth Convention and was impressed by the keynote speaker, anti-apartheid activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who appealed for God's justice to come to bear on the struggles of his homeland, South Africa. This led Penelope to work with the South African Council of Churches in the Justice and Reconciliation Department in Johannesburg. All her efforts have been towards the uplifting of the youth in this country.

Penelope was also part of a church movement that provides assistance and accommodation to thousands of refugees as well as a church for AIDS orphans without adult support. Her colleagues see her as giving tireless and selfless service dedicated to uplifting others for the wellbeing of the community at large, a dedication which goes far beyond that which one would expect of even the most committed South African humanitarians.

Penny's key areas of experience include programme development, youth employment, youth development, public employment and community development.

In 1992 Penelope began work as Deputy Director of the Joint Enrichment Project where she was responsible for initiating the National Youth Development Forum and developing a national agenda for youth development once a democratic dispensation was achieved. From 1994 the organisation began to test through project implementation a number of the core principles outlined in emerging youth policy.

In 2001 Penelope began as Program Manager for the National Youth Service Program where her work included translating policy into clear program delivery frameworks and testing the effectiveness of different program models. Penelope was then the Director of Shisaka Development Management Services in South Africa, who specialise in targeted support services in housing and infrastructure, unemployment and job creation and urban renewal and integration.

In 2008, Penelope was awarded the Strathcona Medal for her work in Service: Justice and Reconciliation in South Africa.

Since 2020 Penelope has been working as the Chief Community Partnerships Officer for Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and her core responsibilities are to build relationships with civil society that ensures that all young people in South Africa can access the pathway manager.



## Natalie Smith

OCCUPATIONAL  
THERAPIST



Natalie Smith graduated from Strathcona in 1986 after completing her VCE and since then has gone full circle, starting from her birthplace in Baiyer River, near Mt Hagen in Papua New Guinea (PNG), to her current workplace, in the position of Country Leader for The Leprosy Mission (TLM) in Port Moresby PNG. Natalie's life choices were strongly influenced by her upbringing in PNG, where she lived until she was 10 years old. It was then, that her family returned to Melbourne and Natalie commenced her Strathcona journey for Year 6-12.

She then trained as an Occupational Therapist (OT) and worked in her first job on the northwest coast of Tasmania, as a Paediatric Community OT. Natalie lived and worked in Devonport and Burnie for three and a half years.

In 1997, Natalie joined World Vision as an OT for amputee war victims in Sierra Leone. But that journey was cut short by a military coup of the democratic government, and Natalie was forced to evacuate from the country. Soon after, that job ended, due to the insecurity of returning Sierra Leone.

After that, Natalie started a job with The Leprosy Mission in Nigeria, where she worked from 1998 - 2005 in two different states - Kwara and Sokoto. In 2006, after realising that she needed to diversify her skill set, Natalie studied a Masters in Public Health (majoring in International Health & Development) which she completed in 2007.

After some short jobs working with projects for refugees in western Melbourne, Natalie returned to work for The Leprosy Mission in Timor Leste as Country Leader for four years. She then worked in Myanmar as an OT Trainer for Myanmar Physiotherapists, teaching them how to add OT to their skills, when working with children with disabilities.

In 2012, Natalie was awarded the Strathcona Medal for her work in Occupational Therapy / Service: The Leprosy Mission, Africa.

Natalie is currently the Country Leader of The Leprosy Mission Papua New Guinea. Her main role is to build the capacity of her 22 staff, in leadership and project management, so that she can eventually work herself out of a job. After being in PNG for nine years, she will transition in 2025, to a fly-in and fly-out role, while still supporting the various projects. These include not only leprosy detection and treatment, but also livelihood development, climate change, education against Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV), Neglected Tropical Diseases, and disability care.

# Catherine Beaufort

## OAM

RADIATION  
THERAPIST

Catherine Beaufort OAM graduated from Strathcona in 1990 and has spent her career working as a radiation therapist, followed by an operations role in cancer, primarily at Alfred Health. Several years into her career, Catherine undertook a Master of Public Health and was inspired by other students who were pursuing careers specifically to address the inequities in global health. During this time an opportunity arose to volunteer for three months at Papua New Guinea's only cancer centre in Lae. In 2011, Catherine travelled to Lae to train three local radiation therapists on their recently installed planning computers and assist in technique development. During this time, Catherine worked with the University of Technology PNG to assist in setting up a Bachelor of Science in Radiation Therapy (BSRT) course.

Catherine has returned to PNG many times following the initial visit, with a colleague from Alfred Health, to teach students in their BSRT course.

More recently she has been consulting for Médecins Sans Frontières to set up a program in PNG around cancer care, as well as consulting on a new cancer centre in Port Moresby.

Over the course of her radiation therapy career, Catherine has also specialised in an area called brachytherapy, focusing particularly on prostate cancer.

Catherine set up a national training course for radiation therapists, medical physicists and radiation oncologists running out of The Alfred. Catherine also mentored a Malaysian urologist in prostate brachytherapy, and was then engaged to set up a training course in Malaysia with the commencement of a prostate brachytherapy programme at the National Cancer Institute in Kuala Lumpur. She has also mentored teams at Canberra Hospital and the Canterbury Regional Cancer and Haematology Service in Christchurch, NZ. Recently Catherine has implemented a programme in Gippsland, based out of the Alfred's radiation oncology department at Latrobe Regional Hospital.

When not hard at work, Catherine is passionate about sailing. This passion commenced with a voyage on the Sail Training Ship Young Endeavour at the end of Year 12. Since then, she has competed in local and overseas short course racing, as well as ocean races including the Sydney to Hobart

Yacht Race. Identifying that sailing is a male dominated sport, Catherine has spent many years engaging women to participate in sailing. She has volunteered on committees at her own yacht club as well as with Yachting Victoria to promote the sport of sailing to women and establish pathways for girls and women to get involved.

Catherine is also a board member for Medical Mission Aid. This is a charity dedicated to improving health outcomes in developing countries by partnering and supporting in country organisations.

After six years at Strathcona, Catherine feels she left knowing that gender wasn't a barrier to achievement. Also, that it was a privilege to attend Strathcona, one that is not afforded to everyone, and to use that privilege to help others.

In 2017, Catherine was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to radiotherapy and international relations, and in 2019 was also the recipient of the Strathcona Medal for her service to medicine and international relations.



# Angela Driver

## HUMANITARIAN



Angela Driver finished at Strathcona in 1993 with her family having a long-standing connection with the School. Her journey from a student at Strathcona to a humanitarian making a significant impact in Uganda, showcases the transformative power of education and the unstoppable spirit of individuals committed to making a difference. Driven by a desire to address social injustices and uplift marginalized communities, Angela found herself drawn to Uganda, a country grappling with numerous post-war challenges, including poverty, inadequate healthcare, and educational disparities.

In 2017, she co-founded the Wajoli Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation committed to empowering vulnerable women and children and fostering sustainable development in Uganda. Angela recognised that the key to

sustainable development lies in empowering local communities and encouraging self-reliance.

With this ethos at the core of Wajoli's mission, Angela and her team of 42 staff implemented a range of initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality.

One of Wajoli's flagship programs focuses on improving access to education, particularly for girls who face formidable barriers to attending school. Recognizing the transformative power of education in breaking the cycle of poverty, Angela spearheaded efforts to construct a kindergarten and primary school, provide educational sponsorship, and implement educational programs tailored to the needs of underserved communities.

Angela's approach to philanthropy is characterised by a deep respect for the dignity of those she serves. She works collaboratively with local stakeholders, empowering them to take ownership of their development priorities. This inclusive approach ensures the sustainability of Wajoli's programs and also fosters a sense of community ownership and pride.

In October 2022, Angela launched Wajoli's newest project — Wajoli House Women's Empowerment Centre. The program serves to transform the lives of vulnerable single mothers coming from domestic violence situations. Many single mothers end up breaking stone in the quarry or working in prostitution to survive, which doesn't earn enough to feed a child, let alone access education and adequate healthcare. Wajoli House Women's Empowerment Centre provides

trauma counselling, adult literacy and numeracy, business subjects and a trade such as tailoring, hair and beauty, catering, etc. By upskilling mothers, they can earn enough to provide food, shelter, clothing, education and healthcare for their families.

And while the mothers attend school, so do their children. Wajoli Kindergarten and Primary School provides quality education to village children. They encourage practical learning methods that allow the pupils to engage in hands-on learning.

Despite facing numerous challenges along the way, Angela has remained steadfast in her commitment to the people of Uganda. Her unwavering resolve and tireless efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals, inspiring hope and creating positive change. Living in a grass hut in the village has been an enormous change for Angela, in comparison to her upbringing in Glen Iris, but she has embraced life and the strong ties to family and community held strongly in Uganda.

Angela embodies the essence of being unstoppable through her remarkable endeavours and passion for improving the lives of women and children. Her work exemplifies the transformative power of education, resilience, and unwavering determination. Through her work with the Wajoli Foundation, she has demonstrated that with a love for something, perseverance, and a commitment to serving others, one can truly be unstoppable in the pursuit of a more just and equitable world.



## Sarah Bearup

HUMANITARIAN



Sarah Bearup (nee Romeril) graduated from Strathcona in 1994 and is honoured to be invited to share her career journey as part of the Centenary. Sarah confesses that she always considered herself to be an average student, and so the invitation came as a surprise.

Sarah experienced a trauma in her early teens that left her shattered, doubting herself and her future. She notes that adolescence can be hard at the best of times, let alone living through a global pandemic or surviving gender-based violence (as was the case for Sarah). With the support of family and friends, Sarah gradually regained her strength and sense of self and over time, grew determined to do what she could to fight injustice and to support others facing the indignity of poverty, violence and exploitation.

After high school, Sarah discovered anthropology in her Arts Degree and became deeply curious about other cultures and religions. Sarah volunteered a lot with homeless youth in Melbourne, and then later an opportunity took her to Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

After that, one role led to another and Sarah went from the Asia Pacific to Eastern Europe and the Middle East, working in community development and humanitarian assistance. She then continued to study part-time, completing a Master of International Development.

In Cambodia, Sarah served as Country Director for Hagar with programs that supported women and children who had faced unimaginable hardships. Then as the National Director for World Vision in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarah oversaw programs helping to rebuild war-torn communities and supporting refugees on the now well-trodden, Balkans route. Sarah also worked as a humanitarian advisor and diplomat for Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, aiming to shape policies and coordinate responses to natural disasters, displacement, and conflict-induced crises.

Today, Sarah is the Chief Operating Officer for World Vision South Asia Pacific. Thanks to many supporters, WV promotes socio-economic development in an increasingly complex geo-political climate, with a focus on protecting the vulnerable child.

On this career path, Sarah has found solidarity across cultural, linguistic, political, religious and class divides with those who are committed to social justice, and to striving for a fairer, more sustainable and peaceful future.

What can be learned from this career journey? Sarah suggests that we all have our own struggles, challenges and opportunities and that it may be appropriate to finish with a Maya Angelou quote picked out by her daughter: "You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

## Amanda Campbell

KINESIOLOGIST  
& AUTHOR



Amanda Campbell completed her time at Strathcona in 1997 and says that her experience as a Strathcona Girl was wonderful and is thrilled to share her journey in this special Centenary publication.

Today Amanda wears a few hats in a career that has become her passion. As a trained kinesiologist and author, Amanda specialises in multiple sclerosis and autoimmune disease. In 2013 she opened her private practice Bend Like Bamboo, where she helps individuals overcome stress and limiting beliefs to optimise healing, reducing symptoms from autoimmune disease. As a mentor and keynote speaker, Amanda helps individuals overcome stress and burnout, uncovering blind spots to achieve their personal and professional goals. It her passion to help individuals to re-imagine possibility in their minds, bodies, and lives.

Amanda also enjoys volunteer roles as an ambassador for MS Plus and Business in Heels.

After Amanda's diagnosis of multiple sclerosis at age 24 and overcoming a left-hand side body paralysis at age 29, her journey led to discovering how to give her mind and body the best environment to repair and thrive. Helping others now she has discovered that a flexible mindset impacts everything that matters: our body's ability to repair, our ability to adapt, heal and perform. Amanda believes that flexibility builds resilience in people and building resilience in our mindset improves our physical wellbeing.

After 15 years of remission, a decade of study, research and learning many lessons along the way, Amanda wanted to share her knowledge to help other people living with autoimmune disease, and anyone going through a challenging chapter in their lives.

Life can be overwhelming: stress, illness, and anxiety can take a toll on our bodies and minds, leaving us feeling rigid and limited. In *Bend Like Bamboo*, Amanda's new book, Amanda shares her simple yet powerful strategies for transforming your life. Using evidence-based methods, Amanda's approach aims to alleviate stress, reset the mind and body, and uncover hidden barriers to success. Drawing from her own experiences and diagnosis of MS, Amanda emphasises the importance of a flexible mindset in achieving optimal health and realising our full potential. *Bend Like Bamboo* serves as your roadmap to improved mental, emotional, and physical well-being. By reconnecting with your inner strength, you'll discover that you possess the power within to achieve your goals and live the life you desire.

One of the highlights of Cathy Woods' (Class of '99) life was the period of her secondary school years spent at Strathcona from 1994 to 1999. During these six years, Cathy made many wonderful and lasting friendships and loved sport, as well as music.

Soon after leaving Strathcona, Cathy entered the noble profession of nursing. In the year 2000, Cathy began her nursing training at Deakin University in Melbourne. And then in 2001, she undertook a short-term mission trip to Townsville and Bangladesh, in order to see where this might eventually lead her. This was later followed by a year's graduate medical study at the SDA Hospital in Wahroonga, Sydney, which began in November 2003. In 2004 Cathy completed her Bachelor of Nursing at Deakin University.

This marked a turning point in Cathy's life. From 2005-2006 Cathy returned to Melbourne and worked in the Emergency departments of both Maroondah and Saint Vincent's Hospitals, which enabled her to gain important skills in critical emergency care, as well as drug and alcohol intervention knowledge. Cathy then served in the indigenous communities of Elcho Island from 2007-2014. Following this, Cathy worked for 12 months at Beswick in 2016, some 100 kilometres northeast of Katherine, and finally concluded her sterling and outstanding medical service at Millingimbi from 2017-2019.

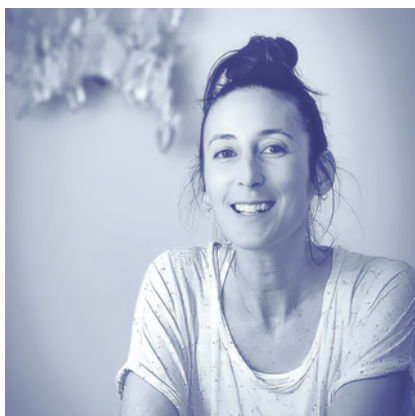
Each of these remote Aboriginal communities loved Cathy dearly and held her in high esteem for the way in which she was able to introduce and apply the best of medical skills and practice for the good and welfare of all ages within these communities. Cathy as a single person actually lived in the communities that she served, and even learned the Yolgnu language, which was no mean feat, demonstrating her identity with, and love for, the Aboriginal people and their concerns.

Whilst at Elcho Island, Cathy even took a young indigenous girl under her wings, providing for her on-going welfare, as well as for her education in Melbourne. Cathy's life and service was one of selfless dedication, of time, love, care, and generosity in each of the places where she served and worked.

Cathy was always one to push the boundaries in terms of her personal skills, development, fitness, and training. She had a love for bushwalking and hiking and seeking to climb new heights and mountains.

In 2013 Cathy was awarded a Graduate Diploma in Divinity with the Melbourne School of Theology, obtaining a High Distinction in most of her subjects. In 2018 she was also awarded her Nurse Practitioner's degree, also gaining the highest pass in this degree for the year of 2018, at Charles Darwin University.

To all who were impacted by Cathy's life, she graced this world with sunshine, love, laughter, compassion, generosity, joy and hope. Finally, she died in her fight with liver cancer in November 2021 at 40 years of age.



IN MEMORY OF

Catherine  
Ruth Woods







**Dr Caitlin Sum**  
**DOCTOR**

Caitlin Sum completed her time at Strathcona in 2006 and looks back on her school years with gratitude and fond memories. Strathy was a place where she felt welcomed and supported by all. She particularly enjoyed music and dancing, playing the violin in the String Ensemble, and singing in the Year 12 Choral Ensemble. Caitlin's role as House Dance Captain for Gilbert was a highlight. French and Physics were her favourite subjects and she was motivated by her teachers' commitment to their students.

Community service was a significant part of Caitlin's Strathcona experience. As a student, she valued the trust placed in her by her teachers to lead and organise volunteer activities, such as tutoring primary school children. She credits many of her teachers who were instrumental in shaping her values and aspirations. As an example, Caitlin recalls Mr Pannam, her Year 12 Coordinator, saying at their Valedictory Dinner that they should all "stop and smell the roses". This is something she still aims to do, not just figuratively but literally on any walk where she might come across a particularly good specimen!

Caitlin couldn't think of anything more exciting than becoming a doctor. After graduating from Strathcona, she applied to multiple universities, securing a last-minute place in Adelaide, which she deferred to work as an administration assistant. This period allowed her to spend quality time with her family and gain valuable professional skills. Moving to Adelaide was a significant and challenging decision at the time, but it pushed her to discover her capabilities. She is now glad that things weren't as straightforward as she wanted.

In Adelaide, Caitlin lived in a residential college, where she met her future husband, with whom she now has two young children. During her university years, she continued to pursue her passion for the arts by joining the Adelaide University Medical Orchestra; co-writing and directing the medical students' annual musical production in her final year.

After graduating from Medicine in 2013, she worked as a junior hospital doctor for two years before completing her specialist training in General Practice. Following the birth of her first daughter, Caitlin embraced various short-term roles, including working as an orthopaedic surgical assistant, a doctor in a mother-baby support unit, and a tele-health doctor for those in hotel quarantine during COVID. She also founded a Facebook networking group for South Australian doctors, which led to her current role as a GP Integration Officer at the Central Adelaide Local Health Network. Passionate about kidney health, she also volunteers on the Primary Care Education Advisory Committee for Kidney Health Australia.

Caitlin enjoys spreading the word about how varied and exciting a career in General Practice can be. Caitlin credits Strathcona with cementing her personal values, which continue to guide her today. She is proud of her achievements, especially those that required a leap of faith and bravery. She wishes to thank Strathy for making her into the unstoppable woman she is today!

# Dr Melissa Allan

DOCTOR

Melissa Allan started at Strathcona in Year 5 and finished with her Year 12 Class in 2011 as School Captain. Upon finishing Year 12, Melissa commenced a Bachelor of Science. She was uncertain about what she wanted to do at that point but chose this degree as it allowed her to explore her interests in both biological sciences and psychological science. It was only in the later part of the Bachelor's degree that she decided she wanted to pursue Medicine. Subsequently she has completed a Doctor of Medicine. While studying, Melissa worked in caregiver roles for children, and volunteered with organisations such as The Starlight Foundation and The Black Dog Institute. A few years ago, Melissa began training on the paediatric program which takes her across various hospitals in Victoria.

During and after her undergraduate degree, Melissa took time away from university. Part of that time was due to an unexpected illness. This meant deferring final university exams and forfeiting a medical school interview. Hence study plans were disrupted and the outlook of being able to achieve them at that time altered.



Melissa is grateful to have recovered and during time away from university, she spent time overseas.

Melissa took part in a student global health program in Tanzania and worked with a refugee/LGBTQIA organisation in Barcelona, and a school in Morocco. During her travels she has also loved learning languages, including some Swahili, Spanish, Arabic and French. Most recently Melissa has been focusing on rebuilding French skills, previously learnt through to Year 12 during her time at Strathcona, with the aim of using this within her job on a more global scale and with migrant and refugee populations.

Melissa has recently commenced a Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and continues to love to travel in between her work and study commitments. Currently, Melissa is working as a paediatric doctor on the Victorian Paediatric Training Program.

Melissa feels strongly that there is no one way to find where you want to go, or to get to that place. She feels Strathcona provided a strong foundation to navigate this path, through the opportunity to explore varied interests, leadership experience and support, and exposure to strong and inspiring female mentors. Strathcona has also created an environment that fostered some of the most formative friendships in Melissa's life, which have supported her and been alongside her as she has (and continues to become) the person she is today.



## Dr Amanda Mackus

### DOCTOR

Since graduating from Strathcona in 2012, Amanda Mackus (nee Donaghey) has undertaken several courses at both Monash University and Deakin University. Amanda always knew she wanted to be a doctor, and this career could combine her passion of biological science and physiology, with her desire to work directly with the public.

Due to the extremely competitive nature of getting into the undergraduate medical degree straight out of Year 12, Amanda decided to take a route of study that would allow her to still complete the medical course and fulfil her dream of being a doctor through another pathway. So, straight out of Year 12, Amanda studied a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Biomedical Science at Monash University with specialisations in Physiology and Psychology. Following the completion of these degrees, Amanda was still unsuccessful in obtaining a spot in the postgraduate program. It was at this stage that she then started the Bachelor of Paramedicine at Monash University. Amanda selected Paramedicine due to the similar aspects between a paramedic and a doctor. Specifically, Amanda wanted to make clinical decisions, utilise knowledge and treat each patient as a holistic person and not a medical condition.

It was in her first year of studying the Bachelor of Paramedicine that Amanda finally was offered a spot on the postgraduate medical course at Deakin University. So, Amanda discontinued the Bachelor of Paramedicine and moved to Geelong to start the Doctor of Medicine. In the final two years of her medical degree, Amanda was placed at Eastern Health to undertake her clinical placement.

Currently, Amanda is in her final year of placement, and will graduate at the end of this year. Amanda's plan and desire following medical school, is to complete two compulsory years of general medicine. Following this, Amanda is keen to specialise in either obstetrics, paediatrics or anaesthetics. The benefit of continuing study is that she will undergo her training whilst still working.

Throughout all of her studies, Amanda has been able to compete in sport at an international level and start a family. Overall, what Amanda has learnt through all of the years undertaking the Bachelor of Science, Biomedical Science, Paramedicine and ultimately the Doctor of Medicine is life is not always a straight and narrow path. Regardless of an individual's career goal, having persistence, passion and determination are key pillars to an individual's career.

# Katie Dean

## LIFE COACH

Katie Dean graduated from Strathcona in 2013, where she thrived in her academic, social and co-curricular life. Katie always believed that school, and succeeding in school, was not only about performing well academically, but also about being deeply involved in all the other activities and opportunities that Strathcona offered. Katie was passionately involved in tennis, badminton, and debating; and also dedicated her time to assist with media projects and social service activities. Her curious mind and passion for people was fostered through the Building Bridges program, where schools with different religions would meet and discuss their experiences with their faith, finding commonalities and understanding. Her desire for travel was also met during a Year 11 trip to the Northern Territory, where exploring nature, connecting to the land and taking in Aboriginal heritage and history fuelled her love of nature, adventure and social justice.

Katie's passion for people, and especially the subject of English, led her to study a Bachelor of Communication at Deakin University. After completing her studies, she landed her first full time position as a Graduate Consultant with ASX listed company, WSP in 2020. During her time at WSP, Katie was promoted to Consultant within her first year, and was also nominated as the Pathways Lead for the Victorian region. Katie ran a committee of 25 fellow employees within Pathways, and managed the professional development of over 400 emerging professionals in Victoria. She organised over 20 in person and online events in 2021, more than any other state that year. Within this year Katie also decided to go alcohol free, and to live a plant-based lifestyle.

In 2022, Katie accepted a position as an advisor within a sector of the Victorian Government. However, this change, becoming sober and a health crisis ended up setting Katie on a new path. She decided to move down to the Bellarine Peninsula, start postgraduate study in life coaching and counselling, and begin working within Allied Health. She did this to align her life with her new outlook and values that had arisen — mental/physical health, connection, adventure and following her intuition.

Katie is now a holistic life coach with her own business, where she supports single women who want to date and love themselves regardless of their relationship status. She lives in Torquay, and is also currently finishing her Master's in Counselling. Katie believes a life well lived is not based on external validation and success, and rather, is based upon internal congruence, and values-based living.

Katie loved her time at Strathcona and looks back on her time there with joy. Katie especially credits the wonderful teachers that she had in her time there, with their endless patience, wisdom, and care — this fun, supportive and heartfelt environment that prioritised pastoral care paved the way in helping Katie truly believe that she could make a difference in the world, that her voice mattered, and in becoming an unstoppable woman.





# Dr Jazz Donaghey

## DOCTOR



Jazz Donaghey graduated in 2014, and from an early age had a love for science and maths at Strathcona, matched only by her dedication to gymnastics. Through her passions she learned time management, teamwork, and adaptability — qualities that have shaped her career journey. Nearing school graduation, Jazz was drawn to the sciences but was undecided on a specific career path. Embracing her fascination with the human body, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Science at Melbourne University, majoring in Anatomy, eager to explore how our bodies work from the inside out.

After two years, Jazz began to feel her ambitions shifting. While her interest in anatomy had grown, she was drawn to a more dynamic academic environment to foster her curiosity. Transferring to Monash University, she pursued a Bachelor of Science with a new focus on Developmental Biology, where she was able to explore the foundations of human development. Jazz earned a place on the Dean's Honours List for two of her three years studying Science at Monash, all whilst volunteering in the Emergency Department at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Jazz had the opportunity to broaden her horizons through an international study exchange at Cambridge University in London, where she was introduced to leading academics alongside talented students from across the globe. The experience proved to be transformative, reinforcing her interest in medicine while also leading to unforgettable travel adventures across Europe and America with Strathy friends.

During this period, Jazz began to set her sights on medical school, but with admissions being fiercely competitive, she also sought hands-on experience that would challenge her intellect and enhance her skills. Jazz joined Deloitte as a data analytics intern, where she experienced firsthand the value of precision, analytical thinking, and a strong work ethic. Her time there reminded her that every step in her journey, whether academic, personal or professional, was contributing to her growth.

Fuelled by coffee and perseverance, Jazz secured a place in Monash University's Medical School. During the years studying medicine she has sought additional learning opportunities at the Royal Darwin Hospital (neurosurgery team), Mansfield District Hospital (rural general medicine) and has presented her research at an international medical conference in New Zealand. Jazz graduated as a doctor in 2023 and was recognised with an Award for Excellence. She has continued to apply the problem-solving skills she cultivated in her earlier academic and professional experiences, and now impacts people's lives in meaningful ways. In addition, Jazz's dedication to gymnastics has never wavered, and she represented Victoria this year in the Women's Artistic Gymnastics National Championships.

