

Chair: John Darvall



Old Wellingtonians'
ASSOCIATION

November 2020

Dear Friend,

It is a huge honour to be President of the Old Wellingtonians, a community of previous students old and young that share a common place that was so important during our development as children into young adults and which played a role in shaping who we are today. Our life journeys have taken us off in many different directions and on many different adventures yet at times the journey draws us back to Wellington, to meet up with old friends, to reminisce. Sadly, we cannot do that in person this year, but in these challenging times I have reached out to and been supported by many of my school friends, as I am sure many of you have too.

As my life takes a pause from its normal routine for the common good, I find myself reminiscing quite a lot and reflecting on what Wellington School meant, and indeed means to me. I joined Wellington School at the age of 10, independent, feisty and a dreamer. The school did not change my core, it did not tell me my dreams and ambitions were unattainable, far from it, it helped to build the foundations underneath me and enabled me to pursue them. Being a boarder for 8 years gave me the stability and family away from home that I needed at that time, to focus on those dreams and ambitions and to make them a reality. Importantly for me, it was not just the education that enabled this, but my social network, those lifelong friends that have been there for me to celebrate my wins and commiserate my loses, to encourage me when moral was low and to have faith that I would succeed.

My career and the many adventures along the way have given me the opportunity to understand the value of my education, which I certainly did not appreciate at the time. I have seen the thirst for knowledge in young people and the ability to learn being thwarted by unstable schooling, unstable homes and uncertainty, limiting their ability to reach their full potential, to fulfil their dreams and to pay back to society.

Wellington School prides itself on being diverse and inclusive, for going beyond the school gates and reaching into the community, and for being the family young people need and turn to from time to time. As Old Wellingtonians we are part of that family and at this time we need to draw close to ensure that those core values remain and that it can continue to offer the stability to many of the children that need it in this time of uncertainty. Some of our community have found themselves on unsteady footing and need a little support to see them through, to ensure their children's education continues undisrupted, their friendship network unthreatened, their foundations remain underneath them, so that they too can see their dreams become a reality.

The Wellington School community has rallied around them with many incredible offers of support and financial contributions to the schools new Development Fund (part of which is allocated to a hardship fund and in the future for scholarships) set up by our visionary new Headmaster, Mr Eugene du Toit. This fund has enabled us, as a community to reach, out to those in need and support them; to bring that stability and family. A huge thank you to those that have been able to contribute. Covid19 is not going anywhere anytime soon and thus the economic consequences of this pandemic will continue and so the hardship fund remains open. We can all understand that financial support is not possible at this time for all, but through your network of fiends you may know someone that can, so do please reach out and ask, to let them know about the opportunity to secure the future dreams of those that will join our ranks as Old Wellingtonians in years to come.

Best wishes and stay safe

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