

THE VITAL ROLE OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL

The College Council performs a vital governance function within the College and nowhere was this more apparent than in the milestone decision by Council in 1975 to admit men to the College for the first time. Now we know that not everyone thought this was a good idea at the time. But as the Principal of the day, Meg Russell-Smith, made clear to the Council, changing social expectations meant that students were choosing other colleges which had already become co-residential. So the ongoing viability of the College would probably depend upon it.

If changing social trends in the 1970s meant that young men and women now sought to live, study and socialise together within the residential colleges, then it was incumbent on the Council of the day to respond to these changing social expectations. What seems inevitable in hindsight, however, was at the time the most radical challenge the College had ever faced – the decision to accept male students. Backed by far-sighted and pragmatic Councillors, Mrs Russell-Smith implemented this change while maintaining a collegiate environment in which the development of the individual and the pursuit of true learning were the main concerns. Today the College is proudly co-residential and greatly enriched by the diversity this brings to our community.

The Council continues to respond to the needs of the time and set the strategic direction to ensure the College is well positioned for the future. As per our strategic plan we are moving ahead with the planning and design for the Master Plan Stage 1 which includes the Dining Hall and Kitchen Redevelopment Project and the construction of new rooms. I look forward to sharing further details with you once these plans have been finalised. In the meantime, it has been wonderful to receive such positive feedback on the impact of the new perimeter fence on College Crescent, particularly with the greater visibility and presence of the original Ellis and Sweet buildings.

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This year we bid farewell to two members of Council, Professor Margaret Sheil and Ms Claire Harman. Having joined the Council in 2012, Professor Sheil is stepping down shortly before the completion of her term due to her university commitments. I thank her for her willingness to serve and her contribution. Claire Harman is leaving to work in London. Her contribution since joining the Council in 2013 has been very much appreciated and we wish her well as she pursues her career abroad.

Finally, the Council is delighted to acknowledge Mrs Judith Ryles who received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours for 'service to the community'. Mrs Ryles is a great friend to the College and benefactor through the Ursula Hoff scholarship.

Anne Cronin
President of Council