Reflecting on her journey, Jazz is excited to see where her future path may lead. She credits her years at Strathcona for instilling the foundational values of curiosity and resilience, qualities that have not only shaped her but made her, an unstoppable woman. Jazz looks forward to embracing new challenges with confidence and remains open to change, knowing that every step forward adds value to her evolving career and personal growth.



# The Coordinators

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN SERVICE

In The Coordinators cluster we honour the unstoppable women who keep everything running smoothly behind the scenes. These dedicated professionals excel in administrative and process-driven roles, ensuring that every detail is meticulously managed. From diligent bookkeepers to efficient law clerks, these women are the backbone of their organisations, mastering time management, digital literacy, and communication. Join us in celebrating the unsung heroes who ensure everything falls perfectly into place.

Shirley Lowthian could not wait to go to Strathcona. In 1929, not long after her fourth birthday, the enterprising little girl with the dark fringe and impish smile took herself to School. Shirley's family lived across Prospect Hill Road at the corner of Wattle Valley Road in Canterbury.

Her older sister, 16-year-old Margery, had been among Strathcona's first students when the school opened just five years previously. In September 1929, Shirley was permitted to don a silky-textured dark-blue uniform and take her place as a kindergarten student. She completed her time at Strathcona in 1940.

Had Shirley's life taken a different path, as she left Strathcona before completing her Leaving Certificate, she thought she may have studied medicine, like two or three other Strathcona girls from that era. Although a few months shy of her sixteenth birthday when she left school, Shirley was dux of her Intermediate year, winning prizes for Biology, Botany and French. These academic successes coupled with a packed extra-curricular timetable: Shirley was a prefect and her blazer pocket was crammed with honours (house colours, school colours) and evidence of her many sporting leadership roles.

Shirley had been a keeper of memories for the entire 1924-1942 cohort. For decades, despite the challenge of locating people in an era with no internet, when married women routinely changed their names, she kept track of her "girls" and penned regular newsletters. Annual reunion luncheons were initially held at Shirley's home



and later the luncheons moved to Strathcona, bringing the original students back to the place where the old house once stood. At these lunches Shirley would proudly present the Balfe Tennis Cup, donated by Shirley, to Strathcona's Senior Tennis Champion and as well as the other tennis cups.

For many years Shirley was involved with the Holy Trinity Anglican Parish in Surrey Hills. Shirley had a close-knit family, with a loving husband Jack, two children Pam and Peter, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Shirley's contribution to the School over many years was so appreciated and she is missed greatly. Shirley passed away peacefully on 7 December 2020 at Hedley Sutton aged 95.

Shirley's love of Strathcona, her contribution to the School and support to foster relationships amongst its alumnae over many decades has always been greatly appreciated. Shirley served the Old Strathcona's Association for many years and now has a Strathcona award, The Shirley Lowthian Award for Citizenship named in her honour.

## IN MEMORY OF Shirley Lowthian

## IN MEMORY OF Joan Bell BEM

Dorothy Joan Bell (nee Balfe) BEM, affectionately known as Joan, commenced her time at Strathcona in the kindergarten year in 1942. She is remembered by her school friends as a good runner.

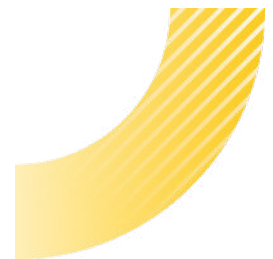
Joan took on the position of Personal Assistant to Mr Reiher, formerly secretary of the Department of Housing and Construction and Director General of Works, in 1967. She had entered the Commonwealth Public Service initially as a typist. When Mr Reiher's departments were combined, he became permanent head of both, and Joan had the job of running two offices — Housing in Canberra and Construction in Melbourne.

This position exposed Joan to the rigorous life of a high-ranking public servant. She witnessed the demanding nature of political life, characterised by late nights and long waits at airports. Her boss worked an average of 80 hours a week, and Joan was expected to match his pace, providing crucial answers to ministerial and departmental questions at a moment's notice.

In 1976 Joan was awarded British Empire Medal (BEM) for public service. This honour highlighted a career marked by diligence, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence.

Until 1976, Joan had lived in Canterbury all her life, with the exception of five years when her father was Crown Solicitor in Canberra. In these years, Joan worked as Personal Assistant to the Principal of what was then the Canberra University College

Sacrifices had to be made throughout her life due to the demanding nature of her job, and Joan had to give up many of the pleasures of normal existence, such as music, sport and relaxation time. Despite the sacrifices she made during her professional life, Joan embraced the opportunity to explore the world in her later years. Until her passing in 2013, she travelled extensively, making up for lost time and indulging in adventures.





Sue Crawford OAM JP completed her studies at Strathcona in 1967, along with her sister Anne who finished in 1972. At Strathcona, Sue was a school Prefect and House Captain of Grenfell in her final year of secondary school and received tennis colours.

Sue has always had a strong, albeit silent, commitment to the community and has tried to follow the outstanding example set by her parents. Sue valued Strathcona's all-encompassing, reassuring, empathic and positive environment.

After completing her teaching qualification, Sue taught at various Primary Schools — all levels including establishing the library in a newly opened school. Sue completed four postgraduate qualifications to refine and develop personal and professional skills. Sue then retired in 1994 to care for her mother.

Sue's early community involvements included volunteering for the Red Cross; coaching junior sporting teams; being a 'badge tester' for Girl Guides; foundation Secretary of the Ferntree Gully Rotaract; supporting children experiencing academic difficulties; and supporting local community members during and after the 1968 bushfires.

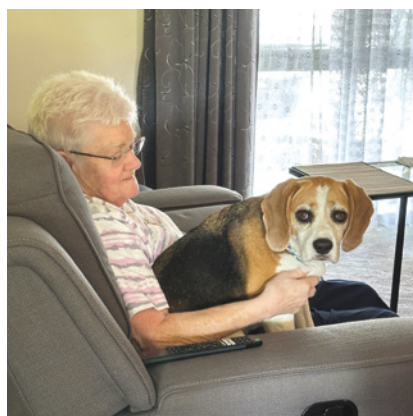
In 1980, Sue was appointed a Commissioner for Taking Declarations and Affidavits. In 1990 Sue was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace, and in 1994 sworn in as a Bail Justice.

Sue became involved in the Honorary Justice environment. Sue participated in information forums for those considering applying for the role plus the training for both roles where she was able to clarify the finer intricacies of each role.

Sue was a member of the Justice of the Peace Reference and Bail Justice Reference Groups. Sue teamed with two of her colleagues to develop training curriculums for future Bail Justice applicants' training. Sue mentors recently appointed Honorary Justices to assist them in their new positions.

Sue met with VicPol recruits and Child Protection Workers to explain the Bail Justice role and process practicalities. Sue volunteered as an Independent Person, a program that provides support for young individuals who are being questioned by police but whose parents or guardians are unable to attend.

Sue is the Secretary of her local Honorary Justices group which offers peer and practical support to local Honorary Justices. Sue established and now coordinates the local Document Signing locations.



Sue's most overwhelming experience of her Bail Justice career was when approached by another customer in a local café. "Are you a Bail Justice?" Sue replied "Yes!" with a churning stomach and heart thumping! The customer replied, "I want to thank you for giving me Bail and the encouragement and the opportunity to turn my life around." The individual explained he was now fully employed, feeling much better about where life was going and now believes is making a positive contribution to the community.

Sue was shocked and most humbled when she received the notification of her nomination for an Order of Australia Medal in 2013.

Sue is most grateful to have had the opportunity to contribute to the Victorian community. She hopes she met the lofty standards of community service her parents demonstrated to her throughout her life.

## Sue Crawford OAM

**BAIL JUSTICE  
& MENTOR**

# Kate Chamley

AUSTRALIAN  
AMBASSADOR



Kate Chamley completed Year 12 at Strathcona in 1997 and feels that her years at Strathcona were formative. At Strathcona Kate made lifelong friends, many of whom are also now part of her professional network and she feels that she developed leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills that Kate draws on every day as an Australian ambassador. Some highlights of Kate's time at Strathcona include amazing camps, Year 9 at Tay Creggan, opportunities to lead both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, and the encouragement she received from teachers and peers as a Year 12 captain. During school Kate was passionate about music, drama, debating and Italian, and Strathcona allowed her to explore these passions in a supportive, nurturing environment.

Upon graduating, Kate spent a gap year in Italy, which opened her eyes to the world and solidified her love of learning languages. These experiences spurred Kate on to complete a Bachelor of Arts (International Studies) at RMIT University and then a Master of Arts (International Relations) at ANU because she wanted to be a diplomat and represent Australia on the world stage.

Kate moved to Canberra to join the public service, first as a graduate at the Attorney-General's Department where she worked on illicit drugs policy, First Nations policy, as a speechwriter to the Attorney-General, and on transnational crime issues.

Kate then went to Bangladesh to work with the United Nations on police reform within the police service. Upon returning to Australia, Kate transitioned into a role with the former Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and then the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Kate's career at DFAT has spanned many areas from national security policy, public administration, to leadership and gender equality, but it is the opportunities to serve overseas as a diplomat that have been some of the most rewarding for her. Kate has served as a diplomat in Pakistan, Kiribati in the Pacific and now as Australian High Commissioner to Mauritius where she is also accredited to Seychelles, Madagascar, and Comoros.

For Kate it is her great honour to have been appointed by the Governor-General as an Australian ambassador. Kate gets to project modern Australia to the world and be a custodian of Australia's relationships in this fascinating part of the Indian Ocean. Her role is dynamic and varied – no day is the same. One day she is meeting with the Mauritian President, the next giving a speech to launch an Australian Government-funded project, the next Kate is assisting an Australian who has lost their passport.

For Kate it is a huge privilege to serve Australia overseas and she will be forever grateful for her Strathcona experience that gave her the foundations for this amazing career.



## Hannah Jude-Smith AM

INTELLIGENCE  
OFFICER

Hannah Jude-Smith AM graduated from Strathcona Girls Grammar in 1998. Living with her mother and stepfather, who served in the army, Hannah was no stranger to moving frequently. She attended 10 schools in 12 years, but Strathcona became her longest educational experience. Immediately, following her graduation, she joined the Australian Defence Force Academy. Drawn to the academy by her stepfather's advice, Hannah saw it as an opportunity to earn a degree while joining the force and embarking on an adventure.

While training for the defence force, Hannah completed a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in History and English building on her strong humanities background. Initially, the relevance of the degree was questioned in relation to an Air Force career, which often draws from engineering, maths or science. However, Hannah found her particular line of work heavily relies on analysis and communication the very foundation of her English degree. This degree ultimately proved to be incredibly beneficial for her career. Hannah was awarded the Commander in Chief's Medal on graduation from the Australian Defence Force Academy.

Since then, Hannah has had a remarkable career in the Australian Defence Force. She has conducted tactical intelligence for air combat, strike, maritime patrol and control and reporting missions, both in Australia and on deployments in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. She has worked in operational intelligence roles in Combined Air and Space Operations Centres, and strategic intelligence roles with the Australian Signals Directorate. In addition to intelligence roles,

Hannah has conducted capability development and strategic planning for the Australian Defence Force, and a representational role in the United States.

Currently, Hannah serves as the Chief of Staff to the Chief of Defence Force. In this role, she supports the Chief, enabling him to command the Australian Defence Force effectively. Hannah runs the small team in his office and ensures he has all the required information and that his intentions and commands are effectively translated. This role not only supports the Chief of Defence Force but also provides Hannah with valuable mentorship. It has given her privileged access to observe how the Chief interacts with the defence force and various government departments.

Hannah credits much of her success to her time at Strathcona. The positive learning environment and the leadership principles she learned at the school have equipped her to navigate the challenges she's encountered throughout her career. The teachers at Strathcona were genuinely invested in the students learning and she found there was a strong sense of community, with the people she met remaining some of her closest friends to this day. Although Hannah initially felt daunted joining a male-dominated military academy, she believes Strathcona instilled confidence in its students, helping her tackle this challenge effectively.

# Steff Fekete

## OPERATIONS MANAGER

Steff Fekete started at Strathcona in 2006 at Mellor House and graduated from Strathcona in 2014. During her time at Strathcona, Steff loved spending time with her friends, participating in House Cup events and applying herself to achieve the best in her studies.

Growing up surrounded by strong independent working women meant that when it was time to kick start her career, she jumped at the chance in 2012 when through a family friend she got a job with McArthur — a recruitment/staffing company that facilitated the casual staffing for Ticketek. Starting as a Box Office Seller for the 2013 Australian Open as her first major event, it didn't take long to be promoted to Advanced Seller, and then Box Office Supervisor towards finishing high school in 2014.

Steff studied an Advanced Diploma of Business (Public Relations) at RMIT and whilst Steff spent time working through her course, she also completed four PR and Marketing internships across major Hotel chains and cosmetic companies in Melbourne and London within the year and a half. Steff during her last



semester was also picked to be part to the Global WIL Tour/competition, working with PR, Marketing and Advertising students from Melbourne (RMIT), USA and Ireland. After a one-week intensive study tour, consisting of three written reports and a pitch to Melbourne City Council, her group won with top marks across all four aspects of the assignment.

Steff was offered a full-time position at Ticketek as a Client Services Coordinator in mid-2017 working on the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Victoria Racing Club, and Blundstone Area. In early 2019 Steff was head hunted by the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) to fill a position on a maternity leave contract in a Ticketing and Accreditation Coordinator role. This role really helped her stamp the path in the ticketing and events world.

Towards the end of her contract at the MCC, Steff was once again headhunted by Ticketmaster and offered a job as a Client Manager which she accepted and has now been at since February 2020.

Steff started three weeks prior to the Pandemic lockdowns commencing and was able to continue working on all sport clients across the country with the focus being the AFL. Once live events were back up and running in Victoria, Steff also took on managing the Australian Open, and the Victoria Racing Club. After nearly three years as a Client Manager, Steff took an opportunity in the Client Solutions team and became Archtics — Solutions Specialist.

At the start of 2024 a new opportunity was presented to Steff, her current role — Operations Manager — League Support. This role sees her managing the AFL and BBL operations nationally within Ticketmaster and alongside key stakeholders — AFL and Cricket Australia.

Whilst Steff's work life is non-stop, she has learnt the importance of work life balance and surrounding herself people who support, uplift and bring out her best.

Steff has also learnt some incredibly valuable lessons since she finished at Strathcona and all are around Respect, Empathy, Integrity, Leadership, and Empowerment, all of which Strathcona engrained in her to make her an Unstoppable Woman.



# The Designers

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN SCIENCE AND  
ENGINEERING

The Designers cluster is dedicated to unstoppable women who apply their knowledge of science, mathematics, and design to construct and engineer groundbreaking products and buildings. Whether they're visionary architects or imaginative food technologists, these women excel in problem-solving, planning, and quality assurance. Join us in celebrating the creative minds who bring ideas to life with precision and flair.

# Emeritus Professor Kerry Landman

PROFESSOR

Emeritus Professor Kerry Landman finished her secondary education at Strathcona in 1970. Reflected in her marks at Strathcona, Mathematics was always her favourite subject. Kerry also enjoyed reading and representing the school in the tennis team. Kerry has fond memories of Joan and Margaret Mellor in Junior School and of her Maths teacher Mrs Gwen Pearse in Senior School.

Following her passion, Kerry obtained her PhD in Mathematics from the University of Melbourne and then spent six years working as an applied mathematician in the USA, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Environmental Protection Agency and Southern Methodist University. She returned to Melbourne to join Siromath, a mathematical sciences consulting firm, before joining the University of Melbourne. She directed the Mathematics-in-Industry Study Group from 1993-1997. Kerry was promoted to Professor in the School of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Melbourne in 2007, becoming the first female mathematics professor in the university's history.

Her research has been devoted to cross-disciplinary research and real-world problems arising in industrial, environmental and biological areas. These contributions have provided major insights that have helped practitioners understand and predict how complex processes interact to produce experimentally observed behaviour.

She has made crucial contributions to a range of fields, including dewatering minerals waste and biological cell migration. For example, Kerry worked for many years with biologists on the embryonic development of the gut's nervous system to understand and help identify the cause of a common birth defect called Hirschsprung's disease.

In recognition of her career contributions to industrial and applied mathematics, in 2014 Kerry was awarded the ANZIAM medal, the premier medal of Australia and New Zealand Industrial and Applied Mathematics Society. In the same year, Kerry was awarded the Strathcona Medal from Strathcona Girls Grammar, in recognition of excellence in a profession and exceptional service to the wider community.



In 2015, after a near 30-year career at The University of Melbourne, Kerry retired from the university. She is now an Emeritus Professor at the University of Melbourne.

In 2019, she was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science.

She has always had a keen interest in all aspects of the arts, including architecture. For the past nine years, she has volunteered at the Robin Boyd Foundation. She leads the volunteer Research and Collections team, cataloguing and digitising their historically significant archive of over 4000 items. She has also curated two of their exhibitions.

Since 2019, Landman has been a board member and helps manage The Institute of Enquiring Minds. The Institute provides free mathematics mentoring and tutoring to improve the mathematics skills of financially disadvantaged high school students.

In 2018, Kerry established the Kerry Landman Scholarship to address the shortage of mathematically trained teachers, who can passionately communicate the beauty and applications of mathematics to encourage, inspire and empower students to succeed. The scholarship supports high-achieving mathematics graduates that demonstrate a passion for education, wish to train as mathematics teachers and enrol in a Master of Teaching (Secondary) at the University of Melbourne.



## Melinda Biggin

### ARCHITECT

Melinda Biggin graduated from Strathcona in 1988 and during her time at Strathcona, loved both Science and the creative Arts subjects. The school provided many opportunities for creative expression from participating in the school musicals, competing in the Melbourne Show, weaving on a large loom at Tay Creggan, to performing in front of the whole school community at the end of year Speech Night. Likewise, the exploration of science was encouraged through entering the Victorian Maths Talent Quest and the Westpac Maths annual competition. In Year 11, Mel was one of the first students in the newly introduced Graphic Design subject which truly ignited an idea of pursuing design further.

A career in architecture seemed a perfect fit. Mel studied Architecture at the University of Melbourne where she learnt the importance of tenacity, risk taking and a good night's sleep. Like her education at Strathcona, the course was balanced between pure design and practical knowledge subjects which are an essential foundation for an architect. Travelling overseas for three months in the middle of the course solidified and deepened her appreciation for architecture's role in shaping communities as well as strengthening her independence. Mel graduated from top of her year with first class honours and two awards — the Nell Norris Scholarship 'Based on all-round merit of the student in fifth year' and the Edward & Penelope Bilson Prize 'For the student in Architectural Design 5 to have shown the most promise in Architectural design, particularly regarding aesthetic content.'

Mel is now an experienced Principal Architect at Studio Polychrome, a newly formed architectural practice whose goal is to create sustainable solutions for people and the planet by employing processes, technology and materials consciously. She has extensive knowledge working on significant community, commercial, health, institutional and high-end residential projects and has worked alongside a variety of stakeholders including Councils, health providers, childcare tenants, community groups and family units. As an all-round architect she is highly proficient in both the creative and technical sides of the design process and has a talent for coalescing site, authority and user requirements into invested outcomes.

Reflecting on her path, Mel credits her Strathcona experience for laying the foundation for her success. The supportive environment encouraged her to explore her interests in both Science and the Arts and develop a strong work ethic to achieve her goals.

# Dr Kate Rickersey

## LAND ADMINISTRATOR

Dr Kate Rickersey (nee Dalrymple) graduated from Strathcona in 1996 after memorable years in gold Gilbert colours and grabbing sporting and travel opportunities where she could while at School. Since then, Kate has completed a number of academic qualifications at University of Melbourne including Bachelor of Arts (Geography) and Bachelor of Geomatic Engineering (First Class Honours) in 2001 and a Doctor of Philosophy (Land Administration) in 2005. During University, Kate got a taste for exploring and working in developing nations. To 'muddy her boots' in her early professional years, Kate participated in a one-year AusAID Australian Youth Ambassador program as a volunteer in Lao PDR 2005/2006. This experience furthered her sense of adventure, resilience and adaptive learning both technically and culturally.

Kate has been engaged in the full cycle of land administration projects using her PhD as a stepping stone that investigated land administration projects as a tool for providing access to land and natural resource rights and addressing tenure issues in developing countries. Joining private company, Land Equity

International in Wollongong NSW upon leaving Laos as a volunteer, her project involvement has ranged from short and long-term technical assistance and capacity building alongside government counterparts, to project design and evaluation missions for development partner agencies. The land administration and governance project work has taken her to countries in Africa, the Middle East, the Pacific and Asia, working continuously with local and international experts. A core area of expertise is developing contextually sound strategies that cater for dimensions of engagement, voice and empowerment for all, in response to land administration reform.

Kate and her then young family moved to Laos in 2014 to take up the Team Leader role on a Mekong Region Land Governance Project, that successfully continues today. After the first four-year phase of the program, Kate returned to Wollongong in 2018, and was appointed as Managing Director for Land Equity International (LEI).

In 2018 Kate was also the recipient of the Strathcona Medal for her service to land management in Africa, Middle East, Pacific and Asian regions.

Kate continues to attend and present at many national and international conferences, including in March 2018 where she took 20 Laos government officials to the 19th Annual Land and Poverty Conference organised by the World Bank in Washington DC, and returned this year in May to present again in two Land Conference sessions at the World Bank.



Kate has had contributed significantly to improving the lives and prospects of people in developing countries over three continents – a clear demonstration of excellence in her field and an exceptional contribution to the wider international community.

Kate now lives near Wollongong where LEI is based, but has spent many years in Laos, where she and her husband raised their two children in their early and impressionable years. Kate feels that her story is not remarkable, it is just a journey hinged on the idea that saying 'yes' opens doors to opportunities that will make your passions grow. Her mind stays open, positive and supportive to those around her as we encounter journeys together.

Be Unstoppable and Say Yes.



Victoria (Torie) Pit left Strathcona in 1997 to pursue a degree in Engineering and entered the public sector workforce a few years later, which she still enjoys today. Her career has included Defence research on armour for Army vehicles, coordinating the future submarine (now AUKUS) research program, leading innovation and academic partnerships programs, STEM outreach and space weather!

What makes her unstoppable? She believes the self-confidence instilled at Strathcona is at her core, which has been reinforced by a Defence Gold Commendation, Museum of Australia Eureka Prize and some wonderful leaders along the way. She knows she has made many mistakes during that time, but says those moments taught her the most and built much resilience.

As if life wasn't busy enough, in her mid-20s Torie was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, which she says carries an enormous mental load, even with the latest technology available for management. However, she doesn't let it get in the way of life and she has since had two children and continues to play hockey — a sport she first took up at Strathcona. She would love to get back to playing music, but is living vicariously through her girls on that front.

Torie still maintains friendships with many Strathcona alumni, who she says are a great source of inspiration and advice. They may have taken very different paths, but each brings their own strengths and perspectives she values enormously. Unstoppable women don't become so by themselves. It's because of the people that surround them at any

moment — advising them, reshaping them, uplifting them, rebuilding them — that they are so. Her most unstoppable memory from her Strathcona days, without question, is Mrs Fendley's "When to Use an Apostrophe" lesson.

Torie is very passionate about encouraging women and people from traditionally underrepresented cohorts to take up careers in STEM and takes any opportunity that presents itself to promote them. Most recently she represented the Bureau of Meteorology at Parliament House in Canberra to showcase its science capabilities to parliamentarians, heads of other government science agencies and Departmental Secretaries. Off the back of the success of this event, she's now planning another event at Parliament House for National Science Week.

Most recently Torie has taken up a position as National Security and Space Partnerships Lead at the Bureau of Meteorology, where she is responsible for a team that delivers global climate intelligence such as water scarcity, food insecurity and other weather phenomena to national security agencies so that they are prepared for events that might lead to civil unrest or climate migration. Her team is also responsible for education around space weather and the Bureau's support to the space flight sector. She thinks being in the know when an aurora is likely to grace our skies is awesome, but it's even better when that insight can ensure our telecommunications, energy, aviation, emergency management and defence sectors can continue operations without impact.

## Victoria Pit

**SCIENCE LEADER  
& MANAGER**



Growing up, Carrie Lambert wanted to be an astronaut. She spent time researching astronaut's career paths, noticing that many started as scientists and engineers. With her curiosity for 'why things are the way they are' and an inherent love of maths, Carrie decided that this could be her career choice (despite not actually knowing any engineers or understanding really what the job entailed).

Her mind made up, Carrie finished at Strathcona in 1997 and went on to Melbourne University, obtaining Bachelors of Physics and Mechanical Engineering as well as a Diploma in Philosophy. Upon graduating, she moved to the UK to work for Rolls-Royce, undertaking its aerospace engineering graduate programme as one of only two female engineers on that scheme that year. A graduate programme was ideal for Carrie, as she was able to experience the breadth of roles within engineering. Carrie undertook many placements working in the UK and Canada, across projects ranging from early-stage research and development, to providing technical support at Heathrow airport for Rolls-Royce engines in service. Carrie discovered that her two passions were around innovation and the environment. Over the next 11 years, she worked primarily on projects designing and developing future technologies to reduce the environmental impacts of aviation, by developing low emissions engine combustors and the company's new energy products — designing carbon capture and storage compressors, tidal turbines and the modelling of future grid systems.

In 2017, ready for a change, Carrie joined Reaction Engines, a small company designing highly novel, reusable space access engines (a bit like SpaceX but with engines that incorporate many aspects of aircraft engines making them more reliable and reusable). To work with new technology dedicated to space access felt like a dream opportunity for Carrie. This new role involved co-leading a team of 100+ engineers running a research and development program. This experience was the toughest but most rewarding of Carrie's career.

After five challenging but fulfilling years developing and demonstrating many of the key elements of a whole new engine, it felt time for a change for Carrie who then moved into the role of Head of Sustainability (still within Reaction Engines). In this role, she helped the company transfer its space technology to other applications such as zero carbon planes and decarbonised energy systems. To Carrie, this was incredibly satisfying, with her career now going full circle.

Carrie is grateful for the Strathcona teaching staff who she believes instilled a sense of pride in working hard to achieve results, without excessive pressure. This environment helped Carrie with the inner confidence to pursue a career in a very male-dominated, sometimes quite challenging field. Carrie is also forever appreciative of the amazing formative friendships made at Strathcona; life-long best friends who have continued to be a source of laughter, wisdom and love despite the years and many miles that separate them.

