

## **COMBINED OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION AGM 2016**

**SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER 2016**

Art Department, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, 10-16 Ranfurly Cres, Glen Iris 3146

Hosted by the Korovian Club Inc. Est 1917.

**SCHOOL TOUR: Commenced from Reception at 1pm.**

Conducted by Jennifer Jaeger, Korovian Club Committee Member.

## **MINUTES**

Chair – Shelby Versa, President, Korovian Club

### **1. Welcome**

- Shelby welcomed attendees to the AGM, and asked all attendees to turn to the person next to them and introduce themselves. She pointed out the Korovians in attendance for any attendees to ask questions to, and ran through general housekeeping.
- Shelby also introduced and welcomed panellists Helen Carmody, Claudine Sand and Sarah Brook.

### **2. Attendees**

- Korovian Club [Shelby Versa (President), Hayley Carra (Secretary), Jan Miller, Sarah Morgan, Jennifer Jaeger, Sarah Brook, Freya Coker, Helen Carmody (School Principal)]
- Old Strathconians' Association [Karina Skourletos]
- Toorak College Collegians [Carolyn Such (President), June Lambert (Secretary)]
- MLC Old Collegians [Gabrielle Lim (Vice President), Maria Mercuri (Manager, Development and Advancement)]
- PLC Old Collegians' Association [Belinda Steel]
- Firbank Old Grammarians' Association [Pam Hammond (Secretary), Anna Borthwick (Vice President), Sarah Pfister (FYGA Rep)]
- Ivanhoe Girls' Old Grammarians Association [Liz Taylor (Secretary), Annie Paras (President)]
- Old Strathconians' Association [Karina Skourletos]
- St Catherine's Old Girls' Association [Phoebe Norman (President), Virginia Edwards, Deb Berry]
- Old Lauristonians' Association [Kate Wipfli (President)]
- Old Ruytonians Association [Sarah Blyth (President), Madeleine Reilly (Secretary)]
- Shelford Old Grammarians
- Lowther Hall [Michelle (Treasurer), Donna Doughty ]
- Camberwell Girls' [Karen Bartrum (Alumnae Relationships Coordinator), Yvonne Mah (Treasurer)]

### 3. Apologies

- Old Fintonians' Alumni
- Hermitage Old Girls' Association
- Firbank Old Girls' Association [Melissa McLean, Sally Cooper]
- Lowther Hall [Tiffany Stevens (President)]

### 4. COGA AGM 2015 Minutes

The minutes of the 2015 AGM held at Firbank were accepted. Moved: Korovian Club.  
Seconded: Ivanhoe Girls' Old Grammarians' Association.

### 5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

#### COGA Subcommittee

A committee to meet between AGMs. Originally raised at Lauriston's meeting however it is lacking someone to drive it. Lowther Hall is open to, however they believe they are too far removed from the other COGA associations. This will be discussed under the round table discussion "What do you believe is the purpose of COGA?"

#### Social media platform for COGA

Action for FOGA to investigate LinkedIn as an option which was followed up by Melissa, however there was not a huge amount of interest. Setting up as an 'individual person' on LinkedIn has made this a difficult option.

### 6. Correspondence

No correspondence

### 7. General Business

#### a. Panel Discussion

##### People coming together from other schools

- More important than ever, especially between independent girls' schools where they are quite competitive, and bode different size. Pulling knowledge and resources will benefit hundreds of girls in the long run. For younger alumni, modelling on the old girls' associations are important.

##### Young graduates joining associations

- A good way to continue a connection with the school and form connections with those from other year levels. The difficulty lies in not knowing how to become a part of the community.

##### Commitment to the committee

- Korowa discussed their approach to as to having one meeting a month. Claudine, as a young Korovian, found the first meeting intimidating but found

that the club was welcoming, and appreciated their reassurance. She found one meeting a month as a time commitment is easily manageable.

- For Claudine, her year level was aware of the club but didn't understand its purpose. She urged the other committees to increase their publicity. Helen Carmody notes that connecting present students and alumni in general is an issue that is something Korowa is addressing presently, and are in an advantageous situation in 2017 when the Korovian Club has their centenary.
- Lowther Hall notes that they are involved at some point every year with past students and alumni which bodes well for reinvolvement.
- St Catherine's holds networking events open to years 11 and 12, and feels that this is a positive addition as they have had a record number of new members this year [7]. This is pitched as a CV building exercise and the speakers are old grammarians from various age groups. These events are divided into industries (i.e. law, science) and are held at industry specific locations. They are also held at different times of day depending on the industry.

#### The role of the Old Girls' vs the role of the school in connecting Alumni

- Helen Carmody notes that the school has a strong role to play in the facilitations and support of activities (ie. communication, publicity, contacts etc). Sarah Brook finds that past associations provide resources in terms of contacts also.
- The privacy act was brought up and Sarah notes that the issue is sidestepped as this is facilitated through her (development officer). It was mentioned that not all schools have officers such as Sarah. Helen notes that we should learn from this and encourage this role within schools and work together as girls' schools to support each other and operate in the same way of thinking.
- PLC noted that most schools are obliged to handover database information to club secretaries.
- Shelby offered the panelists a bottle of sparkling wine each as thanks and explained how the round table discussions will be facilitated.

#### **b. Round Table Discussions**

Round table discussions were had for 40 minutes, then attendees returned to discuss their findings.

What does your club do? Are there any clubs or societies within your club?

