

Canberra
Grammar
School



READY FOR
THE WORLD

BOYS AND GIRLS TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE

CGS is going fully co-educational
from Pre-School to Year 12



A LETTER TO THE CGS COMMUNITY

It is our great pleasure to announce a major step in the history of Canberra Grammar School. After substantial consideration, the School Board has taken the unanimous decision to extend our current co-educational offering from the Infants School through to Year 12. This means that in the coming years, Canberra Grammar School will become fully co-educational at all levels and across the range of School life.

We are delighted by this development, which builds on forty years of co-education in our early Primary School. It will allow boys and girls of all faiths and backgrounds to experience together the School's outstanding array of educational opportunities in readiness for the modern world.

This has not been a decision taken lightly nor rapidly, nor will the transition happen all at once; indeed, its pace will in part be determined by community demand and by our desire that no boy currently waiting for a place be disadvantaged. We remain absolutely committed to the care and education of our boys and to the on-going prosperity of all that has made the School such a vibrant place for the development of impressive and open-hearted young men. However, this decision has been considered repeatedly by the School Board in reflection of community feedback over many years and in light of broad changes in society and education. It is a development that we believe must underpin the future of the School.

In the past four years, we have made significant changes at Canberra Grammar School to reflect contemporary realities and expectations. We have relaunched boarding, introduced CGS Care, implemented the International Baccalaureate at Primary and Senior levels, emphasised the study of languages, built The Snow Centre for Education in the Asian Century, renovated and extended major parts of the Primary and Senior campuses, restored our grounds and ovals, embraced the advent of mobile technology, promoted the creative and performing arts, revived the School's Foundation and invested significantly in the professional development of our staff.

Those initiatives have enlivened the School and helped to secure its current standing as a thriving leader in ACT education. This decision builds on that progress and has been taken for three essential reasons: for the future prospects of our students, for the benefit of our families and for the ongoing prosperity of our School.

FOR OUR STUDENTS

If we aim to educate our students as young leaders of the next generation, then we must recognise the realities of the world that they will inherit from us. That world will be global, technologically advanced, and rapidly changing in its educational, political, economic and social structures. It will also be 'co-ed', led in virtually all fields by talented, aspirational men and women, more than has ever been the case before. It will be a world shaped by educated people of both genders who know each other's capacities and perspectives, who are skilled in working and thinking maturely together, and who are confident in equality and professional friendship.

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Our boys don't need sheltering from that world. They need intelligent preparation for it; and our girls, who currently make 10% of our School population, deserve the chance, if their parents so wish, to continue flourishing with the educational preparation that we offer for it too. Almost all of our students will have had co-educational experience in their primary years, and all will go on to co-educational universities, colleges or careers. We are confident that as bright, egalitarian young men and women they will rise to the educational opportunities of learning together in the years between.

FOR OUR FAMILIES

In addition, while all families are different, all share the reality that modern life is complicated enough without the requirement to place siblings of different ages and genders in multiple schools with different drop-off and pick-up arrangements, with different policies, procedures and communications systems, and with different dates, events and curriculum structures to negotiate. We know that this is significant to many current and prospective parents and, as is demonstrated by the creation of CGS Care, we are committed to making life easier and the School more accessible to busy families.

We know, therefore, that this decision will be welcomed by many; indeed we know that many parents have called for it for years, or, in frustration, have chosen other schools instead of ours. We recognise, too, however, that for some this is not the choice that they made in joining the School nor will it seem a reflection of the School's predominantly masculine history and traditions. We respect that and have not rushed towards this change, which will be introduced over a number of years. Ultimately, however, we know that this step is in the interests of our students. It will provide them with an education that best prepares them for their future in the modern world. It is also essential for the School's on-going capacity to flourish.

FOR OUR SCHOOL

Our enrolments are currently stronger than they have ever been and the School is more financially secure than has been the case for some time. However, government funding is uncertain, parental resources are limited and we have major capital replacement needs in the years ahead that are heavily dependent on a still young Foundation. We also face potential competition from the advent of new schools and from existing schools with the capacity to expand. It is virtually inevitable, therefore, that the need to enlarge our enrolment pool through co-education will come upon us at some point. We believe it right to embrace that reality now, on our terms, not later as a consequence of decisions made by others.

Our aim is to shape the future and culture of our School from a position of prosperity and strength. Its culture will be different, but it will be ours to create. With vision and imagination, with the generous spirit of our students, and with the warm support of our community, we will create a School culture that honours our heritage, that preserves the best in our current ethos, and that adds a new diversity that more truly reflects contemporary society.

As a Board and School executive, we are united and confident in this decision, and we commend it to you with excitement and optimism. Please take time to read the information that follows, and we hope that you will join us in looking forward together to our future.

With warm regards, sincerely,



Justin Garrick
Head of School



Stephen Byron
Chair of the Board

WHAT WILL CO-EDUCATION MEAN AT CANBERRA GRAMMAR SCHOOL?