## Carrie Lambert

ENGINEER





## Alisha McGilp

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Alisha McGilp graduated from Strathcona in 1997 after a tremendously enjoyable Senior School experience. She went on to study a Bachelor of Interior and Exhibition Design at the National School of Design at Swinburne University, which she completed with honours. Following on from her studies, Alisha became a television set designer for the Nine Network (GTV9) and led designs for large-scale public and private corporate events. Her journey then led her full circle, back into her family business of Interior Decoration and Design, McGilp Furnishings. Established in 1952 by Alisha's grandfather Robert, and succeeded by Alisha's father Ian, Alisha was eager to continue as the a third generation of her family business. After 17 years of service, she became director in 2021. Alisha has both continued and expanded the business into full scale high end Interior Design and Decorating services and end-to-end project management. Under the new banner of Studio McGilp, Alisha manages the Interior Architecture, Design and Decoration requirements of her clients across Australia for new builds and renovations.

As a passionate advocate Interior Design, Alisha has been a member of the Design Institute of Australia (DIA) for more than a decade. She lends her voice as a Councillor of the Melbourne Scots society and is an active member on several private committees. With more than 20 years' industry experience, Alisha gives back to her profession on a regular basis, mentoring Interior Design students at RMIT and the Mercer School of Interior Design (now Collarts). She has contributed as an admissions panel member for the Bachelor of Interior Design at Swinburne University. From speaking at careers nights to making

an address with the League of Extraordinary Women, Alisha lives and breathes interior design and continues to support and encourage aspiring young designers who share her passion.

Strathcona provided Alisha with an environment that was equally nurturing and stimulating. The school was small enough to ensure individual attention and focus, whilst having enough students to provide access to a broad, progressive selection of learning opportunities and life experiences.

The personal commitment and investment of teaching staff and specialist coaches instilled values of hard work and dedication, leading to achievements on a personal level as well as recognition and reward in further education, and as an athlete, musician and performer.

Alisha fondly remembers playing the grand piano in Featherstone Hall on many occasions and assemblies. Being encouraged to pursue her love of music and drama ignited a life long passion for performing arts. Alisha went on to play in bands internationally, and continues to develop as a singer/songwriter and classical pianist from her Macedon Ranges based music studio.

The positive impact Strathcona has on Alisha's life reaches beyond graduation. An ongoing connection to the school through alumni events fosters a sense of being part of something 'greater'. Engagement with the broad network of progressive, motivated women provides invaluable opportunities and insights as she continues her life journey as a parent and business owner with passion and gratitude. A dynamically creative, proud Strathconian.

# Marijke Arkley

TEXTILE DESIGNER



Marijke Arkley graduated from Strathcona in 2003 and has worked in commercial textiles as a carpet designer in both Melbourne and Sydney since completing her Bachelor of Arts (Textile Design) at RMIT in 2008.

She finds designing at a large-scale exciting! There are not many roles that allow you to draw into floorplans and create bespoke designs. Collaborating with interior designers to ensure their visions for a space are realised is rewarding. Her designs can be found in hospitality venues across Australia.

Marijke has a wealth of industry experience from working for brands such as Brintons, Feltex, Signature Floors and she has recently joined the design team at Modieus. Her passion and love for constructed textiles and weaving lend itself to carpet design. Marijke won a weaving prize at university that took her to India to see a variety of textiles being produced by hand. This experience really cemented her love of craft and constructed textiles.

Marijke went on to launch a hobby business making handwoven and screen printed homewares, which has allowed her to continue to engage with this textile practice.

She was invited back to RMIT to teach Weave, which she did for five years. Teaching and sharing knowledge was a wonderful experience and one she hopes to do again at some point.

She recently travelled to China to see the production processes first-hand at carpet weaving mills, both machine woven and handtufted carpets. It was a fantastic opportunity that has inspired further product design and development, both key parts of her role.

Marijke has a never-ending list of destinations she would like to travel and this list has continued to grow since her first big trip overseas at 20. Her best friend from Strathcona shared the thirst for adventure, and the two took a year out from studying, worked hard and they enjoyed a fabulous time backpacking

through Europe. Marijke has been lucky to enjoy many more trips since then and took advantage of having Europe on her doorstep whilst she lived in Amsterdam.

The nurturing and encouraging environment that Strathcona offered is something that has stayed with Marijke. Her closest friends are friends she made in high school and it is hard to believe they have known each other for 26 years now. To continue to be surrounded by strong, driven, intelligent, adventurous, hilarious and brilliant women is a privilege and Marijke is forever grateful that Strathcona brought them together. Belonging to this community that sprouted at Strathcona has made her unstoppable.



## Clare Walsh

**PLANNING  
CONSULTANT**



Since leaving Strathcona in 2004, Clare Walsh (nee Warren) undertook an Arts degree at University of Melbourne completing this in 2007. Clare majored in history and absolutely loved her time there. Clare had considered architecture or teaching as career paths whilst at school and during undergrad studies but found herself still unsure of “what next”. In 2008 Clare went on a backpacking trip, and while considering her post-graduate options, Clare started work as a Personal Assistant (PA), using skills gained doing whilst an undergrad student, later progressing to EA to a CEO and CFO of a large business.

In 2010, Clare started a Master’s in Social Science (Environment and Planning) with a planning major at RMIT. This appealed to her interests in architecture, writing, sustainability, policy, business, and the future of Melbourne and its growth. Clare was introduced to town planning issues during her time at Strathcona while her mum, Anne Warren, was a member of the Board. At the time, the School was grappling with the purchase of Mont Calm and navigating complex processes to enable its use and development to become the future Junior School.

Clare continued to work full-time as an EA whilst studying part-time at night, and learnt many useful skills about working in a large organisation with different stakeholders on big projects. During this time Clare’s mum sadly passed away, and Clare begun to channel significant efforts into fundraising for both the Leukaemia Foundation and the Stroke Foundation through the “Run for Anne” team participation in Run Melbourne, and associated fundraisers. Clare and her team raised over \$60,000 over several consecutive years, which she is very proud of.

In 2013, through much networking, Clare was fortunate to obtain a Planning Assistant role at Urbis, one of Melbourne’s largest Property Consultancy firms. Clare has been there 11 years now, progressing through several roles. Clare’s role has a lot of breadth, juggling many projects at a time through various processes, which can be challenging and fast paced, but she loves building relationships with various stakeholders and shaping communities around Victoria.

Highlights have been working with a number of schools achieving key master plan projects, working on the Richmond “Malt” site, on various hospital, aged care and retirement living projects, and the recent “Ground Lease Model” affordable housing developments with Homes Victoria.

In an amazing full circle moment, Clare has been extremely fortunate to work with Strathcona, most recently and notably on the Strathcona Early Years approval. For Clare it has been so rewarding to play a part in the School’s growth.

Clare feels her time at Strathcona brought out her confidence to follow her passions and interests, and to make the most of every opportunity to grow within the community, which has helped shape her into the “Unstoppable” person she is today.

# Emily Byrnes

## CIVIL ENGINEER



Emily Byrnes (nee Harris) completed her time at Strathcona in 2009 and is a passionate civil engineer who consistently challenges herself and strives to develop and expand her skillset, not only in the technical space, but through leadership skills, business and commercial acumen and as a people manager.

After graduating from Strathcona, Emily's keen interest in problem solving, logical thinking and curiosity led her to pursue an engineering degree at Monash University.

Emily's engineering career has been in the design and consulting space working predominantly in the transport sector. At the beginning of her career, she gained opportunities in asset management and structural engineering before discovering her passion within road and highway design. Emily currently works as a Lead Engineer for international design, engineering and advisory company Aurecon where she leads both people and projects within Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

Emily's experience as an engineer has encompassed leading a team of civil engineers on the West Gate Tunnel Project and has more recently been the Civil Lead for a level crossing removal design.

Emily aspires to be a force for creating positive change to the way civil engineers within Aurecon and the broader industry approach sustainability, by leading a transformation and cultural shift within the infrastructure/transport industry as a whole.

In 2022, Emily was one of 25 women selected nationally for the prestigious Women in Leadership Development (WILD) program, which involves participating in workshops, developing business operations knowledge and building relationships with like-minded women in STEM from all over Australia. Through the WILD program Emily became an accredited company director, successfully graduating from the Australian Institute of Company Directors Course. As a result of this program Emily can confidently seek out roles of broader influence in which she can further lead change,

strengthen female representation within engineering, create a positive legacy for future generations and develop mentorship opportunities.

Through her involvement in WILD, Emily was awarded an observership opportunity, which has seen her sit on a board for 18 months, a role that has enabled her to further develop her knowledge of business operations and elevate the presence of women in STEM leadership roles.

Emily is a strong advocate for the engineering industry and key initiatives, including implementing STEM programs in primary schools while also maintaining involvement in the National Civil College Board and Victorian Civil Committee for Engineers Australia.

Emily has established herself as a young leader within the industry, seeking out opportunities to grow her leadership skills and business knowledge to complement her technical engineering skills. Emily was awarded Victorian Young Professional Engineer of the Year in 2022 in recognition of her contribution to civil engineering. Emily's leadership abilities have been leveraged off the foundation she built at Strathcona thanks to the opportunities the school provided to take on roles including Deputy House Captain and Kayaking Captain.

Emily believes that her time at Strathcona provided a safe, nurturing and nourishing space to understand and identify her strengths and passions, enabling her to pursue a career where she can make a difference.

# Sarah Chancellor-Goddard

## CIVIL ENGINEER

Sarah Chancellor-Goddard who graduated from Strathcona in 2013, looks back on her time at Strathcona very fondly and believes it played a big part in shaping who she is today.

After graduating, Sarah eagerly began studying a double degree in a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) and a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance). Sarah fully immersed herself in university life — she volunteered on the Monash Engineering Students' Society committee, spent a semester studying abroad in Malaysia and competed in hockey at the Australian University Games, whilst also playing competitive hockey and cricket locally. In Sarah's view, the joy and personal growth gained through experiences such as these is so important and is incomparable to a focus on studies alone.

Nonetheless, Sarah was a committed student and was proud to achieve strong academic results — not without many challenging moments along the way. She graduated with first class honours and attained numerous unit prizes, completed the Monash Engineering Leadership Program and presented her final year research paper at the Australasian Transport Research Forum.

Unclear on what path she'd like to follow, Sarah's professional career began with undergraduate internships that were key to helping

her find her way. She completed civil engineering internships at SMEC and Engineering Elements, a consulting internship in Infrastructure Advisory at EY and interned abroad in the Innovation & Experience team of software start-up LiveTiles in New York City. Reflecting in depth about her experiences to date and ambitions for the future, Sarah chose to pursue a permanent role in Infrastructure Advisory at EY in Melbourne, excited by the breadth of the work and its tangible impact. Sarah has since worked with public, private and not-for-profit clients across a broad range of sectors, such as transport & urban development, energy, water, sport, arts & culture, health and human services. She enjoys the challenge of working on complex projects of varying scale, from smaller engagements focused on local communities through to large-scale, city-shaping infrastructure.

Eager for another adventure abroad, Sarah moved to Amsterdam, where she currently lives. She is a Manager in Infrastructure Advisory at EY Netherlands, primarily working on projects involving renewable energy and technologies seeking to facilitate circular economy. She is passionate about playing a role in tackling the climate transition and enjoys collaborating with other EY teams across Europe to do so. Sarah is on her workplace DE&I



committee, through which she works on initiatives focused on recruitment, retention and professional development of female staff. She is loving her time in Amsterdam.

Sarah's experiences at Strathcona were extremely influential on her life to date. Her enthusiasm about continuous learning and challenging herself was fostered, while the importance of living a well-rounded life where studies/work are only one element was instilled. She feels the support and encouragement she received to pursue her interests in STEM were important in guiding her career path, particularly given males often form the majority in such industries/environments. Sarah is incredibly grateful for the friendships she gained at Strathcona that are still central to her life today — she couldn't imagine it without them!

## Jane Merrylees

TEXTILE DESIGNER



Jane Merrylees graduated from Strathcona in 2014, and while at Strathcona Jane spent her time nurturing her passion for creativity and imagination with a keen interest in art, design and fashion. She grew particularly fond of the Creative and Performing Arts Centre, a fantastic facility for expanding and improving her artistic skills. This culminated in her proudly accepting the title of Art Captain in her final year at the school, as well as being the recipient of The Barbara Green Memorial Art Award and The J S Head Award for Creative Arts.

Jane continued to further her creative education at RMIT with a three year Bachelor of Arts (Textile Design) course. At the university's Brunswick campus she learnt about the expansive techniques to explore in this field, thriving on the opportunity to combine her current talents for illustration and design with her newly acquired skills in fibre arts. She grew to love the process of forming a repeating artwork, which could be printed onto fabric for a multitude of applications. Furthermore, the introduction of knitting and weaving into her creative practice allowed Jane to fortify her interest in the fashion industry and its many tactile facets.

Throughout her tertiary education, Jane was provided with the chance to engage in industry projects in which students are given design briefs from established fashion and homewares brands, as well as other creative arts establishments. She received first place in the Country Road industry project, impressing the judges with her keen understanding of the brand's target market and subsequent creation of a range of prints fulfilling the

given brief. Jane also received first place in the ACMI industry project, going on to see her 'Moving Image' inspired prints showcased on a variety of products in the ACMI shop in Federation Square, as well as partaking in a two week internship with the design team at ACMI.

Jane graduated from RMIT in 2017 with distinction and immediately entered the workforce as a textile designer for Factory X, a leading Australian fashion retailer housing a number of the country's iconic brands. Over the course of her six years with the company, Jane designed artwork to be printed, knitted, woven, and embroidered onto the clothing and accessories of brands including Gorman, Dangerfield, Princess Highway, Jack London, and Alannah Hill. Working for such a variety of brands allowed her to maintain a sense of intrigue and imagination as each design called for a new artistic approach to satisfy the brief and specific customer.

In 2024, Jane continues to nurture her artistic practice in the freelance industry. Feeling a growing urgency to place emphasis on slow and sustainable design, she has returned to exploring some of the fibre art techniques she learned during university, most notably, the use of domestic knitting machines in conjunction with hand knit and crochet. Jane would not be the Unstoppable Woman she is today, confidently pursuing her creative talents, without the encouragement and wealth of knowledge that she received at Strathcona.



Alex Lotric attended Strathcona from Year 7 to 12, graduating in 2017. In 2022 she completed a 5-year Bachelor/Master's of Pharmacy at Monash University. University life opened a new world for Alex, revealing how her hard work was not only going to put her on a career pathway but enable her to make a positive impact.

In 2023, Alex began her career at the Alfred Hospital where she completed an internship. Staying on at the Alfred Hospital, her internship was followed by position as Foundation Resident Pharmacist. From 2023, Foundation Residency Program has included four rotations. The latest has taken Alex interstate to the Alice Springs Hospital as part of her General Medicine rotation. This has provided Alex with the opportunity to learn a lot about indigenous health and the challenges involved in providing access to primary care to isolated and disadvantaged populations. Alex is pleased to be providing medical pharmacy services to a remote town and in return, she is enjoying great walks, swimming holes and camping trips in this beautiful part of Australia. In the coming years, Alex seeks to narrow her practice to the oncology and haematology space, where pharmacists play a critical role in patient care and innovation.

Some of Alex's proud achievements include being awarded the Pharmacy Gold Medal for achieving the highest score across all units of the undergrad degree in the 2021 graduating class. She is also proud to have presented her intern research project at a national pharmacy conference in 2023.



## Alex Lotric

### PHARMACIST

Alex always had a passion for science subjects, particularly those related to the health field. This blossomed at Strathcona, where she felt empowered to discover her potential. She particularly enjoyed chemistry, a class in which her strong application, inquisitiveness and enthusiasm were nurtured and rewarded.

Alex's years at Strathcona took her from a being bright and enthusiastic girl to a confident high school graduate ready to pursue a challenging degree. The support and reward for effort that she experienced at Strathcona, drove her confidence to pursue a career that matched her intellectual curiosity with her strengths. Alex is a resilient young professional with the drive to make positive change as she looks toward where her career will take her next. Strathcona has been an important part of that journey so far.

## Selina Giles

CHEMICAL ENGINEER



Selina Giles graduated from Strathcona in 2017, and during her time at school enjoyed maths and chemistry and was also the School Music Captain. This passion led Selina to choose Chemical Engineering at University as well as a desire to explore the innovative applications of Pharmaceutical Science. Fortunately, Selina was able to pursue both as a double degree at Monash University.

During her course, Selina studied organic and physical chemistry on a nanoscale and learnt how to formulate pharmaceuticals and studied principles of chemical engineering design, such as mass and energy balances, separation processes, thermodynamics, fluid dynamics, process control, and process design.

Never being one to shy away from a school co-curricular activity, Selina continued this trait at university where she pursued leadership positions, took on experiences that would help her learn more, and strove to be a benefit to her community. Selina worked hard on her communication and teamwork skills and built a network of peers and advisors. It has been an honour for Selina to receive a few awards in recognition of her efforts, including the Sir John Monash Medal for Outstanding Achievement, and being named as one of GradConnection's Top 100 Future Leaders.

During university, Selina completed three diverse internships including with the Victorian Government working on a project assessing the Victorian pharmaceutical industry, with CSIRO's mineral resources team working on a fluid dynamics research project, and finally with Jacobs in the water and wastewater infrastructure engineering team. It was at Jacobs that Selina started to see the importance of water resources in the face of climate change, and the potential of water engineering to have a tangible impact on sustainability and community.

After finishing university, Selina continued with Jacobs as a Graduate Process (Chemical) Engineer. Whilst she is only a few months into this full-time role, Selina has worked on a range of water and wastewater engineering projects. From assessing big picture water supply risk and resilience, sewer odour and corrosion assessments, to water and wastewater treatment plant design and capacity upgrades, there's something new to do every day.

Selina feels that both high school and university weren't always an easy experience, but that with perseverance and thanks to the many friends, family, mentors, teachers, and professors who supported and valued her, she has grown. Selina is so grateful for the career pathway she has begun, which all started when she was encouraged to pursue her interests in maths and science at Strathcona.

# The Generators

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN HOSPITALITY AND  
ENTERTAINMENT

The Generators cluster celebrates careers driven by energy, interaction, and enthusiasm. This section highlights women excelling in retail, sales, hospitality, and entertainment, bringing vibrancy and connection to their work. These unstoppable women are masters of communication, relationship-building, and customer service, making every encounter memorable and impactful. From inspiring sales reps to innovative café managers, discover the stories of Strathcona women who light up their industries with their personality and dedication.

Anne Scott-Pendlebury (nee Pendlebury) left Strathcona in 1964 after what she describes as a wonderful preparation for her life ahead in the performing arts, including an opportunity to appear in the annual School Play, under Mrs Shirley George. With the encouragement of several excellent teachers, Anne concentrated on English, Art, Greek History and Music, subjects that put her in good stead for later years working as a performer.

After leaving School, Anne trained and worked with the Melbourne Theatre Company before moving into television and film for the next four decades as well as gaining a Diploma in Theology from the University of Melbourne.

Singing training, piano studies and dance also equipped her for many varied appearances on stage and screen — in mainly 'classical' roles. The classics involve much discipline and research and as such, Anne is grateful to her parents for their encouragement with her theatrical endeavours — and for allowing her to attend Strathcona, which fostered hard work and a well-rounded education.

Throughout the years, Anne moved into Directing for the stage — which she found greatly rewarding as it involved performance coaching, guiding and encouraging actors — along with giving the written word life on stage in a visual way — telling a story.

A different kind of story telling is involved of course in actually writing for theatre — and several years ago, Anne spent one year writing her own stage adaptation of the much-



## Anne Scott-Pendlebury

ACTOR, DIRECTOR & WRITER

loved Ethel Turner book *Seven Little Australians*. Anne was both pleased and relieved that it was received well and met the approval of the Turner Estate. Creative writing has given Anne a great deal of pleasure throughout her career, including several other works for the stage.

Now, Anne appears occasionally as horrid 'Aunt Hilary' in *Neighbours* in the same role she played many years ago; works part time in a Gallery; and volunteers her services with two organisations in their Archives Departments.

For Anne, her very happy secondary years at Strathcona really prepared her for all her various career and study choices over the years.

Anne's best advice to all Strathcona students is to concentrate and work hard at the subjects you love and don't fret over the subjects you are not strong in. You can't be good at everything!



Kathryn Morrison arrived at Strathcona as an overwhelmed 13-year-old and left after completing Year 12 in 1981, with Strathcona guidance helping Kathryn to discover her true passions.

The Kathryn who might one day be singing centre stage at the Sydney Opera House was beyond her youthful dreams, but Strathcona provided her the time and space to indulge, explore and grow her passion. She joined choirs, sang madrigals and participated in school musicals with unfettered enthusiasm. Kathryn's love of music was encouraged by her inspirational mentor, Mrs Jean Harriet, a kindly, passionate educator who planted the seed of thought that anything was possible.

After Year 12, never having taken a private singing lesson, Kathryn went down the seemingly more secure career route of computer programming; only then did she have funds to further her musical studies. This ember of passion would not be denied nor silenced so at the age of 24, Kathryn courageously auditioned for the Victorian College of the Arts and was accepted. She completed her classical singing music education and then went on to complete a Diploma of Education at Melbourne University.



Finally realising that she indeed needed to perform, Kathryn auditioned for Opera Australia and was accepted, thus commencing a ten-year career as a professional singer. A feeling of déjà vu ensued as Kathryn walked into a rehearsal room on that first day feeling just the same as a young Year 7 girl. But this Strathcona girl wasn't to be denied; no the fire was lit! A mountainous trajectory of learning and perfecting skills followed, with Kathryn becoming fluent in three languages (Italian, French and German) and perfecting sight-reading. The learning curve was daunting, the speed of memorising of music, libretti and stage directions was tackled lightning fast. Initially it was a very challenging time but having achieved her dream, Kathryn worked hard to become a respected professional.

## Kathryn Morrison

**SINGER &  
ARTIST MANAGER**

After ten years of continually learning new repertoire (usually four operas by memory at one time in two to three different languages), Kathryn was ready to move on to the next phase of her career, returning to Melbourne and opening her own business as an international artist manager for opera singers. Kathryn notes that her much-respected Strathcona mentor, Mrs Harriet showed her that it her time to pass on knowledge, skills and encouragement to others.

Strathcona gave Kathryn the space and confidence to follow her path and she is extremely grateful for the positive, supportive environment Strathcona provided, as she battled her way through the insecurity of teenage-hood, to a very fulfilling adulthood.

## Siân Rutherford

JEWELLER



Siân Rutherford (nee Colman) describes Strathcona as her happy place, where core memories were developed. At Strathcona from 1974 to 1983, Siân focused on sport, drama and music with dedicated staff providing many activities to explore. Acapella Choir was Siân's greatest love and she also felt privileged to be able to take part in school productions, with being chosen to play "Brigitta" in *The Sound of Music* (Year 5) as a standout. The encouragement and care from the senior girls involved (one of whom was Janet Costello!) was particularly memorable.

Siân was in the swimming squad during her senior years and was elected Vice House Captain of Findlay in Year 12, noting that the House Competitions were so much fun to organise!

There were particular teachers who added to her positive experience at Strathcona. Mrs Joyce Brown OAM instigated Siân's intense love of netball, playing even into her 50s. Mrs Brown was so encouraging and even used Siân and another student as photographic illustrations in her book about netball for juniors. Mrs Brown, Mrs Dorothy Pell (Head of Junior School), Mrs Dalziel (Year 6) and Miss Scott (Maths Year 11) were models of strong women who achieved in their field but also instilled a confidence that Siân didn't naturally possess. They taught her to never give up. Siân's faith is the most important part of her life, and it was nurtured due to the leadership of Mr Ken Lyall, the Principal and Mrs McMaster, the Chaplain.

Strathcona supported home and church life and helped keep Siân on the path she has always followed. She found herself guided into primary teaching, but the next few years involved a few attempts at finding her fit.

Married to Wesley Rutherford in 1987 and starting a family in 1992, Siân realised that she wanted to be a full-time mum. "It was the most fulfilling career choice for me!" She describes her role as "The CEO of an organisation which developed young people to become leaders in the next generation".

Siân's time at Strathcona helped her to believe that every woman can thrive and be unstoppable in the space they choose.

With her children independent, she and her husband travelled extensively, learning the skills of buying, selling and creating jewellery and growing a family business. They are the Directors of 3rd generation family-owned Rutherford Jewellery with stores in the Paris end of Collins Street and Burke Road in Camberwell. They source the best antique and estate pieces from around the globe and create fine, high-end jewellery using gems and pearls. With over 70 years of relationships, built on integrity and trust, Rutherford is a respected landmark in the jewellery industry and a destination of choice for thousands of clients around Australia.

Siân has four amazing, successful children with wonderful spouses, is the granny of three little ones and is a proud Strathconian — an Unstoppable Woman.

Jo Stanley completed her time at Strathcona in 1990, and after falling in love with theatre and performance at school (and as a VERY proud Grenfell Drama Captain), Jo made her way through a Theatre Studies degree at Monash University, to find herself straddling two careers: by day, a Theatre Producer and Venue Manager, and by night, a stand-up comedian. It was an easy mix, because Jo had a passion for both making theatre and supporting others to create their theatre dreams, while the combination of the adrenalin of live performance, the joy of making people laugh and the exploration of words and writing made comedy an instant love.

Jo's live performance career has spanned 30 years, and included touring nationally and writing, producing and performing her own shows for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival over many decades.

It was after seeing one of these shows, in a dingy pub in Collingwood, that the Content Director from Fox FM offered Jo and her then comedy partner, Jodie J Hill, a chance at radio. After learning the craft of radio in the graveyard shift, they were given their own show — 9.00am to midday weekdays. Radio had never been on Jo's radar as a career option, but the opportunity was enormous, so she (somewhat reluctantly) gave up her day job for the world of commercial radio. It was to become an extraordinary 16 years of Jo's life.

She spent 10 years as one half of the *Matt and Jo Show*, setting records with a remarkable six consecutive years at number one, and made her mark with another number one *breakfast show with Jo and Lehmo*. In 2017, she joined *The House of Wellness* TV on Ch 7 as co-host, an impressive addition to her already long list of TV credits.

Her love of writing has never left her however, and Jo has written an enormously popular regular column in the *Sunday Life Magazine* for over a decade. She is also the creator of the *Play Like A Girl* kids' book series. Her podcast credits include *Best of You* for the House of Wellness, *Pod of the 3rd Age* for Ryman Health, and *A to Be* with Mimi Kwa. Jo's performance style, which is heavily influenced by her stand-up comedy roots, makes her a much sought-after MC and speaker.