- Broadly speaking the main answer was: ‘friendraising’ as opposed to fundraising’, aiming to keep relationships going between past and current students. Fundraising mostly provided scholarships for current students who cannot afford to attend without.
- Reunions were also a major item. The responsibility of which however was split between through the school vs. through club. However those through the school noted that the club is always heavily involved. Reunions are quite informal across the board, ensuring a sense of relaxed community. One year out reunions are quite popular and important. They are seen as a way to bring new members to clubs/associations also.
- In terms of ‘clubs within clubs’, Lowther Hall bodes the “Golden Mitre”, an honour society for those 50+ years out. Ruyton have a running club, and the Korovians have a ‘Korovian Choir’. It was also noted that outside COGA, Scotch College have an orchestra where past students are invited to come back and play once a month.

#### What does your club do well?

- Networking events [St Catherine’s]
- Meeting once a month seems to be a great way to keep communication high
- Social media strategy implemented works much better rather than just “putting things on facebook”.
- In terms of fundraising - “annual giving” is working well. Tax deductible donations are only applicable to the schools instead of the clubs however. It was instead suggested that donations should be nominated to go specifically to the club when donating to the school. It was agreed that people are more likely to donate with an emotional reason i.e. a girl who cannot afford to attend, heritage buildings
- Informal activities such as dinners.

#### What challenges does your club face/have learned from?

- Politics within schools seemed to be a resounding issue, especially in defining the role of the committee vs the role of the school. Meeting with the principal at any time of change helps to ease this.
- Not meeting often enough
- Past students not knowing about community events

What sustains your club? How do you maintain and foster relationships across year levels (apart from reunions)?

- Mentoring and networking has become an effective action
  - This has helped facilitate one-on-one connections
  - Collegians have been able to network across industries rather than year levels
- Informal events
  - Gallery tours, fun-run events, movie nights, past student vs current student sport events
- Mindfulness events [Lauriston]
  - Skill-building events
- International/interstate reunions
- Professional development has come up as a “vision” for their club
  - Role models in the work force

In what ways do you encourage children/grandchildren of past students to enroll back in the school?

- Cards/gifts sent to those who have just has children
  - There has been some issues with this however as it relies on those contacting the school in the first place
- School magazine
  - Page dedicated to mentioning births/deaths
- Those who re-enrol generally do so during senior school
- Encouraging partnerships with neighbouring boys' schools
  - Arranging discounts between brother schools for siblings of different sexes
- Word of mouth
  - Encourage those in social groups to enrol their children in these schools as they approach senior school
- School reunions
  - Making sure those who attend are well informed as they start to think about enrollment

- Scholarships for past students
- Fee discounts
  - Does not occur often as this is determined through the school council/board rather than the past students' association
  - Priority access is sometimes offered instead as does no enrollment fee.
  - MLC offers a 2 year advantage on the waiting list
- The associations agrees that the responsibility of this does not lie with the old girls' association. They are there instead to promote the school in general and encourage new students.

#### What is the purpose of COGA?

- Pooling knowledge from variety of schools
- Modelling outcomes between schools, and encouraging others
- Considering holding an annual networking event between AGMs
  - Speakers
  - Different schools holding a table
- Should COGA include girls schools that have turned co-ed?
  - It was asked whether this was included in the COGA constitution, however no one present was aware of where the constitution was kept, nor what it stated.
  - Some co-ed schools still hold their own separate organisations for old girls'.
  - A sub-committee could instead meet with sub-committees of old boys' associations or information could be gathered from asking our own members.
  - There is a benefit in hearing what old boy's associations are doing as in some respects they seem to be doing some activities better.
- COGA Subcommittee
  - A subcommittee has been in talks for several AGMs however it needs to be purpose driven. This could be to be Information gatherers and facilitators for the AGM, and act as a 'governance body'.
  - Maria [MLC] notes that she is apart of an organisation called Educate+ which development staff of all schools should be apart of. They have an alumni stream and Maria suggested that perhaps this could be used to help share information instead of setting up a whole organisation.

There however would still to be a representative from COGA whose responsibility is to gather and action the information gathered.

- A subcommittee can be used for admin purposes i.e. in facilitation of AGMs and COGA contact details. An up to date email distribution list is vital for this to be a success.
- A second COGA wide meeting has come up as an idea to be held between AGMs.
  - One meeting to have a speaker, one for general discussion
  - These schools would alternate between schools (i.e. OGAs aren't pressured to host the event twice a year)
  - **ACTION:** Strathcona has put forward their interest to hold the first of these meetings before Melbourne Girls' AGM next year (perhaps early 2017). Attendees agree. Strathcona to host.
  - An invite could be extended to Educate+
- As the aim of COGA is to share knowledge and ideas, there could be some kind of information channel such as Facebook to facilitate this 24/7 and pull information for the AGM yearly. It is noted that not all clubs were present today and whilst this is a great idea, the general consensus is that COGA would like to meet more regularly
- A subcommittee is vital to drive this second meeting and make sure everyone is aware of what is going on.
- **MOTION:** Pam Hammond [FOGA] moves that a committee will be created to support the COGA AGM. Majority rules. Motion carried.
- The committee members will consist of Sally Cooper [FOGA] and Donna Dougherty [Lowther Hall].
- **ACTION:** New members are encouraged to contact Sally and Donna if they would like to join the committee. They will talk as a group to decide when they would like these meetings to be facilitated.

#### **HOST AND VENUE NEXT MEETINGS:**

Early 2017 - Strathcona

Late 2017 - Melbourne Girls' Grammar School **[AGM]**

Early 2018 - TBD

Late 2018 - St Catherine's Old Girls' Association **[AGM]**

**This meeting was closed at 4:11pm.**

**Networking and afternoon tea was served in the Art Department.**