

## **90 Year Anniversary Speech by Carole Knott, Principal**

To our honoured guests the St Georgians it is with great pleasure and pride that I address you on the occasion of the 90 Year Anniversary of St George Girls High School. Before I begin to give you a snapshot of your school as it is in the present I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Eora people. We pay our respects to the elders, past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

It is wonderful to see so many of our ex-students visiting us today. I would like to share with all of you some insights into St George as it is in 2006. The students of St George continue to uphold the school's proud tradition of excellence which began 90 years ago.

Academically we continue to be one of the best schools in NSW. Our Higher School Certificate results in 2005 were once again exceptional. Our Dux achieved a University Admissions Index of 100. All of our students gained offers to the university course of their choice. 27 students achieved a UAI which placed them in the top 2% of the state. Their names will appear on the Schools Honour Boards.

Eight students received Premiers Awards for excellence by achieving Band 6 or its equivalent in ten units of study.

The 2005 School Certificate results were also cause for congratulations. Over 90% of all students ranked in the top two performance bands in all external examinations. Some of the results were extraordinary. For example a Year 10 student scored a perfect 100% in her School Certificate Mathematics examination. This student has been selected to participate in the prestigious Australian Mathematical Olympiad School of Excellence in Melbourne and is one of only 25 students selected nationally.

Academic success is one very real cause for pride and celebration. However, the experience of being a student at St George Girls is richer and deeper than mere statistics. There are many other talents our students possess in diverse fields and these talents are consistently showcased throughout the school year.

On the sporting field in 2005 St George Girls once again triumphed, winning the Zone points score trophy and being named as Champion Girls School in athletics and cross country. St George Girls is represented in many sports at an elite level.

Our musicians continue to win gold and silver awards in many prestigious festivals and competitions. The highlight of the musical calendar for 2005 was a Road Trip undertaken by our various ensembles. Seventy of our girls packed their instruments and went on a week-long country tour to entertain public school students around Orange and Dubbo. For many of the children in the audience this was their first experience of a live orchestral performance. I received many letters of congratulations and praise for our girl's excellent performances and friendly engagement with their audiences. This tour typified the very best qualities of St George combining both excellence in performance and the social harmony and cohesion being nurtured in our school.

In the field of design our students continue to achieve. In 2005 a Year 12 student has had her work exhibited in TEXSTYLE, an exhibition of the very best major works in HSC Textiles and Design. Each year the Hall comes alive with the excitement, colour and glamour of our wonderful INSPIRED evening. Our Textile and Design students showcase their creations as well as their poise and sophistication on the catwalk.

In Public Speaking a St Georgian was the National Winner of the Plain English Speaking Competition and will represent Australia in England this year. The talents of our drama students were showcased on two performance evenings and our drama students are invited to be a part of the State performing ensembles.

As part of our extension and enrichment program, our students participate in debating competitions, the Tournament of the Minds, the NSW Junior Chess League and the Da Vinci Decathlon and Future Problem Solving competition. Every year all of Year 8 take part in the St George Challenge day. They work in teams on a project designed to test their intelligence, thinking skills and problem solving abilities.

In the field of Visual Arts our students display enormous talent which is displayed in our annual art exhibition. In 2005 eleven HSC students were short listed to have their body of works exhibited in ARTEXPRESS an exhibition of exemplary HSC artworks. One student's body of work is currently displayed at the Art Gallery of NSW.

Our students are also enterprising young women. In 2005 a team of Year 11 students were named the State Secondary Company of the Year at the NSW Young Achievement Australia Awards. They also achieve in State and National academic competitions. For example six students were awarded gold and silver medals in the National Chemical Analysis competition.

In the area of service to the community our students are young women with a desire to assist those less fortunate in society. For the fifteenth consecutive year our school has once again been awarded the Red Cross Shield for being the highest fundraising school in NSW. Our students also participate in the 40 hour Famine Appeal being one of the leading fundraisers in NSW. Senior students continue to donate blood to the Red Cross. Our Year 7 students collected donated and decorated Christmas Gift boxes destined to be delivered by Santa to children in the Solomon Islands on Christmas Eve last year. Annually Year 9 take part in a community service day visiting kindergartens, special schools and aged care facilities to entertain and bring festive cheer to these people. Every year I receive many letters congratulating our students for their caring natures, maturity and friendliness on this occasion.

In the area of student leadership our girls have interacted with the community in a wide variety of official functions. Our SRC have initiated many successful student events as well as supporting a number of charities.

St George Girls High School it is clear is educating gifted young women to become well rounded high achievers. These achievements are the result of many factors.

Firstly, there is the sheer talent of the student body. Every girl at St George has unique and individual gifts and talents that daily astound us. These talents are carefully nurtured by our teachers who deliver quality lessons in classrooms rich in intellectual rigor. Our teaching staff is renowned for their dedication to their craft, their high standards and expectations and their commitment to supporting each student in their care. Their work begins in the classroom but does not stop there as they assist each girl navigate the journey from childhood to adulthood. Our support and administrative staff are a team of thoroughly professional and hardworking people who contribute to the smooth operation and nurturing environment at St George.

The work of all our staff is underpinned by the families, parents and caregivers who entrust us with the education of their daughters. We are very fortunate to have a positive and supportive parent community which is appreciative of our efforts. In particular our two parent

organisations, the P and C and the Mothers Committee are made up of a group of parents who tirelessly and energetically work on behalf of our school.

The excellence of St George Girls today did not happen overnight. The reputation it deservedly holds has been built up over the last 90 years by each young woman who has attended this great school. Our reputation exists because of the long history and honoured traditions built by each one of you present here today.

Once again a most warm welcome and I thank each one of you for keeping alive the Spirit of St George.