But perhaps the most rewarding of Jo's roles is her innovative and ground-breaking startup, Broad Radio. Utilising her vast media experience, Jo is building Broad Radio to be Australia's first radio network for women, by women, and a platform that will amplify the full diversity of women's voices and stories.

Jo is passionate about mindfulness and meditation, and its profound benefits for mental health. She is also an advocate for women's and girls' health and gender equality. In support of these issues, Jo is a patron for Lighthouse Foundation, a patron for Wellsprings for Women, and an ambassador for Left Write Hook and Fitted for Work.

## Jo Stanley

RADIO PERSONALITY  
& CEO



# Simone Lewis

TRAVEL LOGISTICS  
MANAGER



Since graduating from Strathcona in 1999, Simone Lewis's journey has been anything but conventional. While she may not have thrived in the academic subjects, her true passions were in sports and friendships during her time at school. Her parents were always there, supporting her every step of the way, driving her to various sports events and casual work at the local bakery, nurturing her love for competition and camaraderie.

Simone's passion for travel ignited early on, initially aspiring to be a flight attendant. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts to enter that field, she pivoted to hospitality while studying for her degree in Tourism Management. What began as a practical choice turned into a five-year journey that allowed her to travel the globe multiple times.

Her love for music was another constant in her life, and upon returning home after adventures in Central and South America and a year spent living and working in London, she embarked on a career at Flight Centre. During her time there, she excelled in various roles whilst taking advantage of domestic

and international educational opportunities, expanding her industry knowledge and drive to succeed. After three and a half years, a serendipitous connection in the industry opened the door to a new opportunity. A former manager from a pub she had worked at, invited her to join Future Entertainment as their Travel Touring Manager. This moment proved that in the entertainment world, it's sometimes "not what you know, but who you know."

Simone's first major project was coordinating a tour for The Wombats, marking their inaugural tour in Australia. This success was quickly followed by the logistics of Summadayze and Future Music Festival, where she managed the travel arrangements for up to 260 artists, DJs, and event staff.

After four years managing a small entertainment travel business, Simone took maternity leave in 2016 and made a pivotal decision: she would establish her own company, On the Road Travel Group. With her extensive experience and invaluable contacts in the music industry, she set out to create a successful venture. Today, her renowned past and current clients include Guy Sebastian, Queen + Adam Lambert, Teskey Brothers and Christine Anu, among many other local and international acts.

Looking back, Simone credits Strathcona with shaping her into the unstoppable woman she is today. The discipline, values, and belief instilled in her during her high school years have proven immeasurable in her personal and professional life. Her journey is a testament to the power of following one's passions and the importance of perseverance.



## Amy Tcheupdjian

CELLIST



Amy Tcheupdjian graduated from Strathcona in 2005 with a passion for music. In 1993, Miss Joan Mellor and little Prep student Amy buried the school time capsule in the Tay Creggan grounds at the Strathcona Fair. This time capsule was opened as a part of our Centenary celebrations this year.

After watching her sister play the cello and being attracted to the sound and beauty of the instrument, Amy began playing cello at the age of four and has since has been actively involved in performing with many ensembles; including The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria.

Amy is currently based in New York City and completed her Professional Studies Diploma at Mannes School of Music in 2016. In 2011 she was awarded the Allan's Music Prize and the Monash Hiroyuki Iwaki Orchestral Scholarship. Amy performed as a soloist in Carnegie, Weill Hall in 2015. Other performances throughout her career have included; 'Music in the Round' Concert Series, 'Emerging Artist' series, 'Timeless Concert' Series, as well as being a frequent performer on 3MBS radio Australia. Throughout her career, Amy has toured internationally with various ensembles throughout Scandinavia, Italy, Brazil, and Australia. Amy frequently performs and teaches throughout NYC.

For Amy, Carnegie Hall was her most memorable performance. As for any musician from all over the world, Carnegie Hall is the one worldwide venue which holds the most weight, and after growing up looking up to those who have performed in this venue, being able to share the same stage was extremely rewarding and exciting for her.

In addition, Amy has been the Artistic and Program Director at the Noel Pointer Foundation for music education in NYC public schools, as well as in-foundation classes and ensembles in their Brooklyn location. Amy has also worked on film music where she has immersed herself into this sector of the music industry and has found the music to be so refreshing and enjoyable. Being able to replicate emotions into music for Amy is one of the most powerful feelings and she has absolutely loved working on projects like this throughout the years.

Amy is an active teacher and performer. Teaching both the cello and violin, Amy currently teaches private lessons in person and online. She is also a string Teaching Artist based in public schools throughout Brooklyn and Manhattan. Teaching is a passion for Amy, and she has seen many students accepted into prestigious universities, high schools and festivals. Amy has come a long way on her musical journey and is looking to keep building on it for years to come.

# Victoria Wood

VOCAL DIRECTOR  
& TEACHER



Victoria Wood completed her time at Strathcona in 2006 and is now an accomplished voice teacher and vocal director specialising in contemporary, musical theatre, and jazz styles. With over a decade of experience, she uses a student-centred, health-focused approach to support adolescent and young adult voices. Her teaching philosophy focuses on long-term vocal development while fostering artistic growth and self-expression. Victoria earned a Master of Music (Performance Teaching) from The University of Melbourne and was awarded the prestigious Monash Jazz Music Scholarship for her undergraduate studies at Monash University.

Victoria's passion for the performing arts was nurtured at Strathcona, where she was active in school musicals, bands, and choirs. From playing saxophone in Stage Band to singing on-stage in *Bye Bye Birdie*, the opportunities to perform with like-minded students were always a highlight. These formative

experiences showed her how music and theatre can build community, boost confidence, and inspire excellence — values she now centres in her teaching.

From 2009 to 2019, Victoria served as Vocal Director for the Strathcona Senior School Musicals, working closely with Director Jason Parker. Her efforts earned her a Lyrebird Award nomination for Best Musical Director, and the 2019 production of *The Little Mermaid* won the award for Best Ensemble. Through her decade-long leadership, Victoria formed strong connections within the Strathcona community. She directed the Old Strathconians' *Cabaret* from 2011 to 2013, a showcase that kept alumnae connected through the performing arts.

In 2018, Victoria joined Strathcona's Instrumental Music staff, teaching individual vocal lessons and directing the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble. Her deep connection to the school inspired her to compose '*by the maple tree*' for Strathcona's

Centenary Music Concert, a piece celebrating the school's sense of community and the lasting friendships formed as a student. Drawing from her own experiences, the song uses the maple tree at the heart of the Senior School campus as a metaphor for the strength, growth and resilience of Strathcona students.

Beyond her work at Strathcona, Victoria has taught at several private schools in Melbourne, runs a successful home studio, and serves as Vocal Producer for Starbound Musical Theatre, where she helps young performers prepare for careers in the arts. Her work with Starbound provides opportunities for aspiring professionals to learn from industry experts in a supportive environment.

In 2025, Victoria is launching Reverb Vocal Ensemble, an innovative program designed to empower young women through music. Blending the structure of a choir with the interactive format of a masterclass, this ensemble will focus on contemporary performance techniques, artistic musicianship, and collaborative feedback. The initiative will provide a space for young women to explore their musical identities, develop new skills, and form meaningful connections through shared musical experiences.

Victoria's dedication to performing arts education and community-building was shaped by her time at Strathcona and continues to inspire her students. She shows how music can encourage self-expression, build lasting connections, and make a real difference in young people's lives.



# Celebrating Generations of Strathcona Women.





To celebrate Strathcona's Centenary year, alumnae from families with a proud tradition of multiple generations attending the School were invited to take part in a special photoshoot. This photo captures the essence of our ongoing legacy, showcasing the strong connections and shared history that continue to shape the Strathcona community.





# Naomi Johnson

FLAUTIST & PHILANTHROPY MANAGER



Naomi Johnson graduated from Strathcona in 2007, followed by her sister in 2009. Naomi was a bit of an all-rounder at Strathcona, but her real passion was music and playing the flute, particularly in chamber ensembles.

After school, she completed a Bachelor of Music and Master's of Music in Music Performance at The University of Melbourne, and during this time became increasingly drawn to contemporary classical music and working with composers to create new works for today.

In 2015, after a year of travel and further study in Europe, she was invited to join the Music Programming team at ABC Classic in Sydney. She became an active voice in shaping the sound of the network and saw a clear need to increase the on-air representation of female composers.

During her time at the ABC, Naomi is incredibly proud that female composers went from just 2% of average monthly airtime to an average of 17% in 2022. She has spoken about this change process at arts conferences around Australia, and in 2022 her paper on the topic was accepted as a chapter in the book *A Century of Composition by Women: Music Against the Odds*.

Strathcona instills in young women the fundamental importance investing in both community and the change that one wants to see in the world. Seeing the effects of the COVID pandemic on the Australian arts industry prompted Naomi to further study. From 2022 to January 2024, she completed a Master's of Business (Arts and Cultural Management) at Deakin University, with the goal of enabling greater long-term sustainability in the music and arts. This led to a role in arts fundraising with the Opera Australia Capital Fund, which supports the future of opera in Australia.

Another highlight of Naomi's time at Strathcona was kayaking, which she took up in Year 9 and has now competed in for most of the last 20 years! After all the thrills of paddling the Murray Marathon as part of the Strathy team, Naomi and her sister Sophie teamed up for and won the 202km Murray Half Marathon in 2012. When Naomi moved to Sydney, the pair teamed up for major ultramarathons across both states, including the non-stop 111km overnight Hawkesbury Canoe Classic. In 2019, Naomi qualified for the Australian Canoe Marathon National Team in women's K2, finishing 12th at the World Championships in China, and then set a new all-time women's record for the Hawkesbury Classic the following week at 9 hours 27 minutes. Through COVID she gained her Paddle Australia coaching qualification, and she now balances competition with coaching a mixed-ability squad at her club in Sydney and volunteering on the National Marathon Technical Committee.

Naomi continues to play flute and work with composers. She performs regularly with Sydney-based new music ensemble The Music Box Project and won an APRA Art Music Award for Excellence in Experimental Music with the group in 2020.



# Megan Hopkins

DIGITAL CONTENT PRODUCER



Graduating from Strathcona in 2011 Megan Hopkins was unsure what she wanted to pursue as a career; what was glaringly obvious, was her strong passion for country music. Megan further studied earning a Bachelor of Business Information Systems from Monash University and began working for an IT company. Soon realising IT wasn't for her, Megan landed a role in the entertainment industry at Channel 9. Loving the fast-paced media environment, it wasn't long until Megan realised pivoting from television to music was the end goal but getting her foot in the door would be tricky.

In 2019 a life changing opportunity arose in the form of the Rob Potts International Exchange Scholarship. The comprehensive work-experience program designed to expose individuals to various parts of the music business provides international industry connections and experiences to young professionals from Australia and the United States. After a lengthy application process Megan was the selected recipient for Australia by the CMA (Country Music Association) in Nashville, Tennessee.

Unfortunately, just prior to this beginning the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and the scholarship was suspended indefinitely. Devastated but undeterred to let this stop her, Megan created online blog *Mates of Country* where she'd champion country music via interviews, social media and playlisting, further building upon her network and knowledge. The CMAA (Country Music Association of Australia) took notice and asked Megan to join the VIP Judging Panel for the Golden Guitar awards. VIP Judges are carefully selected from the industry

including artists, record companies, media, broadcasters, and other industry professionals. This indicated to Megan she was starting to make waves in the scene and to continue hustling and by November 2021, Megan was sought out by the KIX Country Radio Network (ARN) to be an on-air announcer and digital content producer.

Surprisingly, in 2023 the CMA reconnected with Megan offering her to take part in a revamped internship in place of the scholarship she received but never undertook. No convincing needed, Megan grabbed the opportunity with both hands and dived in, meeting and hosting key players in the music industry from the US, Canada, UK, Germany, South Africa and Sweden. The whirlwind experience left its mark on Megan and those she made connections with. Her impact and efforts were not only recognised but appreciated so much so that Megan was asked back in 2024 by the CMA International Relations & Development team to run events and connect all international guests attending CMA Fest 2024.

These experiences led Megan to be a panellist on the Sounds Australia panel *A Realistic Look At Making It Internationally* at the 2024 Tamworth Country Music Festival. As one of the panel of experts in the country music space, Megan spoke to established and up-and-coming artists providing them a realistic look at what it takes as an Australian artist to tap into the global market and build an international career.

Life throws you challenges, but throughout her years at Strathcona qualities like resilience and persistence were engrained into Megan making her an unstoppable woman.

Kaiva Kaimins graduated from Strathcona in 2013 and during her time at the school she had the privilege of holding the position of School Art Captain. This role not only ignited her passion for the arts but also instilled in Kaiva the essential skills and values that have guided her throughout her career. The responsibility of leading and inspiring fellow students taught her the importance of teamwork, resilience, and the ability to bring out the best in others.

Kaiva was always encouraged to think outside the box, challenge conventions, and embrace her individuality. Kaiva feels the school's nurturing environment allowed her to explore her creative instincts and push the boundaries of what was perceived as traditional art. This foundation provided Kaiva with the confidence and freedom to pursue her artistic vision without fear of judgment.

Since graduating, Kaiva has embraced her role as the founder and creative director of LADYGARDEN and LADYGARDEN.WORLD. Flowers have become Kaiva's canvas, allowing her to bring impactful visuals and memorable experiences to life. Through this non-traditional aesthetic, Kaiva has strived to challenge the boundaries of floristry, setting the stage for innovative designs that have caught the attention of clients such as Gucci, Netflix, and Dior.

In 2024, Kaiva's dedication and innovative approach to the world of art and culture was honoured with a coveted placement on the Forbes 30 under 30 List in the Art and Culture section. This recognition was not just a personal achievement but a testament to the impact of thinking beyond limitations and weaving creativity into every aspect of business and life.

One of the most gratifying aspects of Kaiva's Journey has been her commitment to fostering a sense of community and empowering others. Building upon the desire for connection and learning, Kaiva has created Ladygardenworld, an educational platform that celebrates creativity and uplifts the community. Through LADYGARDEN.WORLD, Kaiva strives to inspire aspiring creatives and provide a platform for their growth and development.

Looking back, Kaiva firmly believes that her high school experiences at Strathcona have been instrumental in shaping her into the unstoppable woman she is today. The education Kaiva received, combined with the values of perseverance and self-belief that were instilled in her, have been the driving forces behind her success.

Kaiva encourages all Strathcona alumnae, and anyone with dreams in the creative field, to embrace their individuality and pursue their passions with unwavering determination. Kaiva encourages us to continue to break boundaries, challenge norms, and empower the next generation of unstoppable women.



## Kaiva Kaimins

FLORIST

## Rhea Gotsis

ENTREPRENEUR  
& DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER



Since leaving the nurturing grounds of Strathcona in 2014, Rhea Gotsis' journey has been both diverse and rewarding. After completing her studies, Rhea pursued a Master's in International Relations, a decision driven by her deep curiosity about global affairs and a desire to understand the intricate dynamics shaping our world. This academic journey was instrumental in broadening Rhea's perspective, yet she was still navigating what truly sparked her passion.

During this period of self-discovery, Rhea ventured into various roles, each providing valuable experiences and insights. However, it was the entrepreneurial leap with her startup, Traxi, that truly ignited a fire within Rhea. Traxi, a tech-driven initiative focused on courier solutions for small businesses, allowed Rhea to blend innovation with practicality. The journey was challenging but immensely rewarding, culminating in several accolades that recognised the teams efforts and impact in the industry. These awards were not just personal achievements but a testament to the power of resilience and creativity.

While Traxi was a significant milestone in her youthful 20s, Rhea soon realised she craved new challenges and wanted to explore a field she was genuinely passionate about. This led Rhea to the travel industry, a sector that resonated with her love for meeting new people and bringing further independence in her life as a Business Development Manager for Flight Centre Corporate.

Working in travel has been a dream come true for Rhea, allowing her to combine her professional skills with her personal passion for adventure. It has been an exhilarating experience, filled with opportunities to create memorable experiences for others, while fulfilling her own wanderlust.

In addition to Rhea's work in the travel industry, she felt the need to pursue entrepreneurial interests, further leading her to launch a life coaching business called HerSparkAU in 2024.

This initiative is very meaningful to Rhea because it focuses on empowering young women.

Through HerSparkAU, Rhea aims to provide the guidance, wisdom, and support needed to navigate each individual's journey, discover passions, build confidence, and achieve their dreams. Rhea has always believed in the power of mentorship, and she is eager to share her experiences and knowledge with the next generation of leaders.

Reflecting on her own journey, Rhea is deeply grateful for the foundation Strathcona provided her. The values and education Rhea received has been the cornerstone of her personal and professional growth. She is excited about the future and remains committed to inspiring and supporting other leaders as they forge their own paths.



# Olivia Glen

## ENTREPRENEUR

Since graduating from Strathcona in 2015, Olivia Glen's journey has been a testament to the pursuit of passion in her personal and professional life. Armed with determination and a thirst for knowledge, Olivia delved into the realm of fitness, completing various courses including Cert IV in reformer and mat work pilates, followed by CrossFit level 1, STRONG Pilates Academy and Concept2 Rowerg. With each certification, Olivia not only expanded her skill set but also sharpened her ability to inspire and empower others on their fitness journeys. Over the last nine years, Olivia had the privilege of sharing her expertise as a Pilates instructor, guiding individuals towards stronger versions of themselves.

Amidst the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the COVID-19 lockdown, Olivia embraced the opportunity to channel her creativity and passion for cooking. The result was "Balance with Liv," her very own cookbook—a labour of love that encapsulated her essence of holistic wellbeing. Filled with wholesome yet easy-going recipes, practical cooking tips, and insights into finding balance amidst chaos "Balance with Liv" emerged as a glimpse of hope in uncertain times, empowering readers to cultivate resilience and joy in their kitchens and beyond.

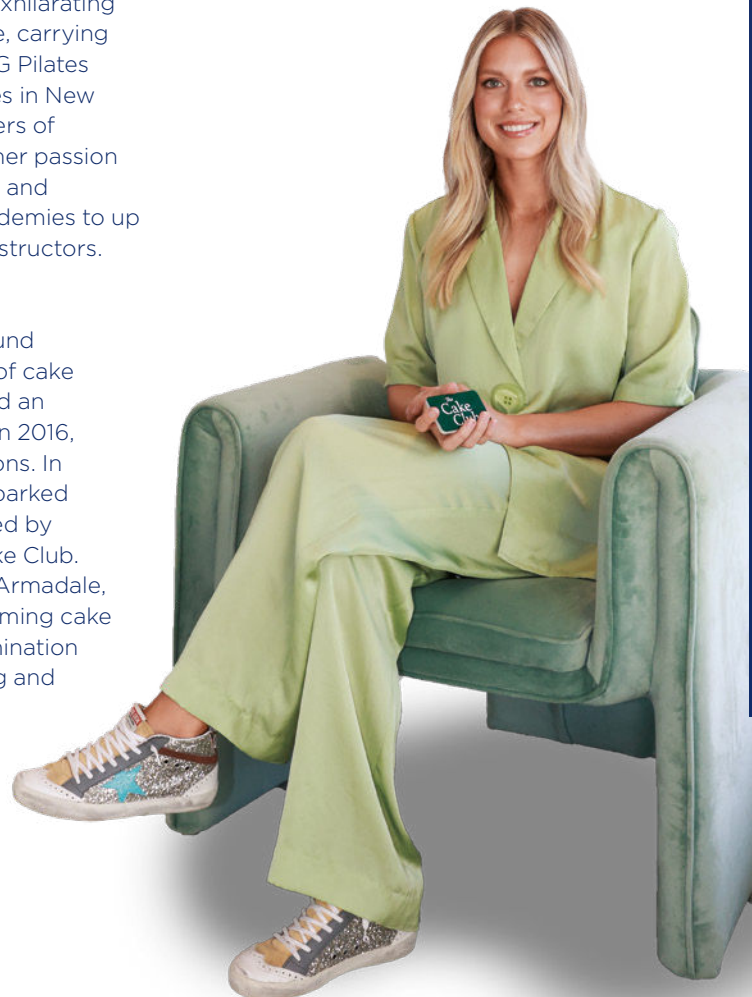
As a Lululemon Armadale store ambassador, Olivia has had the privilege of not only representing a brand with empowerment and community but also fostering genuine connections within the vibrant Armadale neighbourhood. Through collaborative events, workshops, and initiatives, Olivia has worked alongside a diverse team of ambassadors and community members to create a welcoming space where individuals can discover their passions, pursue their goals, and connect with other like-minded individuals.

In the midst of culinary pursuits and her ambassador role with Lululemon, Olivia embarked on an exhilarating journey across the globe, carrying the torch of the STRONG Pilates method. From busy cities in New Zealand to remote corners of Australia, Olivia shared her passion for movement, strength, and community, leading academies to up and coming STRONG Instructors.

Simultaneously, Olivia's entrepreneurial spirit found expression in the realm of cake making. Olivia developed an at-home cake business in 2016, crafting delicious creations. In August 2023, Olivia embarked on a new chapter, marked by the inception of The Cake Club. Situated in the heart of Armadale, on High Street, this charming cake shop emerged as a culmination of her passion for baking and entrepreneurial vision.

Here, amidst the aroma of freshly baked treats and the buzz of satisfied customers, she found a platform to showcase skills to a wider audience.

The journey from student to entrepreneur has been characterised by challenges and triumphs, setbacks and successes. Each experience, whether in the studio guiding clients through Pilates or in the kitchen perfecting recipes, has contributed to Olivia's growth as a professional and as an individual. Her career journey since leaving Strathcona has been a testament to the transformative power of unstoppable passion and purpose.



# The Informers

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN EDUCATION  
AND BUSINESS

The Informers cluster celebrates unstoppable women who provide vital information, education, and business services, shaping minds and guiding decisions. From influential teachers and savvy accountants to insightful policy analysts and dedicated solicitors, these women are the architects of understanding and progress. Celebrate the thought leaders who use their communication, creativity, and research skills to enlighten and empower.

## IN MEMORY OF

# Evelyn Powell OAM

Miss Evelyn Powell OAM completed her time at Strathcona in 1942.

Her recounting of her career working with children with physical disabilities is of historical and political interest and spans a time of change in community and government attitude to the disabled in society. Evelyn was born with Cerebral Palsy and her life has been an inspiration to many.

After working for the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria for some time Evelyn had the opportunity to study with the Mental Hygiene Authority of Victoria, an 18-month course in July 1957-58.

In 1959, Evelyn went to Adelaide and begun working in the Woodville home owned by the Spastic Centres of South Australia Inc (SCOSA), as a kindergarten and then school teacher. This organisation provided a range of supports to children and adults with disabilities including medical services, splint making, accommodation with palliative care and nursing home services. Initially it focused on people with cerebral palsy.

The school area (known as the "Miss Australia Wing") included physio, O.T. and speech pathology with whom Evelyn always worked closely. The Education Department took over the school in 1969.

Evelyn undertook study leave in 1972 and 1974 and then retired in December 1985, after being at Woodville for 27 years. The James A. Nelson Centre was opened in December 1975 — the school was then called the James A. Nelson School.

In July 1985, Evelyn was made "Companion of Rostrum" and on Australia Day 1986, Evelyn was granted the O.A.M. (Order of Australia Medal), which she received from the Queen on the Royal Yacht Britannia on March 13th for service to the welfare of children with physical disabilities.

Evelyn Powell's dedication to improving the lives of children with disabilities like her own, stands as a testament to her invincible spirit and firm commitment. Her work not only transformed the lives of many but also paved the way for more inclusive and compassionate societal attitudes towards disability.

# Margaret Fendley

TEACHER & AUTHOR



Mrs Margaret Fendley (nee Haines) is now proudly in her 90s; her life story has been linked to Strathcona for almost 80 of those years. As she was known then, Margaret Haines started at Strathcona in 1945 after winning a full scholarship. The principal at this time was Miss Dora Featherstone, whom she remembers fondly as 'Aunt Dora'. After studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Melbourne, Margaret became a teacher at the School and later a parent to her daughter, Anne Fendley, who also became a teacher in the Junior School at Strathcona.

In 1984, Strathcona's sixtieth anniversary year, Margaret was among Strathcona's longest-serving staff members when the principal at that time, Mr Ken Lyall OAM, proposed that she write a history of the School. Margaret was granted just two terms – part-time – to research and write Strathcona's history, deciding to structure the book around the achievements and character of each of Strathcona's successive principals. The book, *A School on a Hill*, was published in 1986 and is a much-loved Strathcona treasure, with numerous reprints. Margaret retired from Strathcona

in 1997 but has remained essential to our community. Margaret loved the students and is forever thankful for the gift Strathcona gave her to study and work with women who embraced the life of the mind.

Margaret contributed innumerable creative initiatives in the development of our school for over 30 years of teaching C.E., English and History, from 1964 to 1997. Staff and students have learned much from her. Her strong sense of vocation, breadth of knowledge and scrupulous attention to detail have enriched classes and safely navigated thousands of girls. With intelligence and compassion, she studied and accommodated the needs of students as Year 12 Coordinator, and they responded with loving appreciation of her warmth and understanding.

Margaret's integrity in maintaining the spirit and high standards of Strathcona is unique and remains our touchstone. We are grateful for her generous time and help in her role of Head of English, as she guided new staff through the vicissitudes of curriculum and students in exploration of literature and taught them to esteem correct English usage. She maintains genuine close friendships with many of her classmates, colleagues, students and their parents from more than 50 years' association with Strathcona. Margaret Fendley embodies the spirit, history and heart of Strathcona.



Prue Leggoe OAM (nee Turnor) completed school at Strathcona in 1963 and continues to have a strong connection to the School.

Prue undertook a Law Degree at Melbourne University at a time when only about 10% of students were women. She chose law because she had a strong interest in social justice and saw the law as a career that would help make change for the good. She worked as a solicitor, eventually establishing (as a working Mum) her own law firm, Prue Sibree & Co. Prue's interest in social policy and the law, led her to join Young Liberals in 1969, becoming Vice president of Young Liberals and a member of the Liberal Party's policy committees. Prue advocated and got funding for Family Planning Clinics and other laws affecting individual choices. She was appointed a member of the State Government Consumer Affairs Council and the Metropolitan Transit Council and was on the Board of Citizens Welfare Services and served on the Melbourne University Council.

In 1981, Prue won a by-election caused by the retirement of Sir Rupert Hamer in the district of Kew. During her time in Parliament, Prue served as Secretary to Shadow Cabinet, opposition spokesperson for Early Childhood Development, Youth and Women's Affairs and opposition spokesperson for Further Education Training and Employment. She developed the framework for Enduring Powers of Attorney through her work on the Social Development Committee. Prue raised the issues of Sexual Harassment against women in the workplace at a time when this was not recognised or indeed debated in parliament. She was also a member of the Liberal Feminist Group.

Retiring from Parliament in 1987, Prue practised in the Corporate Sector and for a time was Acting Chancellor of Victoria University. She retired in 1997 after which her and her husband spent six years sailing their yacht overseas.

In 2007, Prue founded and became President of Suited to Success Inc in Brisbane, which operated under the name Fitted for Work and then Dress for Success Brisbane. The service assists struggling unemployed women to be better prepared for work by being coached for the world of work. Starting from "scratch", Prue managed the recruiting of volunteers, development of a strategy and business plan, and systems for the organisation, and the raising of support and funding for the organisation, which has continued to thrive and assist hundreds of women each year into employment.

Prue later became President of Groomed to Go Inc, which operates Dress for Success in Mornington Peninsula, when she moved residence to Melbourne in 2012. In that time, Prue led this not-for-profit organisation through a difficult "restructuring" that ensured that it continued its services and built new supports like a "Career Centre" for its unemployed clients who need additional skill and personal development tools to help them be more work-ready.

Prue was awarded an Order of Australia in the General Division (OAM) in 2019 for her service to women through job-readiness initiatives, and in 2021 Prue was also the recipient of the Strathcona Medal for her service to women through job-readiness initiatives.



**Prue Leggoe**  
**OAM**  
**LAWYER**



## Susan Goss

WRITER & TEACHER

Susan Goss (nee Cooke) left Strathcona in 1964 when it was quite unusual for girls to continue to university — with only two girls from Susan's year doing so. Being strongly encouraged by the staff at Strathcona to apply to university, Susan attended The University of Melbourne, with the help of a Commonwealth Scholarship. At 17, Susan remembers the night before the first day in that wonderful place thinking: "this is the first day of the rest of my life".

Indeed, it was the beginning of an amazing journey where courage and self-belief were an integral part of Susan's success. Although Susan was on a full scholarship, she developed serious disabilities but the philosophy of Strathcona had continually reassured her that all things were possible if only she believed they were. For Susan, this was a precursor to the 'unstoppable' ideals; a philosophy of freedom in the emerging global awareness of the seventies when youth, hope and equality were such an exciting prospect.

After graduation, Susan found the whole world was not at her feet! With few real options, Susan took on a Diploma of Education but a discussion with a former teacher helped her to re-group and find a new path, reminding Susan that shutting one door opens many others. Susan spent the next ten years exploring, literally walking around the world, working in many countries, meeting fascinating people, living in crazy and wonderful situations leading to Susan having her first two books published. Finally homesick for Australia, Susan returned, trailing a lovely Englishman behind. Not exactly a path mapped out by a dedicated careers' expert but so much fun — and so broad and so free.

Susan and her Englishman both became writers for *The Age*, mostly on the subjects of education and careers. They raised three wonderful children, one of whom also went to Strathcona and graduated from Monash University. As a trained teacher, Susan taught writing and journalism at TAFE, after twenty

years at *The Age*. She was also invited to edit several anthologies on behalf of organisations such as EPPIC, the Epilepsy Foundation, and supported residential services, which she loved. Despite not winning a Nobel Prize or being on the stage or become a famous artist or discovering the cure for phenylketonuria — although some of her friends did, with the help of Strathcona and its positive atmosphere, she did a lot more than most people ever expected — just survive. Susan thrived, lived, loved and wrote.

What's retirement? Using every skill and learning more, Susan began to volunteer in an aid agency working with prisoners, the unemployed, homeless, addicts, the many people who think nobody cares about them. Wonderful brave human beings. It was the richest part of Susan's entire working life.

During COVID, Susan wrote poetry, her main love. Poetry is hard to sell, but giving it away was easy! Through Long Covid clinics around the world, the hundreds of haiku poems she wrote in 2020, still spread a little hope and joy; a small but significant way for Susan to give back from a writing life which began in a modest school in Canterbury, where we wore skirts to our knees and thought tablets were what you took for headaches.



## Dr Liz Rushen AM

**HISTORIAN, AUTHOR  
& LECTURER**

Dr Liz Rushen AM (nee Tyler) is a former student, teacher, and parent at Strathcona who graduated in 1969. In 1986, with a small committee, she re-formed the Old Strathconians' Association, serving on the School Council in her capacity as OSA president, and becoming a life member of the Association.

After training as a Business Studies teacher, Liz travelled extensively before working for an international organisation in Geneva. Returning to Australia, Liz resumed her teaching career at the David Syme School of Business, and at Strathcona for a short period.

Liz is on the Editorial Board of the Australian Dictionary of Biography and an Adjunct Research Associate in the Faculty of Arts, Monash University. She is a former Executive Director of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and a former Chair of the History Council of Victoria, and has served on many historical and community boards and committees. Liz regularly speaks to community organisations and is regularly consulted for TV programs such as *Who Do You Think You Are*. In 2004, Liz hosted a weekly history program for ABC 774.

For twenty years, Liz was a director of Anchor Book Australia, a small independent publishing company which focused on Australian nineteenth-century history. Liz worked in all aspects of the business and particularly enjoyed bringing people's theses to the public attention.

An independent scholar, Liz has a PhD in History from Monash University and is widely published in the field of migration history, particularly the migration of Irish

women to Australia in the nineteenth century. She also writes on the social history of the Port Phillip District (Victoria), including Bishopscourt Melbourne: official residence and family home. Her doctoral thesis was published as *Single & Free: female migration to Australia, 1833-1837* and she has had many articles published in national and international scholarly and special interest journals.

Liz's first biography was a study of the life of John Marshall, a nineteenth-century shipowner and emigration agent, who was actively involved in the re-organisation of Lloyd's Register of Shipping and whose work had a huge impact on the Port Phillip District.

In 2018, Liz was awarded a Creative Fellowship by the State Library Victoria to research the life and writings of Edmund Finn ('Garryowen'), an Irish immigrant, journalist, raconteur and eyewitness to the development of the Port Phillip District. Liz's biography of this important chronicler of early Melbourne was published by Anchor Books Australia in 2022 and received a commendation at the Victorian Community History Awards 2023.

More recently, Liz has curated an exhibition, *Garryowen's Melbourne*, which was installed for six months at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. The exhibition showcases the writings of this early Melbourne journalist and is currently (2024) touring various libraries and historical societies in Victoria.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours 2021, Liz was appointed a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia (General Division) for significant service to community history and heritage preservation.

# Professor Robyn Sloggett AM

**CULTURAL  
MATERIALS  
CONSERVATIONIST**

Professor Robyn Sloggett AM completed her education at Strathcona in 1972 and has since become an internationally recognised authority in Cultural Materials Conservation. Robyn's contributions to the field have profoundly transformed the understanding and practice of interdisciplinary studies involving the materials and techniques of art, technical art history, art attribution in Australian art, and the ethical and philosophical aspects of cultural materials conservation.

Robyn has been instrumental in pioneering Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne. Through the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, she has developed academic programs and established an externally engaged commercial research hub, known as Grimwade Conservation Services. Robyn holds the Cripps Foundations Chair of Cultural Materials Conservation and serves as the Director of the Grimwade Centre.



One of Robyn's significant achievements is her leadership in community conservation programs, particularly in partnership with Indigenous communities and remote, rural, and regional organisations across Australia. Her research projects have advanced the framework for a national conservation program, promoting equity and graduate employment. Additionally, her work examines the impacts of climate change on the preservation of cultural material, addressing a critical and timely issue for communities in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Robyn's research interests are diverse and include the study of artists' materials and techniques, particularly in Australia and Southeast Asia, and the development of scientific techniques for conservation. She has also made significant contributions to ethical and philosophical discussions in the field of cultural materials conservation.

Robyn's work has been recognised with numerous national and international awards, reflecting her impact on both the academic and professional spheres of conservation including the Conservator of the Year Award (2004), the AICCM 'Award for Outstanding Research in the Field of Material Conservation' (2013) for her leadership of the ARC 20th Century in Paint project, and the International Council of Museums Australia Award for fostering international relations in museum and conservation practice (2014). In 2016, she received the Bathurst Macquarie Heritage Medal for her significant contributions to the protection of Australia's heritage. More recently, she was awarded the Marles Medal in Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) in 2021, recognising her excellence in research impact, and the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material Medal in 2023.

In 2015, Robyn was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to the arts in the field of cultural heritage management and preservation. This honour reflects her dedication as an academic, conservator and adviser. In 2016, Robyn was awarded the Strathcona Medal for her contribution to Cultural Heritage: Services to conservation and heritage management.

Robyn demonstrates the spirit of dedication and excellence. Her groundbreaking work and significant contributions to cultural materials conservation make her a truly unstoppable woman.



## Anne Rowland

ART REGISTRAR



Since graduating from Strathcona in 1973, Anne Rowland knew that her direction was art and was able to combine this with travel. After four years of Art School at Prahran College of Advanced Education, Anne upgraded her diploma with two years of teacher training to help fill a shortage of Woodwork teachers in Victoria. Between training and her placement, Anne headed off on her first international travel, on her own for two months in a Scottish winter.

Upon returning home, Anne was posted to Wycheproof in north-west Victoria, to see out a three-year contract, teaching Woodwork and Art, followed by six months on a working holiday in New Zealand and then a year in the United Kingdom, during which she refined her 'art' plan to looking for work in museums and, hopefully, art museums.

Anne returned to Melbourne in 1984 and began night-classes studying Museum Studies, which led to her working part-time as a volunteer in the Registration Department at the National Gallery of Victoria. This grew into the paid position of Assistant Registrar, managing exhibitions and various collection projects, finishing in 1998 as the first Relocation Project Manager.

With Long Service Leave in the Public Service, Anne travelled to Alaska, offering her experience and knowledge to a museum on the island of Kodiak, and was then appointed as the first Collection Manager at the Museum of the Aleutians, on the island of Unalaska, south-west Alaska — 800 miles SW of Anchorage. There was over twenty years of collecting in the community that as one of only three staff, Anne helped to sort, and to install exhibitions — which had to house archaeological and indigenous collections, historic Russian-American objects plus 19th century American, US and Japanese World War 2 objects and ordnance, and art items from various time periods.

The complete change of place, seasons and weather was intense and challenging for Anne. Russians arrived in SW Alaska in the 18th century and had christened the region 'the cradle of storms, birthplace of the winds', and nothing had changed by 1998! It was fabulous and exhausting for Anne but after three and a half years she came home; although happy to move to the mainland, Anne's visa was specific to that museum, so Australia was the alternative.

In 2003, Anne moved to Ballarat and was appointed to the role of Registrar at the Art Gallery of Ballarat — the oldest and largest regional Gallery in Australia. Anne loved the amazing art collection and the opportunity to curate exhibitions and write catalogues, which she did for 16 years before retiring — though Anne still volunteers at the Gallery.

Emeritus Professor Bronwyn Naylor OAM attended Strathcona for her secondary schooling, and was in the first group to go to Tay Creggan, in 1970. Finishing her schooling in 1973, she went on to study Arts and Law at Monash University, graduating with a BA (honours) in English Literature, and LLB (honours). She then worked at a major law firm, studying for a Master of Laws part-time. These further studies sparked her interest in legal research and social change. She took on a policy position at the Victorian Law Reform Commission, reviewing criminal laws, and was inspired to see how evidence-based research could lead to changes in law.

Bronwyn then became a lecturer at Monash University Law Faculty, teaching criminal law, government accountability, human rights, and law, gender and feminism. She took leave to go to Cambridge in the UK to study for a doctorate in Criminology — with her husband and one year-old daughter. She completed the doctorate on her return to Australia, and also had a second daughter.

**Emeritus  
Professor  
Bronwyn  
Naylor OAM**  
**PROFESSOR &  
RESEARCHER**

Returning to Monash University, Bronwyn continued her teaching, and was appointed an Associate Professor. She worked closely with University colleagues and local secondary schools to encourage Aboriginal young people to consider university study, and in particular to think about law studies. Bronwyn also began the research she was to follow through her academic career, based on a deep concern for social justice and the rights of vulnerable populations.

One field of ongoing research work for Bronwyn, was finding ways to reduce the harms of detention — in prisons, immigration detention or psychiatric and disability facilities. Other research has focused on challenging the ways criminal justice involvement creates hurdles for people wanting to work and contribute to society, through the widespread practice of criminal record checking. She has also continued to publish and advocate reforms on gender issues in criminal law, particularly around family violence.



In 2016, Bronwyn was appointed a Professor of Law at RMIT University, in the Graduate School of Business and Law, where she was able to continue her research and advocacy, as well as rejoicing in teaching her graduate law students. Her work on protecting rights in places of detention has been recognised in work with the Victorian Ombudsman, and by her appointment to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Advisory Group on monitoring places of detention. She has also recently worked with the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions on the global tragedy of deaths in custody.

Her research on criminal records and employment has contributed to law reforms, and Bronwyn is currently working with Aboriginal partner organisations on guidance for employers providing meaningful employment for people with irrelevant criminal records.

Bronwyn's community engagement has included Board membership of the Springvale Monash Legal Service, and of the not-for-profit organisation Vacro. She is a passionate advocate of Vacro's work supporting people leaving prison in their transition to the community. She is also a longstanding National Editor of the *Alternative Law Journal*.

In 2022, Bronwyn was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to tertiary education and the law. She is now Emeritus Professor at RMIT University.

Terry Bracks AM (nee Horsfall) has very fond memories of Strathcona and graduated in the Class of 1974. When she reflects on her time at the School, Terry realises how lucky she was to be a student at such a forward-thinking school. Terry studied a Bachelor of Education at Rusden Teachers' College and after graduation, taught at secondary schools in Maryborough and Ballarat, where she met her husband, Steve Bracks.

Terry was always interested in politics and joined the Australian Labor Party in 1983. In 1987, Terry and Steve started a family and three years later moved to Williamstown in Melbourne's west. Terry's passion for politics and positive social change led her to work part time for Labor Federal Member of Parliament, Barry Jones, and later, Julia Gillard. Following Labor's surprise election win in 1999, the pressure of being married to a high-profile partner, and also caring for a young family of three children, led Terry to take time away from paid work.

Terry joined the board of the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) an organisation ensuring Australian children have



## Terry Bracks AM

NON-EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR & CEO

access to Australian content. While on the ACTF Board, the Federal government introduced ABC Kids — a safe channel that ensures parents their children watch quality shows without ads or news.

In 2003, Terry was appointed to the Board of Breast Cancer Network Australia and she participated in the first Field of Women on the MCG. Terry has been involved in other boards with an arts or youth focus, such as the National Film and Sound Archive, the Australian Children's Television Foundation, the Melbourne Theatre Company Foundation, and the Victorian Arts Centre Trust. Terry has also been patron of Big Brother Big Sister, Heide Gallery and the Williamstown Literary Festival.

The organisation that has taken up most of Terry's time, and been her proudest achievement, is Western Chances. In 2003, Terry visited a scholarship organisation called Chances for Children that provided financial support for disadvantaged young people Victoria's Mallee district to pursue their education.

The western suburbs of Melbourne, where Terry lives is home to a diverse community. Over 150 different languages are spoken, and a high proportion of families face financial barriers to realise their children's dreams. Chances for Children inspired her to found an organisation in the region called Western Chances. Terry has chaired Western Chances since 2003 and in her first year, they provided 21 scholarships to students in Melbourne's west. In 2023, Western Chances also awarded almost 1000 new and renewed scholarships and continue to provide other support and opportunities to help students fulfil their potential and overcome barriers to success.

In 2016, Terry also became Chief Executive Officer of a not-for-profit organisation with projects in the small village of Balibo, where five Australian journalists were killed in 1975. The Balibo House Trust was formed in 2003 to honour their deaths with positive projects making a difference to the local community. A community centre, dental clinic, and schools and kindergartens have been established.

Amongst many other awards, Terry received a Centenary Medal in 2001, an Honorary Doctorate from Victoria University in 2008, a Victoria Police Citizen's Commendation Award in 2009 and became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2012.



Reverend  
Janet  
Costello  
CHAPLAIN

For Reverend Janet Costello, completing secondary school in 1978 at Strathcona was a formative experience in learning what matters in life. *"Faith, Hope and Love and the greatest of these is Love"* — 1 Corinthians 13:7.

Janet began at Strathcona the same year as Mr Lyall began as Headmaster. It was a school readjusting to the progressive 70s, bringing in new and exciting subjects like Legal Studies. In terms of excellence in education, Strathcona was always known for doing well in the areas of English and History and Janet had outstanding teachers like Margaret Fendley. Like many of her Strathcona friends Janet continued studying Humanities subjects like English, Literature, History, and Philosophy at University and beyond.

The other great legacy of a Strathcona education for Janet was the sense of community. Janet made deep and lasting connections and friendships with students and their families.

After becoming a teacher, being from a Christian and Baptist family, Janet had learnt through Strathcona the importance of giving back to the community. *"To those who had been given much, much is required"* — Luke 12:48 was a verse that her dad, Russell Costello, a teacher and biblical scholar taught her to take seriously.

In Janet's 20s she left home in leafy Blackburn where she was a part of the Blackburn Baptist Church (now Crossway) and moved to support her brother Tim who had started a legal office and began a ministry in St Kilda at a small Baptist church. This was an eye-opening time for her, working with people from different backgrounds, without family, education or basic resources. It was during this time that Janet started studying theology to make sense of her faith and the needs of people around her. Janet continued to believe in the importance of "love in action" giving back to those around who had not had the advantages of loving families, education and material resources.

Janet continued working in a secondary school in Student Welfare, studied counselling and psychotherapy and then became a Baptist Minister. Janet married, had two children and continued to work with teenagers and their families. Whilst schools are good at educating the body and mind, understanding of the emotional, psychological and spiritual development of people is also important to Janet.

Now Janet is back at Strathcona as Chaplain, forever thankful that the sense of belonging and community that she experienced as a teenager is still alive and well. Janet works together with staff, students and families to promote Wholebeing where there is value on body, mind and spirit. As Janet and the staff educate the students to be unstoppable, she continues to consider the importance for those who are giving back to others by loving God and loving others with their body, mind and spirit.

Janet looks forward to seeing the next generation of the unstoppable Strathcona community giving back to others, showing love in action and joining her as Women in Ministry.





## Janette Kendall

**NON-EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

Janette Kendall (nee Morton) completed her final year at Strathcona in 1979 and over the years many of her family members have attended the school. Janette has a Bachelor of Business (Marketing) from Monash University, is a Fellow of the Australia Institute of Company Directors, a Fellow of Monash University, and a member of Chief Executive Women. Janette is an experienced non-executive Director with over 25 years' board experience across public, private and not-for-profit organisations, spanning a diverse range of industries including marketing and technology, media, property, retail, hospitality, horticulture, tourism, sport and the arts.

Janette's experience with organisations facing disruption, undergoing transformation, expanding through acquisition or entering new global markets has required a strong focus on strategy, people, risk and governance. Janette has worked across Australia and China and has significant expertise in strategic planning, digital innovation, marketing and leadership across a number of industry sectors including digital and technology, marketing and communications, media, retail, FMCG, hospitality, gaming, property and manufacturing.

She has previously served on the boards of Costa Group, Nine Entertainment, Australian Venue Co, Foodworks (AURL) and Wellcom Group. Over Janette's executive career she was a Director of Clemenger BBDO, Managing Director of Clemenger Digital,

CEO emitch, GM Pacific Brands (Holeproof) and CMO at Crown Melbourne. Her last executive role was spent living and working in China as Senior Vice President, Marketing at Galaxy Entertainment Group.

Janette is also passionate about the Arts, having previously served on the boards of the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, The Melbourne Theatre Company, and MTC Foundation. She was also a sponsor of the MTC Women in Theatre programme.

Janette is committed to Diversity and Inclusion and is a mentor at MentorWalks, a community of over 6,000 aspiring women across Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Canada, an Advisor to Youth Activating Youth, a non-profit organisation that assists multicultural Australian youths to re-engage in their communities and an ally of CDW (Culturally Diverse Women).

Janette currently is a non-executive Director for Vicinity Centres (ASX: VCX) and Tabcorp (ASX: TAH), KM Property Funds, Visit Victoria, and the Melbourne Football Club.

When reflecting on how Strathcona shaped her into an Unstoppable Woman, Janette said those formative years embedded strong values including hard work, striving to be your best, the courage to take risks, and giving back to community.



# Sarah Russell

NON-EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

Sarah Russell completed her time at Strathcona in 1979. Looking back on her career spanning 40 years in the financial services sector, Sarah's journey could not be anticipated when she completed HSC.

After undertaking a two-year secretarial study, Sarah started as an administrative assistant with a foreign bank subsidiary in Melbourne. Today, she is a non-executive member of the Board of a Dutch-based bank, non-executive Vice Chair of one of the world's largest pension service and investing organisations, and non-executive Vice Chair of a

hedge fund specialising in frontier currency hedging products. Her past executive career has included two roles as Global CEO of asset management businesses and CFO of the worldwide wholesale banking activities of a global bank.

Her career took her first to Sydney for six years before moving to the Netherlands in 2000 where she lives today with her Dutch partner. Sarah holds a Master of Applied Finance from Macquarie University in Sydney and is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

The greatest privilege of her career has been the role of leadership, especially of diverse teams that have at times spanned 45 countries, many more nationalities, or who have possessed expertise Sarah doesn't have. Sarah has enjoyed exploring how to be effective in unique environments such as the first and, for some time, only non-nordic board member of a Swedish/Finnish company, or as a member of the board of a subsidiary of the French post office.

Being part of an organisation that was the target of the largest ever bank takeover, only to subsequently fail in the turmoil of a global banking crisis was both the worst and best time of Sarah's career. To lose a global organisation with a strong sense of purpose and values, founded on a more than two-hundred-year history, was a devastating yet rich learning experience.

In an honest reflection of her learning years, Strathcona didn't set Sarah on the path that instead, found her. When Sarah looks back, she wishes to have made more of her time at Strathcona and believes simply that she was a late bloomer! Once Sarah got going in her career it has been a great journey. Strathcona nevertheless has remained important to who she is. The power of the alumnae as a resource to support her work has been important. Even more so, the fun of reconnecting and reflecting on 45 years of life experience with other Old Strathconians, of connecting with old friends who live in the Netherlands, or who are simply passing by, has been great.

As an advocate of maintaining a healthy work life balance, sport has also been important part of Sarah's life. Tennis has been the key to building new social circles, and participation in seven 100 km/24-30 hour walks for charity has afforded a great sense of pride!



Jeanette Mathews completed her HSC in 1980 at Strathcona and undertook a four-year degree at Lincoln Institute in her chosen vocation of Speech Pathology. After a short career, Jeanette married David Hunter at Tay Creggan, then moved to Switzerland to commence another four-year Bachelor of Divinity degree at the International Baptist Theological Seminary near Zurich.

Jeanette and David had intended to pursue missionary work but instead continued to Cape Town, South Africa to study a Master of Arts (Religious Studies), aiming to do further postgraduate study overseas or pastoral ministry back in Australia. They were in South Africa at the time that apartheid was dismantling and visited political prisoners on Robben Island. They were present when Nelson Mandela gave his first speech after his release from prison in the Cape Town City Hall in February 1990.

Jeanette and her husband returned to Melbourne in 1990 for the birth of their first son and both worked part-time teaching theology and in pastoral ministry in the inner-city, during which time their second son was born. The family moved to work on a dairy farm in north-east Victoria for two years (where their third son arrived) and then to Canberra in 1997 where Jeanette took up a full-time role as a minister of the Canberra Baptist Church. Not long after arriving in Canberra, David was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and passed away in 2003. Jeanette continued on in ministry for some time but found it a difficult role as a widow and single mum.

So, after ten years at the church, she returned to study, to complete a PhD in Biblical Studies, focusing on the Old Testament book of Habakkuk. Jeanette married John Clark in 2008, then in 2011 she began teaching Old Testament subjects in the School of Theology, Charles Sturt University where she still works. She is Deputy Director of St Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra, a partner in the School of Theology and was Head of School and a member of the Faculty Leadership Team from 2022-23.

Jeanette has published three books in her research field of Biblical Studies and Biblical Performance Criticism: *Performing Habakkuk* (Pickwick, 2012); *Prophets as Performers* (Cascade, 2020); and *Reading the Megillot* (Smyth & Helwys, 2023). She is co-chair of the Biblical Performance Studies program unit in the Society for Biblical Literature (USA) and was a Fellow of the Baptist Scholars International Roundtable that met at Oxford University for several years. She has recently become nanna to a granddaughter, so is making regular trips to Victoria for visits!

During her education at Strathcona, Jeanette remembers being encouraged to achieve in any path of life and vocation. During her final year, Jeanette and her friends predicted each other's futures. They predicted she would become a minister's wife. And she did, in fact, become a minister's wife — but also, a minister, lecturer, author, scholar of the Old Testament and an Unstoppable woman!

## Jeanette Mathews

THEOLOGIAN



# Lisa Medved

AUTHOR



Lisa Medved (nee Hams) who graduated in 1984, celebrated the publication of her first novel, *The Engraver's Secret*, in April 2024. She credits her English and English Literature teachers at Strathcona with instilling in her a love of literature, language and creative writing during her time at the school. Lisa said that her teachers encouraged her to read broadly and read critically during her years at Strathcona. In particular, Margaret Fendley, made marvellous suggestions of comparative books to study, and was very encouraging with Lisa's interest in creative writing.

After completing a Bachelor of Arts in History and Fine Art from the University of Melbourne, Lisa worked in public relations and event management in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne. She honed her writing skills for various corporate publications before moving to San Francisco then Vancouver with her husband for his international assignments. After finishing an online graduate diploma in editing and publishing, and returning to Melbourne, Lisa took time away from PR work to care for their children, complete volunteer work, and run her own jewellery-making business.

Following a move to the Netherlands for another international assignment with her family in 2008, Lisa began dabbling in freelance writing and had articles published for several magazines in the UK and the Netherlands. Although she enjoyed researching and writing the articles, she decided her interest lay with historical fiction.

Lisa began writing her first novel in 2014, spending the next five years editing the manuscript, attending courses, and learning how to write fiction. The road to publication was convoluted and unpredictable. She received numerous rejections from literary agents and publishers, before finally signing with agents in London and Melbourne, then securing publishing deals in Belgium and Australia.

For Lisa, every time she received another rejection from a literary agent or publisher, she told herself not to give up. She kept telling herself that someone in the industry would love her novel and want to publish it.

Her first novel was translated into Dutch and published as *De Graveur* by a Belgian publisher in February 2022, which was unusual given her book had not yet been published in its original language. HarperCollins Australia soon offered a two-book publishing deal and her novel, *The Engraver's Secret*, was published in April 2024.

Lisa is very grateful to the teachers at Strathcona who encouraged her to follow her interests in history, fine art and creative writing, and also keep her options open when choosing subjects for her final years at school.

*The Engraver's Secret* is an art thriller set in Antwerp with a dual timeline, focusing on the Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens, and a mystery related to his engraver. She is currently writing her second novel, which is set in fin-de-siècle Vienna about the Secession painter Gustav Klimt, and highlights two women searching for where they belong in the world.

Lisa and her husband divide their time between Melbourne and The Hague. They have two children, a daughter living in Amsterdam, and a son living in Manchester.





Karen Bull graduated Year 12 at Strathcona in 1985 and is now in her 32nd year of EAL teaching in the AMEP program, delivering courses to English migrants. The first 31 years were with AMES Australia, and she is now with Box Hill Institute of TAFE. It has been very rewarding work for Karen, a large component of it assisting refugees, often from backgrounds of trauma.

Along the way, Karen became a Commercial Pilot and Flight Instructor based at Essendon Airport. This eventuated from a lifelong love of aircraft and all things aviation. She juggled both careers successfully until her children were a few years old, at which point she decided that pursuing a career as an airline pilot as a sole parent was not going to be feasible. So, Karen abandoned her guaranteed pathway into Qantas and developed her teaching career with no regrets.

Karen has held many roles of responsibility: Senior Teacher, Pathway Co-ordinator, EAL coordinator, Youth Coordinator. In fact, her work with refugee youth led her to participate in developing the awarded Ucan2 program, designed to support students with their language and psycho-social needs while assimilating into mainstream education. This inspired Karen to gain her Graduate Diploma of Counselling and open a private practice in conjunction with teaching.

Karen's years at Strathcona gave her the opportunity to follow her musical interests. She had already been dancing and singing since the age of 4 which led to a role as a regular extra in *Young Talent Time* from Year 9 until Year 11. Concurrently, she participated in choir and madrigals and was encouraged by the wonderful staff in the music department to complete Year 12 music in singing. She remembers this time of her life very fondly. After graduating, Karen was invited to join the National Chorale and performed at weddings, including her sister, Sandra's, as a soloist. She has continued to dance over the years; her favoured jazz ballet, but also other styles as they evolved, such as commercial jazz and hip hop. She is now learning the guitar.

In 2016, Karen faced a health crisis after a trip with her family to LA Disneyland. The long-haul flight led to DVT and subsequently more than 40 bilateral pulmonary embolisms and she was very lucky to survive. Upon recovery, Karen, who had always lived life to the fullest, further embraced the concept of *carpe diem*. She returned to flying after a long break from it while raising her children and bought her beloved 1971 Piper Cherokee, "Phoenix", named after her new lease on life.

Karen attributes her approach that the sky really is the limit to her time at Strathcona and life experience. Careers and pathways of all kinds are possible with passion, persistence and vision.



## Karen Bull

TEACHER &  
COUNSELLOR



## Associate Professor Amanda Whitfort

LAWYER & LECTURER

Associate Professor Amanda Whitfort graduated from Strathcona in 1987 and has since completed a number of qualifications including: Bachelor of Arts (Hons)(Monash), Bachelor of Law (Monash), Master's of Law (London), and Master's of Science (Edinburgh).

Amanda left Melbourne for Hong Kong in 1998 and still lives there today. She arrived as a young lawyer hoping to join the Department of Justice, but the Territory had just been handed back to China and a new policy came in the year she arrived. Amanda realised she would need to learn to read, write and speak Cantonese fluently to go back to her old role as a full-time criminal prosecutor. Her VCE French score at Strathcona shows languages were not her strength and Cantonese is a very hard language to learn.

Instead, Amanda joined a local law firm and later the University of Hong Kong, where she began to teach criminal procedure to postgraduates. Amanda also began volunteer work for local charities. One of the things Amanda chose to do was to walk homeless dogs for Hong Kong Dog Rescue.

Through her charity work, Amanda realised she could do more to help animals by using legal skills rather than her legs and, in 2008, she applied to the Hong Kong government for her first research grant to review Hong Kong's animal laws. Amanda also designed and began teaching Asia's first International Animal Law course at HKU. The research grant allowed Amanda to partner with the SPCA (HK) to produce a series of reports focused on law reforms for the pet trade, food animals, wild animals and stray animals. In 2016, one of the reports led to a new law being passed, which has outlawed puppy mills in Hong Kong. Kittens came next.

Amanda's research currently focuses on the international wildlife trade. Many endangered animals are smuggled across the world to be used in medicines, for the exotic pet trade and for food. Amanda now works with governments, frontline enforcement officers and conservation scientists across the Asian and African regions, to try to reduce illegal wildlife trading.

Amanda feels fortunate to have the support of her Faculty in this and regularly travels outside of Asia to speak at conferences focusing on animal-related crime. Amanda has given presentations in 12 countries over the last three years and in September 2024 she spoke to 100 judges at the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Conference on Environmental Crime in Rwanda. Her training materials on wildlife crime for prosecutors in Nigeria have been endorsed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Amanda hopes for Strathcona girls to work hard and be creative with their skills. Amanda trained as a criminal lawyer, but she wanted to help animals, domestic and wild. She had to invent a law course (which raised a few eyebrows) to make that happen, but fifteen years later Amanda has transformed a niche undergraduate course into an international research programme. Amanda still goes to court though as she loves trial advocacy. Amanda is also a member of the Hong Kong Bar and regularly take briefs to prosecute for the Department of Justice on fiat (in English!)

# Veronica Angelidis-Reich

SOLICITOR



Veronica Angelidis-Reich (nee Angelidis) graduated in 1987 from Strathcona, a place where she felt safe, supported and optimistic. When she entered the school gates, Veronica felt gently prepared for the outside world and her future life. She was always encouraged to follow her passion. Kindness and empathy are woven into the fabric of Strathcona, and Veronica remembers often being reminded of these virtues by the endearing Chaplain, Mrs Judy McMaster. She remembers at her final assembly emotionally clutching the bible presented to her by their very caring principal, Mr Lyall — she then cried for days.

As a practising solicitor a few years later, Veronica used this same bible to administer Oaths and Affirmations. A little piece of Strathcona accompanied her into her professional life — for Veronica it was comforting and encouraged both reflection and connection to her Strathcona learnings. Whilst practising as a commercial lawyer — having graduated from Monash University with an Arts/ Law Degree — Veronica returned to University to study Human Resource Management/Industrial Relations. Veronica then joined Andersen to head up the International and Domestic Mobility Department, a role that fused her Law and HR credentials. Later, she accepted a role at Ernst & Young and around this time something amazing was also unfolding: motherhood was becoming a reality, and her career journey took another turn.

As a new mother, Veronica created a boutique property law firm and worked part-time to enjoy the flexibility it offered. Family-friendly work environments were somewhat

flimsy — if at all existent, at the time — so she decided to create her own. For Veronica, sometimes it seems that Unstoppable Strathcona Women need to pave their own way. Resilience is key and she knows Strathcona encouraged her to be independent, confident and to embrace and adapt to new and challenging situations.

More recently, Veronica took on the role of Communications Director (Volunteer) for OneSky (for all children) Australia. Helping teach overseas communities and caregivers to provide love, nurture and responsive care to orphaned and at-risk children, was a privilege and life-defining opportunity. Visiting orphanages abroad only further proved to her that our collective energy can create the positive change in the world that we all want to see. Strathcona was always big on keeping an open mind whilst embracing the journey of serving others, so Veronica feels perhaps she was always destined to volunteer and lead with her heart. Today, Veronica is involved in various projects whilst also supporting her family, including daughter Lili who currently attends Strathcona.

For Veronica, Strathcona is not a school that you just leave behind. She does hope that all Strathcona students achieve their aspirations by realising their gifts and remembering the strong sense of well-being and wholeness instilled in them during their Strathcona years. Veronica's belief is that Strathcona helps shape Unstoppable Women by creating a strong community where girls are empowered to be continuous learners and conquerors of life.

# Lisa Bond

## MARKETING EXECUTIVE

Lisa Bond followed in the footsteps of her mum by attending Strathcona from Years 7 to 12. She graduated in 1989 and though she admits receiving a low result was a hard lesson to learn, Lisa stayed true to her goal of getting into the workforce after completing Year 12 and secured a full-time role with a determined drive for independence. Lisa worked in retail and quickly advanced into roles with significant responsibility for a 19 to 20 year-old, noting that the management and customer-centric skills learned during that early period are still valuable today.

Lisa's early 20s were spent backpacking around Europe. She worked in London, including for a carpet manufacturer with a royal warrant "By Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen." Arriving home, Lisa studied public relations and landed a dream job in marketing in TV at Network TEN while it aired classics like *Seinfeld*, *The Simpsons*, and *Beverly Hills 90210*.

At 27, Lisa established her own PR firm, Collaborate PR. It was during this time that Lisa truly 'cut her teeth' in business and honed her public relations craft. With lots of grit and pure determination, Lisa secured highly desirable clients, specialising in luxury brands including Tiffany & Co, Hugo Boss, Tag Heuer, and Zegna.

After eight years of extremely hard work, Lisa closed the business to join media and production company Crocmedia, where she worked across divisions in Los Angeles, New York, and Singapore.

After having her daughter Allegra (now 14), Lisa's career evolved from business entrepreneur to strategic director in PR and communications and general manager, to lead consultant and adviser on significant business development and change management projects. Lisa's strengths are strategic and tactical, practical and innovative and she has had the benefit of a career that spans a broad range of businesses and sectors, involving a diversity of target audiences and customer bases. Lisa is adept at tapping into primary market needs and expectations to deliver high-impact strategic plans and brand engagement initiatives.

Lisa is currently the Head of Marketing and Client Experience at Tribeca Financial, a scaling financial advice firm our family owns, based in Hawthorn. Today, her focus is the program for financial wellbeing education in the workplace. Five out of 10 Australians are experiencing "a lot of stress" at work, while 67% are "quiet quitting," and only 20% are thriving. One in three full-time employees say that money worries have negatively impacted their productivity at work. All of this adds up to a major workplace and community issue costing Australian businesses over \$31 billion annually due to employee distraction and absenteeism. Lisa believe that



Workplace Financial Wellbeing sessions are great for improving people's overall feelings of financial security and freedom — which is also great for business.

Lisa's voluntary experience has focused on children's health, as a Development Board Member of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute from 2006 to 2016. She continues to be a proud advocate for the Institute's groundbreaking work.

Lisa feels that Strathcona played an integral part in shaping her into an Unstoppable Woman. She is fiercely loyal to her close group of friends who she met at Strathy. Her education and the community at Strathcona taught her self-confidence, showed her how to genuinely connect with people, and underscored the value of resilience and determination.



Lisa Button's career since finishing Year 12 in 1990 has been a case of endeavouring to say yes to new experiences, standing up for things that she thinks are important and forging her own pathway. Lisa is a firm believer that it's very hard to know what you want to do with your life until you start trying things; every experiment, positive or negative, helps you determine who you want to become in the future and it's a never-ending process. The only error you can make is to do nothing.

Having had a strong interest in English, Philosophy, Art and Drama as a Strathcona student, Lisa started with an Arts degree at Melbourne University, transferring into Arts/Law in her second year. Looking back, she had a general interest in social justice but without a particularly clear goal. Like many other law graduates, upon leaving university she commenced working in corporate/commercial law with Arthur Robinson and Hedderwicks (now Allens Linklaters). Various twists and turns led to stints as a lawyer in Cambodia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

16 years ago, following the birth of her third child, Lisa decided to make a big change. She wanted the next chapter to be the 'start of the rest of her life' — a more deliberate choice that aligned with the goals and values that had emerged with greater clarity with time and maturity. This started a journey away from commercial law and into legal work assisting exploited migrant workers and refugees, which led into becoming a refugee policy advisor for Save the Children Australia, the Centre for Policy Development,

and then the founding of a new independent non-profit, Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA). As the CEO/founder of this national charity, Lisa feels fortunate to be working on an issue that she cares deeply about, in a role where she's able to use pretty much 'everything she's got'.

CRSA is importing into Australia the Canadian practice of 'community sponsorship' of refugees. This involves training small local groups of everyday Australians who are willing to give up a few hours a week of their time to 'sponsor' the settlement and integration of a refugee household into the Australian community. These are people who have fled serious persecution owing to who they are or what they believe in, and whom the Australian government agrees to resettle in Australia as humanitarian migrants. They come from all over the world, with 15 nationalities represented in the program so far. And they're just getting started. Lisa encourages people from all walks of life to consider getting involved — it's incredibly rewarding!

As the mum of three boys, now aged 16 to 21, Lisa at times struggled with the competing challenges of caretaking and building a satisfying career — a theme she had the prescience to explore in a Gilbert House play that she wrote in Year 12. While she remains a hard-core optimist, she is fuelled by the knowledge that the world is too often an unfair place and the desire try to change this where she can, using the experience, tools and privileges that she has to offer. A great education at Strathcona was one of those privileges.



## Lisa Button

LAWYER & CEO



# Natasha Mackinnon

## PRINCIPAL

Since leaving Strathcona in 1991, Natasha Mackinnon (nee Gill) has embarked on a remarkable career, achieving notable success and making a significant impact in the field of progressive education. Known for her unwavering determination and passion, she has continually strived to reach her personal and professional goals, becoming an unstoppable force in the process.

During her time at Strathcona, Natasha discovered her deep-rooted passions for singing and performing as a school soloist. This ignited a strong desire within her to pursue a career in music, leading her to obtain a Bachelor of Music. Recognising her love for teaching and her aspiration to make a difference in the lives of students, she decided to pursue a teaching degree as well.

Upon entering the workforce, Natasha began her career as a Teacher of Music at Heathdale Christian School. Her exceptional talent and dedication allowed her to quickly ascend to the role of leading the arts department, where she spent eight years building and nurturing the music and arts programs.

Driven by her desire to make a broader impact on the lives of young people, Natasha and her husband took a leap of faith and planted a church. This led her to explore school chaplaincy, where she served at Ivanhoe Grammar and Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar, providing guidance and support to students and staff in faith formation and pastoral care.

As her career progressed, Natasha returned to Ivanhoe Grammar School as the Acting Head of Music. However, she soon realised her passion for whole school leadership and the opportunity it presented to make a difference on a larger scale. Encouraged by her Principal at the time, she took on a new challenge and moved to Los Angeles, where she assumed the roles of Vice Principal and then High School Principal. During this time, she also pursued and completed her Masters in Educational Leadership, further enhancing her knowledge and skills. Natasha is a lifelong learner and is currently completing a Master of Business Administration.

Upon her return to Melbourne, Natasha served as the Assistant Principal of Staff at Aquinas College, followed by a role as Assistant Principal at Templestowe College. Her dedication to providing quality education and her relentless pursuit of excellence caught the attention of Leighland Christian School, where she now holds the esteemed position of Executive Principal.

In her current role, Natasha leads a two-campus school on the beautiful North West Coast of Tasmania. Leighland Christian School is known for its innovative approach to education, offering a personalised learning experience within a

Christian framework. Natasha is instrumental in shaping the school's vision and ensuring that every student receives an inspiring and holistic education.

Beyond her school accomplishments, Natasha also dedicates her time and expertise to volunteer work. She serves as a Board Director on the National AHISA (Association Heads of Independent Schools Australia) Board and is the Tasmanian Branch Chair. Through her involvement, Natasha is an advocate for developing Principals and contributing to both National and State education policy.

Throughout her career journey, Natasha attributes her resilience and unwavering focus to the formative years spent at Strathcona. The school's commitment to empowering young women and nurturing their potential has shaped her into the unstoppable woman she is today. With her indomitable spirit and passion for making a difference, Natasha continues to inspire and leave an enduring impact on the educational landscape.



# Joanne Knight

## LAWYER

Joanne (Jo) Knight completed Year 12 at Strathcona in 1996 and is a Strathcona medallist. A Monash University alumna, Jo holds an Honours degree in Arts and Law, concentrating on international politics and human rights. Her formative years at Strathcona were marked by an environment that nurtured her advocacy skills, leadership qualities, and a passion for understanding our multifaceted world.

Jo is a visionary leader who galvanises action towards a just and sustainable world. With over twenty years dedicated to championing global justice and environmental stewardship, she has been a pivotal force in non-profit sectors and influential boards. As a trailblazing lawyer and leader, Jo spearheaded landmark migration law cases, mobilised communities against poverty, and catalysed a worldwide Church initiative confronting the climate emergency.



Before her role as CEO of Anglican Overseas Aid, Jo's dynamic leadership as Tearfund Australia's Advocacy Director, her strategic guidance in the Renew Our World climate justice campaign, and her advocacy with the Micah coalition for Australian aid have been instrumental. She also led the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Ecumenical Migration Centre in its work of inclusion of new arrivals fleeing persecution.

Jo's governance expertise is evident in her role as founding Board Chair for the youth-led Oaktree movement, her contributions as a board member of Green Collect, and her tenure as Section Chair for the Law Institute of Victoria, overseeing administrative law, human rights, and refugee matters.

In 2015, Jo was the recipient of the Strathcona Medal for her service to Law Advocacy for refugees, migrants and alleviating poverty. Jo credits her time at Strathcona with instilling an unwavering conviction that we all have the power to be agents of change. Her upcoming book calls faith communities to immediate and meaningful engagement with climate justice, drawing on accounts from her encounters with some of our world's most marginalised peoples in the most marginalised places.

Jo's favourite retreat is the Australian bush with her young family, where she enjoys kangaroos, birds, and tree-covered mountains. Jo's story is a testament to the belief that we can forge a brighter, more equitable future for all with determination and collective effort.



## Rebecca Andrews

WRITER &  
PRODUCER

What do Oprah, mummified crocodiles, the UN and reality TV have in common? Answer: Findlay Deputy House Captain of 1997!

After leading Findlay to victory in Year 12, Rebecca Andrews graduated Strathcona in 1997 and went on to complete her degrees at Monash. She moved to London where she began her media career as a researcher on *Long Way Round*, a documentary series featuring Ewan McGregor.

Rebecca returned to Australia to join Tourism Victoria's international marketing department, managing the media team and overseeing the production of hundreds of travel shows, TV specials, film, music and fashion shoots, radio broadcasts, journalist and influencer visits to Victoria — including *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. As PR Manager, Rebecca led the communications strategy for Melbourne's major events like the Australian Open, Melbourne Cup, and Formula 1 Grand Prix. She championed the city's arts and culture scenes; from Broadway musicals and live music, to fashion and comedy festivals, working alongside a wide range of creatives - from street artists in laneways, to international artists exhibiting at the NGV. Rebecca also played a key role in Tourism Australia's international campaigns, including bringing events like San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants Awards to Melbourne.

After more than a decade of destination marketing, Rebecca transitioned into travel writing, chronicling her global adventures for publications like *Escape*, *Vacations & Travel*, *Woman's Day* and *New Idea*. In the name of journalism she has eaten rotten shark in Iceland (it's a delicacy!), visited mummified-crocodile museums in Egypt, danced with the Maasai in Kenya, been dacked by a monkey in India and accidentally made world news when she faked a pregnancy to avoid Jetstar's excess carry-on fee (and was busted).

Rebecca's distinctive voice earned her a spot on an ABC TV special and her career continued to evolve into production. She works across all formats, from panel (eg *Gruen*), comedies (*Reputation Rehab*) and game shows (*Deal or No Deal*) to documentaries — including *Sea of Islands*, the first-ever VR film commissioned by the United Nations. In addition to her production work, Rebecca has cast celebrities and VIPs for a range of projects. Her knack for spotting new talent has led her to cast some of the biggest reality TV shows, including *Australian Survivor*, *MasterChef*, *Gogglebox*, *Gordon Ramsay's Food Stars*, *The Summit*, *Big Brother*, and more.

Rebecca credits her time at Strathcona for instilling an over-inflated, unwavering confidence, and a fearless approach to life. She says “yes” to every opportunity, pushes boundaries and opens all doors, knowing that change is always a step forward. Alongside her career, Rebecca's biggest role and proudest achievement is mum to her 3-year-old son Elliston — and his soon-to-be baby brother (due Christmas!).



## Alisia Romanin

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



Alisia Romanin completed her time at Strathcona in 2001, focusing on the humanities in her final school years and actively participating in music and art. Alisia's move to a Bachelor of Arts at The University of Melbourne in 2002 was a natural progression. After experimenting with subjects like linguistics, classics, and French, as well as a year abroad in Europe, she settled on a double major in Art History and Italian, completing an Honours year in 2007. At the time, she aspired to secure a role in an arts organisation post-graduation.

During her degree, Alisia worked part-time in various roles and volunteered with the Wednesday Night Tutoring program, tutoring residents in social housing around Abbotsford and Richmond. Her sense of community service, seeded at Strathcona, was further reinforced, becoming a guiding principle in her life and career.

In the latter half of her degree, Alisia worked as a personal assistant to Sir James Gobbo AC CVO, former Governor of Victoria. This role exposed her to many accomplished professionals dedicated to positively impacting communities. Under Sir James' mentorship, Alisia learned the importance of a purpose-driven career where alignment of values was crucial.

In 2010, Alisia was appointed Aide to the Governor of Victoria at Government House, where she served two Governors over three years. This role was a unique opportunity to put public service into practice, working with communities and organisations across Victoria. From coordinating The Queen's last visit to Melbourne to arranging afternoon teas for country community groups, these years became a career highlight.

A subsequent role as Relationship Manager at the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce led to a position at La Trobe University, where Alisia worked for nearly a decade. Starting in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor managing projects and partnerships, she eventually found her calling in philanthropy, leading La Trobe's first philanthropic campaign to raise \$200M. This role allowed her to align with the university's mission of positive societal change and work closely with donors to achieve real impact, whether through scholarships, publishing Indigenous histories of Australia or funding clinical trials.

Throughout her career, Alisia continued to volunteer in non-executive board positions, including with the International Specialised Skills Institute, the Italian Australian Foundation, and Strathcona's Philanthropy Committee.

In 2024, Alisia's original dream of working in the arts came to fruition when she became Executive Director of Development at Arts Centre Melbourne. She now leads the team responsible for philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and government support, helping supporters positively impact Melbourne's world-renowned arts and cultural sector.

Reflecting on her journey, Alisia credits Strathcona for shaping the person she is today, teaching her the value of staying true to oneself, and the importance of hard work and building relationships, which have been vital throughout her life and career.

# Laura Loftus

**ASSOCIATE  
GENERAL COUNSEL  
& COMPANY  
SECRETARY**



Laura Loftus finished Year 12 in 2004 and has remained closely connected to Strathcona. Laura completed a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting)/Bachelor of Laws at Monash University in 2009 and started working as a graduate lawyer at global law firm DLA Piper in 2010. After a number of years at DLA Piper, Laura moved to an in-house legal role. Laura is currently Associate General Counsel and Company Secretary for an ASX-listed pharmaceutical company. Laura's role has seen her work in both Australia and the United States, working closely with the executive team and the Board and completing a number of multi-million dollar transactions.

Laura participated in many co-curricular activities during her time at Strathcona, including choir, debating, drama, hockey and kayaking. Laura completed the Murray Marathon in Years 9-12 and went on to coach the kayaking team with Jane McKay ('04) between 2005 and 2008. Laura and Jane completed the Murray Marathon a further three times between 2006 and 2008. Anyone who participated in the kayaking team during this period would remember the early morning wake up call of Cat Stevens' *Morning Has Broken* at the campsites in Yarrowonga and Echuca and the bright yellow t-shirts identifying the Strathcona contingent on the banks of the Murray.

The principles and values instilled at Strathcona and the school motto, 'Fortiter, Fideliter, Feliciter' (Bravely, Faithfully, Happily), along with the strong sense of community, have influenced Laura's path since leaving Strathcona. Some of the people Laura met at Strathcona remain her closest friends to this day.

Laura has remained actively involved with Strathcona since leaving — after coaching kayaking, Laura joined the Old Strathconians' Association (later becoming President of the OSA) and is currently a member of the Strathcona Medal Committee and a member of the School Board. Laura is grateful for the opportunity to give back to the school and loves meeting other past students at reunions and other events, hearing their stories of their time at Strathcona and the positive influence the school, their teachers and classmates have had on their lives.

As President of the Old Strathconians' Association (OSA) Laura and the team are committed to fostering relationships between past students and the broader Strathcona community. The OSA supports past and current students in a number of ways, such as:

**Hosting Reunions for past students** - These are held every 5 years and have also been hosted interstate and overseas. The oldest group of alumnae are those who finished school before 1970. Some of these women are well into their 80s and still enjoy coming back to reminisce about their time at Strathcona.

**Running annual Careers evenings** - Each year, many alumnae come back to Strathcona to talk about their studies and career paths since leaving school. We are always overwhelmed with volunteers for these evenings, which shows how much our alumnae are keen to encourage the next generation of Strath girls.

**Writing letters to Year 12s** - At the end of each year, alumnae write letters to the Year 12 students as they approach their final exams, providing encouragement and sharing advice that they wish they had when they were in Year 12.

**Continuing to support current students** - The OSA has sponsored Year 10 students to participate in the 'Burn Bright' leadership program, enabling them to learn valuable leadership skills ahead of their final years at Strathcona.

## Caitlin Conway

### EDUCATOR

Caitlin Conway graduated in 2008 and at Strathcona was interested in science, with scientific research as her career goal at that time; choosing Biology and Chemistry in Year 11 and 12. Underpinning this interest was a combination of a desire to help others and a curiosity about the world — both of which were reinforced by her years at Strathy.

At university, Caitlin initially studied Biomedical Science and did an honours year in Microbiology. However, during this time she had the realisation that while she loved science, laboratory research did not mesh with her love of working with people or her love of being active and outside. At school, when choosing a career path, she had focussed on what subjects she enjoyed and what she was good at, not at what suited her personality.

So, taking a risk, she decided to do the Teach For Australia program and over two years, completed her teaching qualification while working at a low-socioeconomic school in Geelong, teaching science. The impetus for working in scientific research had always been to help others and Caitlin realised she could also do this through education. She went on to complete her Master of Teaching and eventually a Graduate Certificate of STEM Education. This certificate has been a crucial step in her career path.

After four years of teaching in Geelong, Caitlin moved to Katherine in the Northern Territory, where she taught STEM to an entire primary school. This experience opened Caitlin's eyes to the inequality in Australia's education system and the lack of access and opportunities experienced by rural communities. It also was the start of her learning about her own privileges and unconscious biases.



Caitlin moved to Darwin and worked at the Department of Education, working with science teachers across the Northern Territory. This role allowed Caitlin to work with a whole range of teachers and students. This again reinforced the differences in education access and resourcing available to all Australians, particularly when compared to Caitlin's schooling at Strathcona.

This experience of the inequality in education eventually led to Caitlin working at Teach For Australia, as the Northern Territory Manager. During this time working at a Not-For-Profit organisation, a highlight was working in the Reconciliation and Truth Telling space and gaining an understanding of the effect of colonisation on the First Nations people of Australia.

After three years at TFA, Caitlin's love for science and education has brought her to work at the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT, working as the lead educator in the STEAM education program. This role will allow Caitlin to help NT students access better STEM education opportunities.

Looking back at her path since school, Caitlin feels that her ability to try new things and say yes to opportunities has allowed her to be in the position that she is now in. She recognises that she has been extremely privileged, including her time at a school like Strathcona, and wants to continue to help amplify the voices of people less privileged than herself.





## Ashleigh Phillips

TEACHER

Ashleigh Phillips graduated from Strathcona in 2008, after which she took a gap year to work and save money. Upon her return to Australia, Ashleigh commenced a double degree in Arts/Education (Secondary) in 2010 at Deakin University and graduated with a distinction in the Arts (Drama).

In 2014, Ashleigh obtained a full-time position at Keysborough Secondary College and has worked there for the last 11 years teaching English, Media and Drama. Ashleigh was the Head of Performing Arts for six years before transitioning into leadership where she has developed a passion for student wellbeing in the year-level coordinator role. In 2020, she was elected to the Committee of Management for Drama Victoria and has spent the last four years assisting in developing resources and hosting the annual State Conference.

Not only will Ashleigh again host the conference this year, but she will also present at the New Zealand/ Drama Australia conference held in New Zealand.

Ashleigh has said that Strathcona taught her about the importance of education, but more importantly the importance of community. Ashleigh has taken much of what she learned in her six years at Strathy and implemented it into her work with her students and colleagues.



Jess Wilson graduated from Strathcona in 2008 and was elected as the Member for Kew at the November 2022 Victorian State Election. Currently holding the roles of Shadow Minister for Finance, Shadow Minister for Early Childhood and Education and Shadow Minister for Economic Reform and Regulation, Jess is making significant strides in these critical portfolios.

One of Jess' notable achievements has been her staunch opposition to the State Government's new tax on independent and faith-based schools. She has been a vocal advocate for choice in education, particularly emphasising the impact on schools catering to students with learning challenges. Her efforts culminated in the successful exemption of Andale School from the tax list as well as reducing the number of impacted schools from 110 to under 60, highlighting her commitment to ensuring fair and equitable education policies. Jess has also been leading the debate on restoring prudent financial management in Victoria and ensuring housing affordability and home ownership, particularly for younger Victorians, is a priority for government policy making.

Jess' roots run deep in Melbourne's inner east, where she has spent her entire life. Her education at Strathcona laid the foundation for her academic journey. Her time at Strathy played a pivotal role in shaping Jess' professional life. The school's emphasis on leadership, critical thinking, and community service instilled in her a strong sense of responsibility and a drive for excellence. The passionate teachers at Strathy, including Mrs Young and Mrs Buchanan, inspired in Jess a love for lifelong learning, and a true sense of integrity.

After school, Jess studied a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws at Monash University and obtained a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice from the Australian National University. Jess is admitted as an Australian Lawyer in the Supreme Court of Victoria. Her academic pursuits also took her to the London School of Economics, where she was accepted into the Hansard Scholars Programme and undertook an internship in the House of Commons in the UK Parliament.

Jess' professional journey combines experiences in both the public and private sectors. Her career began at global services firm KPMG, where she gained invaluable insights into business and finance. She then transitioned to the political arena, serving as a Ministerial Adviser to a Federal Cabinet Minister, where she honed her skills in public policy and government operations. Her most recent role before entering parliament was at the Business Council of Australia, where she served as the Executive Director of Policy and Company Secretary. In this capacity, Jess led policy development initiatives across a broad spectrum of critical areas, including energy and climate change, tax, regulatory reform, infrastructure, skills and education, digital, and cyber security.

In her spare time, Jess is a passionate hockey player as a member and premiership player with the Kew Box Hill Hockey Club for over two decades.

## Jess Wilson

POLITICIAN





**Deborah  
Holmes**  
METEOROLOGIST

After completing Year 12 at Strathcona in 2010 alongside her twin sister Catherine, Deborah Holmes enrolled in a Bachelor of Science at the University of Melbourne, not knowing where she wanted her career journey to head. Deborah decided to enrol in the safe, familiar subjects of Maths, Physics, Chemistry and French, eventually choosing to major in Physics. Toward the end of her degree, Deborah found the graduate program at the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and thought that it would be a good fit, having always had an interest in the weather. Deborah was successful in obtaining a position in the 2015 graduate meteorology course at the BoM and has been there since.

At BoM, Deborah's career began as a graduate meteorologist, completing a 10-month graduate program and gaining a Graduate Diploma of Meteorology, which then gave her the skills to become an operational meteorologist. After finishing the graduate program Deborah was posted in Hobart as an aviation and public weather forecaster and continued this role for the next four years before moving back to Melbourne as a dedicated aviation meteorologist.

Whilst in Hobart, Deborah was encouraged to apply to become an Antarctic meteorologist and was selected to spend her first summer season in Antarctica in 2017. This started her passion for Antarctic meteorology. Antarctica is a place where the weather impacts all operations, including planes and helicopters travelling to remote scientific field camps, as well as maintenance works carried out by tradespeople. Deborah has now completed four summer seasons, around four months each as an embedded Antarctic meteorologist in support of the Australian Antarctic program, posted at the research stations of Casey and Davis.

Deborah is now a senior Antarctic meteorologist and the senior BoM representative at the Antarctic research stations during the summer season. This means playing a key role in planning the weather support provided to the Antarctic program and the different scientific research projects, including aviation, marine and traverse support. She is also a member of the senior leadership team on the Antarctic stations during the summer season, assisting station leaders with the culture on station.

Outside of Antarctic work, Deborah's usual role at the BoM is an Aviation Service Improvement Lead. In this role, she manages the aviation training and competency program for aviation meteorologists located in Melbourne and Brisbane who write the forecasts for all airports and airspace around Australia. Her day-to-day involves completing rigorous competency assessments of meteorologists to ensure they have the necessary skills to complete their work, developing training material and ensuring a culture of continuous improvement within the team.

While becoming a meteorologist may seem like a very niche career, Deborah is so thankful that she came across the graduate program and the many incredible opportunities she has had working for BoM.

# Gemma Hallett

ASSOCIATE  
PROFESSOR

Life involves a lot of 'sliding doors' moments, and being granted an academic scholarship to Strathcona when Gemma Hallett was 10 years old might be the most important one yet for her. Gemma completed Year 12 in 2011 and attended Strathcona with her sister Mads. One of the great lessons Strathcona taught Gemma was to throw yourself into what you love and what you're good at, and trust it will send you in the right direction. Gemma loved her final years, spending her days in English, Literature, French and Legal Studies and International Studies. Doing what Gemma loved, with devoted teachers and incredible friends, helped her score a great ATAR and study a Double Degree of Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of International Relations at Monash University.

Gemma threw herself into University life, joining the Law Students' Society, volunteering at community legal centres, and landing an internship at Human Rights First in New York. She also spent six months studying and living at Sciences Po in Paris.

Meanwhile Gemma worked part time in cafes, call centres and admin and fell in love with her best friend, who later became Gemma's partner!

After months of hustling, panicking and networking, Gemma landed her first job as a graduate lawyer at Hall & Wilcox. She spent three great years learning the ropes as an employment lawyer again, throwing herself into what felt right: discrimination, sexual harassment, modern slavery and whistleblower protections. Meanwhile, work supported Gemma to continue volunteering where she spent six months at the Australian Human Rights Commission, and three years chairing the board of the Minus18 Foundation, Australia's leading LGBTQIA+ charity. Gemma gained the confidence and skills to move to Victoria Legal Aid, advising marginalised Victorians who'd been mistreated at work and here she got the chance to work on human rights litigation too.



In 2021 Gemma moved to Canberra and spent two years working in human rights and legal policy for the ACT Government. Gemma was the Human Rights Advisor on cutting edge reforms, such as legalising voluntary assisted dying and banning non-consensual medical treatment on intersex people. Following this stint in Canberra, Gemma's partner was offered a three year posting as a diplomat in Geneva and together they moved there in late 2023.

Gemma recently started in a short-term role as the Human Rights and Gender Adviser for the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations. It's a dream job, and some days she can't believe she's there. Gemma is not sure what the next few years hold but is excited to make the most of spending her 30s in Europe.

Gemma's career so far has been incredible, and thanks Strathcona for encouraging her to dream big, lean into her strengths, and care about the world. Gemma also has Strathcona to thank for some incredible friends who she is still very close with.

In school, Gabrielle Ebeling who graduated in 2014, was primarily interested in languages, studying English, Literature and French in her final year. When it came time to decide what to study at university, Gabrielle attended an open day at Monash University. Inspired by her favourite movie *Legally Blonde*, she visited the law school and immediately felt that it was right for her. After a year of hard study, she was accepted into an Arts/Law degree at Monash University, where she majored in French Studies and minored in Human Rights.

Throughout her degree, Gabrielle made the most of Monash's international opportunities. In 2018, Gabrielle commenced a semester abroad at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, where she studied Global Law and Visual Arts in the Public Sphere. At the start of 2019, she travelled to Jakarta for two months to study Indonesian law and language, before completing a four-week internship at a not-for-profit organisation focused on the human rights impacts of free-trade agreements. Later that year, Gabrielle spent three months in New York, where she interned for the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, a non-government organisation which advocates for the prevention of atrocity crimes. During this internship, Gabrielle attended the UN General Assembly, a true highlight of her university experience.

Gabrielle did not go into her law degree with the intention of practicing law. However, after graduating in the middle of 2020, she found her options to be limited due to the uncertainty of ongoing lockdowns. As a result, Gabrielle decided to complete a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice in 2021, a qualification which would allow her to practice law. In October 2021, Gabrielle was admitted to the Supreme Court of Victoria as an Australian Lawyer.

Late in 2021, Gabrielle got her first job as a Court Officer in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court, where she assisted Magistrates in and out of court. At the start of 2023, she started working as a Judge's Associate in the criminal division of the County Court of Victoria. In this role, Gabrielle provides legal assistance to her Judge across a range of matters, including criminal trials, sentencing and appeals. Next year, Gabrielle hopes to get a job as a criminal defence solicitor, a role which would combine her love of law, human rights and criminal advocacy.

Gabrielle's mantra has always been to never say no to an opportunity, no matter how daunting it may seem. She feels the legacy that Strathcona has left in her life is the knowledge that anything is achievable when you set your mind to it. This opens so many pathways, which is at once exciting and overwhelming. While Gabrielle was never certain that a career in law was right for her, she has learnt there is no use fretting over making the 'right decision'. Whatever decision you make in your career, you will always find a way to make it right.

Strathcona taught Gabrielle to go out into the world with courage, to always be inspired by other women and to be truly unstoppable.



**Gabrielle  
Ebeling**  
LAWYER







## Alexandra Legge

TEACHER

Alexandra Legge attended Strathcona from Year 5 to Year 12 as a recipient of the Beth Smallwood Scholarship and graduated in 2016. Profoundly deaf from birth, Alexandra navigates both the hearing and deaf worlds with the aid of a cochlear implant and the use of English and Auslan.

During her time at Strathcona, Alexandra was a keen sportswoman and a member — eventually captain — of the literary society. Deprived of spoken language until the age of four, Alexandra developed a passion for reading from a young age. She participated in both netball and rowing until Year 12, winning the Club Person of the Year Award for netball and Senior Coxswain Award for rowing that year.

After the conclusion of her Strathcona journey, Alexandra attended Swinburne University of Technology, completing a Bachelor's degree in Primary Education. As a student at the university, she served for a time as the President of the Swinburne Netball Club. She also played netball for Victoria at the Australian Deaf Games in 2018, winning a silver medal.

Alexandra graduated from university in 2021 and has since spent time relief teaching and taking on short-term contracts in the senior school at Scotch College and Presbyterian Ladies' College. She currently works as the Rowing Coordinator at PLC, running the school's rowing program. As a member of the wider rowing community, she has twice won the Rowing Victoria Coxswain of the Year award, and the Mercantile Rowing Club Coxswain of the Year award.

Her experiences in relief and contract work have led her into the fields of Health & PE and Geography education; she particularly enjoys teaching students about Antarctica!

In the eight years since she walked out of Featherstone Hall for the last time as a student, she has found unexpected trials placed in her path, and learned how to navigate and overcome these challenges.

Alexandra firmly believes that the challenges she faced in her early life have contributed to the skills she brings now as a teacher. She has a particular insight and ability to relate to students who may be facing their own challenges, and recognises the importance of building both skills and confidence in her students.

Alexandra's time at Strathcona shaped her, in many ways, into the woman she is today, by supporting her to complete her VCE as a deaf student; by including her in all activities and hobbies she gravitated towards; and being unafraid to place responsibilities on her shoulders and allow her to carry them out. In doing so, Strathcona instilled in her the motto of the School, words to live by for life — *fortiter, fideliter, feliciter: bravely, faithfully, happily.*

# The Technologists

UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN  
IN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

The Technologists clusters celebrates unstoppable women who thrive in the tech world, manipulating digital technology to build, program, and design the future. From pioneering software engineers to creative web designers, these women possess the skills to transform the digital landscape. Discover the stories of tech trailblazers who combine communication, teamwork, and meticulous planning to lead us into the digital age.

# Professor Ainsley Newson

## BIOETHICS PROFESSOR

Professor Ainsley Newson completed Year 12 at Strathcona in 1993, following which she attended the University of Melbourne, completing a Bachelor of Science (Hons) followed by a PhD in Bioethics and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons). After completing her studies in Melbourne, Ainsley travelled to the UK, undertaking the role of Research Fellow in Ethics and Genetics at Imperial College London. Ainsley was then appointed to Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Ethics at the University of Bristol. Ainsley was named "Young Australian Achiever of the Year in the UK" in 2010, an award presented annually since 2005 to celebrate great talent by The Australia Day Foundation.

In 2012 Ainsley was also the recipient of the Strathcona Medal for her service to Bioethics, and Medical/Clinical Ethics.

In 2013, after returning to Australia, Ainsley was appointed as Senior Lecturer in Bioethics at the University of Sydney and is now Professor of Bioethics at Sydney Health Ethics, a division of the University of Sydney, where she teaches and coordinates Units of Studies within the degrees. Her students are very appreciative of the care and interest she takes and note that she is very generous with her time and knowledge.



Ainsley is an internationally recognised expert in ethical issues in human genomics, genetics and reproduction. Her work focuses on the appropriate implementation of these technologies, benefiting individuals and populations. Issues that Ainsley has focused on include data sharing, ownership, population screening and genetic testing during pregnancy and in children. Ainsley has particular expertise in the ethical issues that arise in both personalised medicine and human reproduction. Her job involves asking and answering questions like: should we sequence all babies' genomes? Is the increased use of genetic testing in pregnancy okay? How should we decide whether to introduce a new reproductive technology?

In 2019, Ainsley was presented with the Award for Excellence by the Mito Foundation, for her research project on mitochondrial donation in Australia. In addition to her academic role, Ainsley is also a member of several policy-making committees in bioethics and health for government and professional associations around Australia and overseas. Ainsley also appears regularly in the media to discuss current issues in bioethics. Her current research projects address issues relating to ethical aspects of genetics and human reproduction. A recent project of Ainsley's was the Mackenzie's Mission – a funded trial of reproductive genetic carrier screening in Australia, in which Ainsley led the bioethics program within this project, leading to several publications. Ainsley has published over 150 research outputs and has helped gain more than \$65m in research funding in Australia and internationally. Ainsley is a regular contributor to media across print, radio, television and online; and is adept at discussing complex issues with non-expert audiences.





# Karina Klonis

**CONSUMER  
PARTNERSHIPS  
LEADER**



Karina Klonis (nee Skourletos) spent 12 wonderful years at Strathcona, where her passion for learning and community involvement took root. In her final year 2008, Karina was one of the Debating and Public Speaking Captains, and although Findlay didn't win the House Cup, the friendships and memories made were invaluable. After finishing Year 12 Karina embarked on a Bachelor of Arts (Major in Italian, Minor in French)/ Bachelor of Laws at Monash University. Her time at Monash was enriched by a semester abroad in Prato, Italy—an experience that had a profound impact on her, having first visited Prato on Strathcona's Italy Trip in Year 10.

University was more than just academics; it was about engaging with diverse communities and making lasting connections. Karina joined several committees, including the Monash Law Students' Society and the National Union of Greek Australian Students, and continued her involvement with the Old Strathconian's Association (where she is still a committee member to this day). Working part-time at Slater & Gordon Lawyers while at university, allowed her to hone her language skills and taught her the importance of delivering exceptional customer experiences.

An internship at Shell Australia during university introduced Karina to the dynamic world of fuel, which led to a fulfilling seven-year career at Viva Energy (formerly Shell). Starting as a commercial graduate in 2015, Karina worked across the Shell Card, Lubricants, and Aviation businesses. Highlights included visiting the Cooper Basin, travelling around Australia, and witnessing the impactful work of the Cathy Freeman Foundation on Palm Island. These experiences not only expanded her professional skills but also deepened her appreciation for community and customer engagement.

In 2021, Karina moved to the tech industry, joining DoorDash in Customer Strategy & Operations. This role has been a thrilling ride, where her team focuses on in-app merchandising, partnerships, pricing, and product launches. Karina is proud to have been part of launching the New Zealand market, the DashPass membership service, and DoorDash's partnerships with Afterpay and CBA. Karina has recently returned to work after maternity leave and has enjoyed solving interesting customer problems, developing cutting edge skills and being innovative at lightning speed.

Strathcona instilled a number of values in Karina including resilience, the importance of hard work, giving back to the community, humility and empathy which are key values and traits which continues to hold her in strong stead today.



# Genevieve Day

MARKETING CEO

Since graduating from Strathcona in the class of 2009, Genevieve Day has been an instrumental force in developing and leading the influencer marketing industry in Australia.

After completing a Bachelor of Professional Communications at RMIT, Genevieve started her career working at a lifestyle PR agency specialising in tourism and luxury hotels. After noticing a shift in the media landscape in 2015 she went out on her own and started digital talent agency Day Management, one of the first influencer marketing agencies in the country.

Genevieve has worked on campaigns with leading global brands such as Apple and L'Oreal Paris and driven social-first campaigns beyond the phone screen, with her talent featured on national billboards, TV commercials, land publishing deals and coveted out of home campaigns.

Genevieve has been recognised from her work by the Australian Financial Review's Fast 100 List, Business News Australia's Young Entrepreneur Awards in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 and the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in 2021. She was also a founding member of the Australian Influencer Marketing Council, and regularly speaks on the social media industry to programs such as *Channel 7 News*, *A Current Affair* and *The Project*.



Today, Day Mgmt has grown into the Day Mgmt Group, comprising of two additional agencies — Next of Kin Mgmt for family talent marketing to the household's decision maker, the mum, and a TikTok-specific agency Day Creators.

Gen believes that her Strathcona days helped her build a network of supportive women in her industry, all happy to help out a fellow alumna. The Strathcona environment also supported her curiosity, pushed her to expand her horizons and has left Gen with many fond memories and proud achievements, both academically and beyond — some of her favourites being the Gilbert house dance competition and school musical performances!





## Alexandra Herft

MARKETING  
MANAGER

Alexandra Herft's journey since leaving Strathcona in 2010 has been marked by significant achievements and a love for marketing, social media, and digital media.

At Strathcona, Alexandra discovered her love for connecting with people and the Arts. This passion led her to pursue a career in the creative industry, where she has over nine years of experience in social media and marketing. Alexandra's journey began in the weddings and events industry, where she worked for six years.

Alexandra moved into social media roles, applying her skills across various companies, from consulting firms to creative agencies. Her career path led her to Kikki.K, where she worked in the marketing department as a social media specialist. Alexandra continues to use her extensive experience to drive effective campaigns and create engaging content. Her expertise in content strategy, social media outreach and trend research has been pivotal to her success. Alexandra's knack for staying ahead of industry trends and building meaningful connections has helped her excel in her field.

Throughout her career, Alexandra has been dedicated to continuous learning and professional growth. She has taken on various marketing roles, further study and participated in mentor programs, broadening her skill set and understanding of the digital landscape.

Reflecting on her journey, Alexandra credits her time at Strathcona for shaping her into the woman she is today. The school's nurturing environment and emphasis on personal growth provided her with the confidence and skills needed to excel in her career. Strathcona showed Alexandra that her future pathway lay within the creative industry, a revelation that has guided her career ever since. She also drew inspiration from watching her mother develop as a leader, moving from Head of Mathematics to Acting Principal at Strathcona, as well as from her sister, who is also an Old Strathconian. Even though Alexandra finished after her year at Tay Creggan in 2010, she always celebrates and continues to support and enjoy Strathcona and all it does. The values instilled in her during her years at Strathcona continue to guide her, both personally and professionally.

Alexandra believes that the supportive community and the opportunities she had at Strathcona played a pivotal role in her development. The friendships she formed, the challenges she overcame, and the teachers who guided her have all contributed to her success. She is proud to be part of a network of remarkable women who continue to make a difference in the world.

As she looks to the future, Alexandra remains committed to pushing boundaries and exploring the endless possibilities that lie ahead and is determined to continue making a positive and meaningful impact in her industry and beyond.

# Mads Hallett

## CHIEF OF STAFF

Since graduating from Strathcona in 2014, Mads Hallett began her professional career in startups after studying marketing and economics... whilst dreaming of becoming a chef! Career journeys are rarely a straight-line and Mads feels hers has been just the same.

After completing Year 12 in 2014, Mads studied a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Melbourne. Hungry to get started in business, Mads joined Forethought Research in a Project Support role three days a week, where she learned how to work in an office, doing everything from manning reception to preparing client reports. Mads balanced this with hospitality jobs at Fonda and a local café. For Mads, cooking and sharing food with others has always been her first love!

Mads' marketing career started in the Uber Eats Melbourne launch team in 2018. Initially joining as a Marketing Coordinator, she was thrown all kinds of projects including social media, events, PR and content creation and the team grew to be the largest market in the world in Mads' first six months. Uber supported Mads to move into a full-time role during her final two years of study, and as soon as she graduated, Mads was on a plane to San Francisco to take on a Global Social Media Strategist role.

Mads learned heaps from working with the best of the best, and had the chance to apply these skills in a Marketing Operations role in New York City,

In 2020, it was time to return home to Melbourne and Mads was thrilled to be introduced to the CEO at hospitality tech startup Mr Yum. Again, it was a jump into the unknown to take a role at a 20 person Aussie startup, but an amazing opportunity to join as Head of Marketing and grow the team from two to eleven happy marketers through a period of massive growth.

In early 2022, Mads became Chief of Staff at Mr Yum, which has given her a front-row seat into the inner workings of a high-growth business and an opportunity to play a key role in the 2023 merger with me&u. In this role, Mads supports the CEO, COO and leadership team on Internal Communications, Operations and many things in between.

Reflecting on her time since school, Mads is grateful to Strathcona for providing a supportive environment that nurtured her interests in business, economics and psychology. As one example, the program that was offered at the time, to do a Melbourne University subject in Year 12 showed Mads that it's possible to balance work, study and school. Also, although the school musicals were a significant time commitment, they are an example of Strathcona's focus on students having well-rounded and balanced lives. This has supported Mads to take big leaps whilst enjoying life outside of work.





## Maddison Hopkins

DIGITAL &  
DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER

When Maddison (Maddy) Hopkins graduated from Strathcona in 2014, she was unsure which path to take, but at school, she enjoyed studying visual communication design (VCD), and health and human development. After leaving school, Maddy decided to enrol in a Bachelor of Nutrition at Deakin University. She found the course interesting, but quickly discovered it was very science-heavy, which wasn't for her, so she transferred her studies at Deakin and enrolled into a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual Communication Design).

Maddy went on to complete her creative arts degree and throughout her course, decided to undertake marketing units as her electives as she knew that graphic designers typically sat within a marketing team. After graduating from her creative arts degree in 2018, Maddy decided to undertake further study in marketing as she enjoyed the elective units she'd studied in her creative arts degree. She completed a Master of Marketing specialising in Public Relations and Image Marketing at Deakin University and graduated in 2022.

During her master's degree, Maddy completed an International Marketing study abroad tour, which was a highlight of her university studies at Deakin. She visited several businesses and agencies in London, Amsterdam, and Paris, to learn about how brands marketed themselves and operated during the time when BREXIT was occurring. The highlight for Maddy was visiting Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein Head Quarters in Amsterdam.

Maddy entered the marketing industry at the age of 22 where she worked casually as a Junior Graphic Designer and Marketing Assistant at Fletchers Real Estate, however, she and many members of her team were stood down in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Maddy worked for two years as a Practice Manager in a nephrology clinic at Epworth Eastern, where she'd also previously worked part time during her university studies.

Post the pandemic, Maddy re-entered the marketing industry, landing a role as Marketing and Social Media Coordinator at Castalia Performance, a company that manages the corporate services

on behalf of the owners for several retirement village and aged care homes spanning across the east coast of Australia. She loved that her role combined her passion for both marketing and graphic design, whilst working in a growing industry that makes a difference to the lives of others. After 18 months in the role, Maddy was promoted to Marketing Manager, where she worked until August 2024.

Maddy recently joined the marketing team at Strathcona Girls Grammar as the Development and Digital Engagement Manager, taking care of the social media platforms and digitally engaging with our alumnae community.

Reflecting on her career journey so far, something Maddy would love to tell her younger self is to trust the process and know that everything that happens along the way is a steppingstone to where you're meant to be. Maddy says that she loves being back at the school which helped shape the person she is today and believes that unstoppable women truly do begin at Strathcona.



Since leaving Strathcona in 2016, Ruby Meers has built a career in design and creative advertising. During her school years Ruby was always a highly creative individual, always involved in any kind of creative activity. Whether that be designing brochures, formal invites, or filming and editing videos. Art, Media and Visual Communication were Ruby's favourite subjects during school where she fully immersed herself into all the creative opportunities she could. This led her to receive the Barbara Green Art Award in 2015, which is awarded to the most outstanding visual art student that year. Her tenacity and creative flare have followed her leaving Strathcona, which lead her into studying Communication Design at RMIT.

Following her studies, Ruby started her creative career as a volunteer graphic designer at We Are Mobilise, a youth lead charity that develops solutions for those experiencing homelessness across Australia. She played a pivotal role in helping establish their brand identity, which saw them reach national exposure with Ned Brockman's record run across the country in 2022.

Shortly after, Ruby entered as a creative in the world of media and advertising. Starting at an independent media agency, she was able to experience new challenges beyond her education in design. In her early career she spearheaded leading and crafting television commercials, radio ads and social media strategies for major Australian retailers.

A career highlight was art directing the 2021 Seacol campaign. This involved from concept to reality, building out a suite of creative assets and working with creative teams to produce their television commercial. This ad played during the 2021 AFL Grand Final where the match had an average national viewership of 4.11 million. It is the fourth most-watched AFL game in history, and it was the most-watched grand final since 2005.

Ruby is now a Creative Strategist at Australia's largest billboard company, oOh!media. her role involves forming strategies and crafting innovative ideas for brands in the billboard advertising landscape. She has worked across many iconic brands including L'Oréal, Disney, LEGO and Specsavers. Her favourite part about her job is educating brands and agencies on the power and importance of creativity.

Ruby's time at Strathcona was pivotal in shaping her to be the unstoppable woman she is today. Strathcona helped her to foster passion for creativity and encouraged Ruby to take on challenges with a bold and fearless mindset. Strathcona enabled Ruby to be her most authentic self by providing a supportive environment that nurtured her individuality, empowered her to pursue a creative career, and instilled in her the confidence to lead, both in her personal and professional life.

**Ruby Meers**  
CREATIVE STRATEGIST



# Celebrating our innovative approach to education.



Strathcona Girls Grammar is proud to be named as one of The Educator's 5-Star Innovative Schools for 2024, recognising our commitment to redefining education and well-being. This award celebrates Strathcona's innovative programs, including our Wholebeing framework and Floresco learning philosophy, placing holistic well-being, resilience, and authentic learning experiences at the heart of our community from Early Years to Year 12.

Our Wholebeing program, developed with The University of Melbourne, has encouraged a cultural shift, embedding a whole school approach to well-being across all campuses. Floresco, meanwhile, ignites creativity, curiosity, joy and exploration in Early Years learning. Together with initiatives like the Envision program at our dedicated Year 9 campus, Tay Creggan, these innovations have created a thriving, connected school environment, strengthening Strathcona's position as a leader in education and a school where unstoppable girls begin.







# Alumnae updates

## Births

**Victoria (Tori) Allen (Pittendrigh '15)** and husband, Ramon Allen, welcomed Sunday Grace Piper Allen on Wednesday 3 April 2024 at 8.16pm. Sunday weighed 3.34kg.

**Shana Besanko ('06)** and partner, Andrew Kovacs, welcomed the birth of their second daughter, Zara Aubrey Kesanko on 5 February 2024, a little sister to Emma.

**Genevieve Day ('09)** and partner, Patrick Gillett, welcomed the arrival of their little son, Henry, on 18 September 2023 at Epworth Freemasons. Henry weighed 3.91kgs.

**Shannon Flynn (Ramsay '07)** and partner, Liam, welcomed Isabella Rae Flynn on 18 November 2023 at 6:07pm. There is something special about seeing Indi, their first daughter, as a big sister. She is obsessed with Izzy. So much love for our family.

**Sierra Gooding (Wilson '11)** and partner, Michael, welcomed Lila Ann Gooding on Monday 4 March 2024 at 10.38am. Lila weighed 3.5kgs and is a little sister for Cole.

**Laura MacIntosh ('05)** and partner, Tristan Larter, welcomed baby Oliver (Ollie) MacIntosh Larter on 18 September 2023 who was born in Hobart, Tasmania.

**Amy MacKintosh ('10)** and husband, Charles Korn, welcomed daughter Zoe Gloria Korn on 31 January 2024 at Epworth Freemasons. Zoe's birth weight was 3.57kg.

**Wei Ai Ngo (Aimee '99)** and partner, Scott Worsley and big sister Lucia, welcomed their baby girl, Neve Mae Worsley on 8 August 2024.

**Cynthia Pelosi (Costanzo '11)** and partner, Michael, were delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Serena Pelosi, on 5 January 2023. Serena was 4.56kg (10 pounds) and 53cm(!) when she was born at St Vincent's Private Hospital.

**Alexia White ('06)** and partner, John, welcomed their twin boys, Arthur Forrest Wilson and Patrick Jude Wilson, on 23 June 2023. The boys have been warmly welcomed by their big sister, Mia who loves to smother them with cuddles! (Still learning how to be gentle!) They were born at Francis Perry.

**Jess Wilson ('08)** and husband Aaron Lane, welcomed baby Patrick James on Friday 30 August 2024 at Epworth Freemasons weighing 2.8kgs. Patrick was in a hurry to come into the world being delivered four weeks early!



**Clockwise from top left:** Zoe Gloria Korn, Arthur Forrest and Patrick Jude Wilson, Lila Ann Gooding, Henry Day, Patrick James Lane, Ollie MacIntosh, Neve Mae Worsley with sister Lucia, Serena Pelosi, Sunday Grace Piper Allen, Zara Aubrey Kesanko and sister Emma.









## Marriages

**Rachael Adams (Coulthard '14)** married Joel Adams on Saturday 6 April 2024 at Lancemore, Macedon Ranges. One of Rachael's bridesmaids was Meg Parry ('14) and there were a number of other Strathy alumnae guests present — Madeleine Lack ('14), Joyce Mitchell (Lim '14), Laura Seddon ('14) and Samantha Walker ('19).

**Georgia Daniel ('09)** married Dennis Waluga on 30 November 2023 at Stones of the Yarra Valley. Georgia's maid of honour was her sister, Hayley Daniel ('11) and her bridesmaids were Georgina Read ('09) and Elise Tebbutt ('10). Also in attendance from Strathy were Dr Rachel Fetherston ('09) and Isabelle Jardine ('09). It was a wonderful day!

**Alana Donoghue ('10)** married Zach Ginies on Thursday 16 November 2023 at Ricky's in Noosa followed by a cruise on the Catalina. Many Strathy alumnae joined the happy couple on their special day — Laura Liddy (Donoghue '08), Nikita Goodwill, Mia Adam, Julia Hart, Laura Gould, Hayley Clark, Kate McKay (Oldland), Georgia Studach, Olivia Andolfatto and Lidia Vido (all Class of '10), Eleanor Geilings and Rachelle Soumprou (both Class of '13), Issy Duyker ('14) and Stephanie Thom ('15).

**Sarah Keane ('13)** married Lachlan Sens in March this year. They were married at a winery in Adelaide

where they now live. Sarah's mum (Sue Keane, nee Armitage '72) and her aunty (Jenni Heffernan, nee Armitage '74) were guests, as well as Amy Martin and Monique Fernandez also from 2013.

**Olivia Kellock (Stark '17)** married Benjamin Kellock on 19 April 2024 at Encore, St Kilda with the ceremony at Christ Church, Hawthorn. Clare Duyker ('17) was one of the members of Olivia's bridal party.

**Demi Parker (Papigiotis '08)** married Luke Parker on Friday 8 December 2023. They were married at a stunning venue called Mewburn Park in Maffra, near Gippsland in Victoria. Demi's bridesmaids were Stacey McArdle ('08), Evie Papigiotis (sister, '05), Jess Lane (Cummings '08), Sally Hankridge (Hankin '08) and Jess Griffiths ('08).

**Brittany Salamouras (Testro '11)** married Dean Salamouras on the 16 September 2023. Their wedding was at The Glasshouse Brucke in Richmond. Brittany was joined by her sister Jessica Testro ('08) as her bridesmaid. The couple celebrated with family and friends, performing a traditional Greek bridal dance during the reception!

**Claire Stollery ('13)** married Paddy Beasley at Wandin Park Estate on Saturday 6 April 2024. Clare Exinger, Charlotte McKinnon and Gaby Coulthard (all '13) were Claire's bridesmaids.



**Clockwise from top left:** Olivia and Benjamin, Rachael and Joel, Demi and Luke, Georgia with her bridal party, Alana and Zach, Brittany and Deam, Sarah and Lachlan, Claire and Paddy with their bridal party.



## Engagements

**Stephanie Anderson ('08)** is engaged to John Luong. Stephanie was posted in November 2023, by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to Palau which is an archipelago of over 500 islands, part of the Micronesia region in the western Pacific Ocean. Stephanie and John are planning to marry late 2024 or early 2025.

**Ebony Fietz ('06)** was engaged to Gerhard Heyns on 3 November 2023. The wedding ceremony will be held at Tay Creggan on Saturday 26 October 2024 followed by the reception at Chin Chin.

**Emma Nyhof ('03)** was engaged to Justin Brown on 14 February 2024 at their local beach in Parkdale.

**Keely Simpson-Bull ('14)** was engaged to Christopher Johnson, in the Pilbara on 15 June 2024.



**From left:**  
Keely and  
Christopher,  
Emma and Justin.

## In memoriam

**Julie Scott ('86)** sadly passed away on 11 September 2023, after first being diagnosed with breast cancer six years ago. Julie had fond memories of her years at Strathy and is sadly missed by all. Her two sons, Connor 18 and Harry 15, have her determination to be happy.

**Doris Melville (Hill '47)** sadly passed away on 14 August 2020 in Cairns, aged 90. Her plaque in Cairns Cemetery describes her as "a gracious, giving and gentle lady". Doris volunteered in the Strathcona Development Office and the 1940s group always met on the last Saturday in March with Doris organising the catch up, assisted by Merle Herbert (Dunstan '47) and Ruth Spencer (Wilkin '48). This group donated a pew to the School Chapel in memory of Dora B Featherstone. Doris was Head Prefect in 1947 and a Prefect in 1946. Doris dedicated her long life to early childhood development starting her career as a kindergarten teacher and then supervising new teachers through the University of Melbourne. Doris was stepmother to Lynette Melville-Rea (Melville '82).

**Jeanette Coulter (Brooks '81)** sadly passed away on 11 April 2024 from vasculitis. Jeanette's husband, Andrew, described her as a beautiful compassionate woman and thoughtful friend who was devoted to her family. Jeanette enriched the lives of many and will be greatly



missed. She passed away at home in Williamstown at age 60. Loving wife of Andrew, mother of James & Claire and mother-in-law to Damian. Loved daughter of Robert and Joan Brooks, sister to Leanne ('78 dec) and Jacqueline. An inspiring woman willing to help all who will be fondly remembered by all. A service was held on 22 April 2024 at Royal Yacht Club of Victoria in Williamstown.

**Catherine (Cate) Clarke (Cameron '66)** sadly passed away on 27 July 2024 after a six-and-a-half year battle with cancer aged 75 years. Strathcona days and memories were very special to Cate, as well as the lifelong friends she made. The family were very privileged that a few OSA alumnae attended a celebration of Cate's life at the Mount Martha Yacht Club on the Mornington Peninsula.

**Judith Newnham OAM (Cone '47)** passed away peacefully on 16 March 2024, aged 95. Judith was Deputy School Captain in 1947 and featured in the 'Who's Who of Australian Women'. Judith was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on 13 June 2005 for her service to the community through Red Cross. In 1994, Judy's reputation as an authority on first aid made her the obvious choice to work with a team of three on a First Aid Manual. Having completed the manual, she then worked on writing a guide to accompany the manual. After completing these projects,

Judith moved back to voluntary work. From 1987-94, Judith was a member of the Australian Resuscitation Team.

**Claire Wilkinson ('48 Giles)** passed away peacefully on 9 June 2024. Claire was a student at Strathcona and also taught Grade 3 in Mellor House for many years. Fiona Fisher (Wilkinson '89), Claire's daughter also attended Strathcona. Claire talked fondly about her time at School, both as a student and teacher. She wrote many of the Christmas and Easter plays and treasured a cross stitch given to her when she retired made for her by one of the other staff members.

**Judy Womersley (Past Staff)** sadly passed away on 18 August 2024. Judy was a French and Italian language teacher as well as Head of Tay Creggan from 1977 to 1979. She taught at Strathcona from 1974 to 1989. Judy will be sadly missed by her family and colleagues.

**Norma Leseberg (Past Staff)** sadly passed away on 30 August 2024. Norma died at Ringwood Private Hospital after a short illness. The 13 years (1979-1992) she spent at Strathcona were some of her happiest and she forged many ongoing friendships with her colleagues and their families. Norma's granddaughter, Cathryn Youings ('12) attended Strathcona for Years 7-12.



## Other news

Meg Fricke ('96) and Jo Cooper ('91) represented Victoria in hockey at the Australian Masters Games in Sydney recently, with the finals being played on Saturday 6 July. Meg's team defeated NSW 2-1 to win the 45+ division grand final gold medal, and Jo's team was runner up for the bronze medal in the 50+ division. Both Meg and Jo were keen hockey players at Strathcona, being guided by Mrs Devlin and Miss Chittick. The tournament was played at the Olympic Park Hockey Centre.



# Reunions

Once a Strathy Girl,  
always a Strathy Girl!

Over the past 12 months Strathcona Girls Grammar and the Old Strathconians' Association have hosted 18 reunions, including in London and Sydney, with hundreds of alumnae coming together. The reunions offer an opportunity to talk about memorable milestones, as alumnae come together, not only to celebrate the past, but also to continue nurturing the connections and values that unite them as Strathcona women. Strathy women look forward to a future enriched by the strong ties that have always defined our past students.

As well as these reunions, the School has celebrated its 100-year history with special events including the Centenary Foundation Day and Commissioning Service at St Paul's Cathedral, opening of the Time Capsule buried in 1995 at Tay Creggan, the Centenary Diamond Gala dinner at the National Gallery of Victoria, the unveiling of Strathcona's Centenary Sculpture *The Conversation* by alumnae Hannah Northam ('76) and book launch of the pictorial history *A Century of Memories, A Future of Promise*. Many alumnae joined us for these special celebratory occasions.

We appreciate hearing from our Old Strathconians about their achievements, international and local community contributions, engagements, weddings, births and sadly news of the passing of alumnae. We encourage you to always keep us updated with your contact details by emailing [osa@strathcona.vic.edu.au](mailto:osa@strathcona.vic.edu.au)



**Top:** Alumnae attending the Centenary Foundation Day and Commissioning service at St Paul's Cathedral. **Above:** Hannah Northam ('76) installation of the Centenary sculpture *The Conversation*.





**Clockwise from top left:** Class of 1961, 1963, 1965; Class of 1960-69;  
Class of 1973; Class of 1974; Class of 1978; Class of 1979.





**Clockwise from top left:** Class of 1983; Class of 1984; Class of 1988;  
Class of 1989; Class of 1994; Class of 1999.





**Clockwise from top left:** Class of 2004; Class of 2009; Class of 2014; Sydney reunion in August 2024; Class of 2019; Class of 2022; London reunion in September 2023.



# Strathcona through every step

CELEBRATING THE STUDENTS  
WHO HAVE GROWN, LEARNED,  
AND FLOURISHED FROM  
THEIR FIRST DAY TO THEIR  
FINAL YEAR.

2024 marks a significant milestone of the 13-year Strathcona School Journey for these students! Some began their Strathcona schooling journey as bubbly 3 or 4 year-olds in the ELC, while others joined as energetic 5 year-olds in Prep. To honour these students who faithfully spent their whole education journey with us, we proudly celebrate our "Fidelians."



## PARENT TESTIMONIAL:

*Our daughter Bethany bravely, faithfully and happily began her journey at Strathcona's ELC 3 year old kinder class in 2010. This year, we proudly witnessed with joy as she graduated at the Year 12 Class of 2024 Rose Assembly. We are blessed with wonderful memories and lifelong friendships made in a school that is more than a community. It's an extended family. Our heartfelt gratitude to all the teachers, volunteers and staff who were part of Bethany's fifteen years at Strathy. Thank you to Principal Lorna Beegan for your inspiring leadership in making Bethany's final year an extra special and memorable experience. — Patricia and Jason Dodd*





**Left to right:** Isabella (Izzy) King, Cherie Katsoulis, Gemma Kellock, Naomi Attalia, Sienna Eccleston, Bethany Dodd





# Strathcona's Centenary Celebrations

Strathcona's Centenary year has been a remarkable celebration of 100 years of dedicated to girls' education, developing intellectually curious, optimistic, and life-ready young women who are empowered to reach their full potential in a rapidly changing world.

Throughout 2024, the School marked this milestone with a series of special events that honoured its rich history, celebrated its achievements, and brought the Strathcona community together. As we reflect on the past, we also look ahead with excitement, ready to inspire and support the next generation of unstoppable young women who will shape the future.

## CENTENARY FOUNDATION DAY SERVICE AND COMMISSIONING OF PRINCIPAL

We began the Centenary year celebrations on Monday 12 February with the Centenary Foundation Day Service and Commissioning of Principal at St Paul's Cathedral. This was a momentous occasion, not only marking 100 years of Strathcona, but also welcoming our 11th Principal, Lorna Beegan. The service gathered students, staff, alumnae, and distinguished guests who united in song and celebration of Strathcona's ongoing commitment to instilling vision, wisdom, and faith in every student. Alumna, Dr Liz Rushen AM reflected on the School's legacy, setting the tone for what would be a year of both honouring the past and embracing the future.



## TIME CAPSULE OPENING AT TAY CREGGAN

On Thursday 22 February, we welcomed back past Principals, past Heads of Tay Creggan, alumnae, students, and special guests for the Time Capsule Opening at Tay Creggan. The capsule, buried in 1993 during a school fair by Miss Joan Mellor and Prep student Amy Tcheupdjian, was opened with its contents on display for all to enjoy. The event was nothing short of a journey through time and was a nostalgic reminder of Strathcona during that time, but also encouraged us to look forward to continuing to shape its bright future. Mrs Ruth Bunyan AM, the Principal at the time of the capsule burial, shared insights into what Strathcona was like in 1993. Principal, Ms Lorna Beegan, reflected on the contents

of the time capsule and how it compares to today's world, and Ms Jen Buchanan, current Head of Tay Creggan, shared visions for the future. Year 9 students showcased the evolution of the Strathcona uniform over the past century through a fashion parade, with the guidance and support of longtime staff member, Diana Little. Adding to the significance of the event was the loaned painting of Lydia Mortill kindly supplied by the Lyceum Club. The portrait of Lydia who at one stage lived at Tay Creggan, was painted by Constance Stokes, offering a glimpse into the past of Tay Creggan. Plans are already underway for a new time capsule to be buried at the conclusion of this Centenary year.





## DIAMOND GALA DINNER: A CENTURY OF BRILLIANCE AT THE NGV

The penultimate celebration for the year was the Diamond Gala Dinner: A Century of Brilliance held on Saturday 23 March at the National Gallery of Victoria. The significant occasion brought together 500 guests including alumnae, staff, and families for a grand evening of celebration. The evening was nothing short of spectacular, as attendees socialised in the festivities that honoured a century of excellence in education and Unstoppable Girls. From the moment guests arrived, they were greeted with an atmosphere of joy and anticipation, setting the stage for a memorable celebration. One of the most exciting aspects of the evening was the opportunity for all members of the Strathcona community to come together. Alumnae reconnected with former classmates, teachers, and staff, reminiscing about cherished memories and shared experiences. Likewise, current members of the Strathcona community took the chance to build on new connections and strengthen the bonds that make this community so special. Throughout the evening, the room was filled with laughter, lively conversations, and great music. From heartfelt speeches to historical visuals, every moment was a testament to the spirit of fostering connections within a community that authentically loves its school. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. Strathcona extends heartfelt thanks to Duane Wolowiec and Stuart Evans from Marshall White Real Estate, South Eastern Cleaning Service, and Dobsons for their invaluable contributions.







## CENTENARY SCULPTURE UNVEILING AND CENTENARY BOOK LAUNCH

On Wednesday 27 March we welcomed former Principal, Marise McConaghy, UK-based alumna and sculptor, Hannah Northam, and author, Cathy Gowdie, to the School, along with many esteemed guests to the Centenary Sculpture Unveiling and Centenary Book Launch. The sculpture, titled, *The Conversation*, symbolises a connection between the school's past and present, depicting a Strathcona girl from the School's founding year engaging with her modern-day counterpart. This memorable bronze piece now resides in the Strathcona Early Years courtyard, serving as a lasting tribute to the School's legacy. At the same event, our Centenary book, *A Century of Memories, A Future of Promise* was launched. The book explores the rich history of Strathcona's evolution, capturing the essence of 100 years of education, unstoppable women, and cherished memories.



In addition to the historical celebrations, the 100 Reasons to Connect Networking Event on Thursday 20 June at Longrain Melbourne, was an evening filled with inspiration, connection and empowerment. Bringing together alumnae from all generations, the event featured memorable speakers, including Lisa Keenan from Mecca M Power, who shared her moving professional journey of building her personal brand, inspiring the room with her storytelling. Alice Stolz, well-known journalist, parent, and Editor at *Domain*, embraced all with her natural warmth, humour and curiosity as our MC for the night. Principal, Lorna Beegan, spoke passionately about the School's future, and the importance of girls' education, while alumna Angela Driver, from Driver Bus Lines, shared her amazing humanitarian work with the Wayjoli Foundation in Uganda. Capturing the magic and visions for Strathcona's future was graphic artist, Alice Edy, and 'fun' photographer, Joe Vittorio, who took professional LinkedIn headshots for all attendees to use to build their personal brand. Thank you to our generous sponsor, Driver Bus Lines, for your support on such a wonderful night.



Strathcona deeply values the importance of professional development for all staff, and on Monday 15 July staff came together at Tay Creggan for the Professional Excellence Staff Professional Development Day: A Century of Achievements and a Future of Possibilities. From an African drumming session to discussions with Dr Sophie Fenton on the future of education and AI, the event energised and united staff as they looked to the future. Staff heard from past Principal, Dr Helen Hughes, who reflected on the Strathcona Journey and provided tips to lead staff into the future, assisting discussion amongst our team to think about the Schools's strategic plan for 2025 and beyond. To end the day, staff raced around Tay Creggan, participating in a collaborative Amazing Race Challenge run by Uplift Events.





## CENTENARY MUSIC CONCERT

The Centenary Music Concert held at the Melbourne Recital Centre on Wednesday 4 September was a stunning showcase of the school's musical talent. Students performed a range of pieces in one of Melbourne's most iconic venues, including a special Centenary item *Under the Maple Tree*, written by alumna, Victoria Woods, specially for the Centenary year. The event was a powerful reminder of how music and creativity have been central to the School's philosophy.



## CENTENARY ART AND DESIGN EXHIBITION

The Centenary Art and Design Exhibition took place on Tuesday 10 September, and was a breathtaking culmination of student creativity. With the theme, Flight, the exhibition featured pieces from Early Years to VCE students and demonstrated the boundless imagination and talent of Strathcona's girls. The Junior School's exhibit transformed the Early Years Community Space into a mystical gallery, while the Senior School's exhibition showcased intricate artworks and design projects. We were thrilled to also have 2024 Artist in Residence, Lucy Hersey there to officially open the exhibition.





## OLD STRATHCONIAN'S ASSOCIATION CENTENARY AFTERNOON TEA

The Old Strathconian's Association Centenary Afternoon Tea on Sunday 20 October was a lovely celebration of our alumnae coming together to share their memories when they were a student at the School. With alumnae present from 1951 through to 2014, the afternoon was opened by Laura Loftus, President of the Old Strathcona's Association, followed by Principal, Ms Lorna Beegan who welcomed guests and reflected on the School's celebrations throughout its Centenary year and its visions for the next 100 years. It was lovely to see women from different generations share their stories, and for those who were lucky to experience the Year 9 Tay Creggan journey, many enjoyed taking a tour of the historic mansion they remember so distinctly.



## EARLY YEARS CAMPUS OPENING

On a beautiful sunny day on Saturday 26 October Strathcona marked a new chapter in its Centenary year, officially opening the brand new purpose-built Early Years Campus. The morning began with a Welcome to Country and traditional smoking ceremony led by Indigenous Elder Perry Wandin, honouring the land on which our school stands. Principal, Lorna Beegan, Board Chair, Jocelyn Furlan, Head of Junior School, Lisa Miller, and alumna and Shadow Minister for Early Childhood and Education, Jess Wilson MP ('08) also addressed guests with words of inspiration and pride. We welcomed families and local community members who explored the campus, witnessing firsthand the thoughtfully designed spaces tailored for hands-on learning and joyful play.

The afternoon was filled with lively laughter as children enjoyed the urban playground, sang and danced with Peppa Pig, and embraced the possibilities that lie ahead in this remarkable new beginning for Strathcona's youngest community members.

The Early Years Campus has been thoughtfully designed to offer an exceptional beginning for young, curious minds, supported by our very own philosophy, *Floresco*, ensuring a smooth, enriching transition through Kindergarten, Prep and Year 1. *Floresco*, created specifically for our students, offers a dynamic curriculum that combines rich experiences with academic excellence, embracing children as active learners in our community.

## EVENING UNDER THE STARS

On Saturday 9 November, the Strathcona Family Association celebrated 100 Years of Strathcona with its Evening Under the Stars event. It was a wonderful night with many current and future families enjoying all that the evening had to offer including international food trucks, a wine bar by Brown Brothers, performing arts, mini golf, Strathy has Talent, and a heritage display to celebrate Strathcona's history over the last century. As the sun set, the energy from all was full of singing, dancing, and good times with a spectacular performance from BABBA, with many popular hit songs performed throughout the night.



These events throughout 2024 have served as a testament to the spirit of Strathcona and its unstoppable women.

This Centenary has been more than just a celebration of the past, but a reflection on the values that continue to guide the school and an anticipation of a bright future ahead.

From all who have been part of this remarkable year, we say thank you, and we look forward to the next 100 years of Strathcona.



To commemorate this milestone, you can purchase exclusive Centenary merchandise, including *A Century of Memories*, *A Future of Promise* via this QR Code or on our website, [strathcona.vic.edu.au/shop](https://strathcona.vic.edu.au/shop)



**Strathcona**  
GIRLS GRAMMAR

**GIRLS  
UNSTOPPABLE**

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An exclusive email for Old Strathconians.  
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