It is our intent to become fully co-educational from Pre-School to Year 12, building on our existing co-educational enrolment from Pre-School to Year 2. The major transition will begin with an intake of girls to Years 3, 4, 7 and 11 in 2017.

Expressions of interest for entry in other years (including Years 3 and 4 in 2016) will be considered subject to there being sufficient girls to form friendship groups in each age cohort. Our aim is to have girls in all year groups by 2020, followed by a gradual transition to relative parity within the general parameters of the School's existing size model and targets.

We intend to become fully co-educational in population and culture, with boys and girls learning, growing and flourishing together. We do not intend to be a boys' school with some girls, nor a school that runs parallel but separate programmes for different genders. Boys and girls will be equal citizens of Canberra Grammar School, each valued for the talents, personality and qualities that he or she bring to the whole.

As is already central to our purpose, the School will respect and nurture all students – boys and girls – as distinct individuals, seeking to inspire, support and celebrate the efforts of all in realising their intellectual, spiritual, cultural, social and physical aspirations. We will aim, as ever, for our young men and women to be intelligent, innovative and internationally-minded; to be confident, creative and compassionate young leaders of the future.

'WE INTEND TO BECOME FULLY CO-EDUCATIONAL IN POPULATION AND CULTURE, WITH BOYS AND GIRLS LEARNING, GROWING AND FLOURISHING TOGETHER'



WHAT EXPERIENCE DOES THE SCHOOL AND ITS STAFF HAVE WITH GIRLS AND CO-EDUCATION?

Girls attended Canberra Grammar School at its foundation in the 1920s and 30s, and co-education was introduced to the Primary School under Headmaster Paul McKeown four decades ago in 1975.

In fact, girls already make up one tenth of the School population. Moreover, the majority of teachers attended and have taught in co-educational schools. All attended co-educational universities, and teacher training degrees are designed to prepare teachers for work in co-educational schools. Of course, many teachers also have children of their own who are boys and girls.

The School has a very positive gender balance on staff, including in leadership positions: around 55% of our staff are women and around 45% of leadership roles are held by women. The Head of School taught in co-educational schools prior to joining Canberra Grammar School and was part of the team that led the transition of his previous school to full co-education. In short, the School and its staff are no strangers to teaching girls nor to the prospect of a mixed community that reflects the normal reality of everyday life.

Nonetheless, adjustments to habit and customs will be necessary, and staff professional learning in the months ahead will be designed to familiarise and re-familiarise all staff with the nature of working in a co-educational environment.

'THE SCHOOL AND ITS STAFF ARE NO STRANGERS TO TEACHING GIRLS NOR TO THE PROSPECT OF A MIXED COMMUNITY THAT REFLECTS THE NORMAL REALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE'

HOW WILL THE SCHOOL PREPARE?

In addition to staff professional learning, it will be important for boys to be ready to include girls fully in the life of the School.

For those in the Junior years, much will come naturally from prior experience at Southside and Northside. Likewise those in Senior years will undoubtedly bring a positive and welcoming attitude from their current experience of co-educational opportunities in Music, Drama and a range of sports and other activities. In addition, discussion in tutorials, classes and other forums will focus on consolidating positive attitudes and on welcoming girls into the daily life of the School.

More tangibly, there will obviously be infrastructure adjustments, with the upgrade, conversion or addition of toilets and change rooms in both the Primary and Senior campuses scheduled to begin this summer. Much of this work is needed regardless of co-education and the School will invest significantly in improvements to the quality of facilities for boys as well as for girls. This will have the added advantage of making the campus facilities more conducive for School events, for out of School hours users and for holiday programmes like CGS Care, which already cater to boys and girls.

Planning is also underway for significant improvements to facilities like the Art, Design and Technology Centre, which is due for renovation and will be better able in future to accommodate a range of curriculum options to suit both boys and girls. Future changes to sports facilities are also under consideration with the School's capacity to finance its necessary capital investment strengthened by the benefits of co-education itself.

DOESN'T THE EVIDENCE SUGGEST THAT SINGLE-SEX EDUCATION IS BETTER THAN CO-EDUCATION?

Despite extensive research over decades and from around the world, there is no conclusive evidence that either form of education is better than the other; nor can there be.

There are too many interacting factors to permit the isolation of a single element as the determinant of a school's culture and success. Studies suggesting that either gender performs better in the presence or absence of the other are counteracted by studies suggesting otherwise. At the same time, much popular and media commentary is coloured by selection bias, anecdote and school marketing messages. Thus, it is often said that only in single-sex schools can boys or girls be truly free to study, play sport and music, paint, sing, speak and show emotion without inhibition or sexual distraction; yet, clearly, the existence of flourishing intellectual, artistic and sporting communities at healthy co-educational schools all over the world would suggest that boys and girls can and do perform impressively in all domains in the presence of each other. Our own co-educational Music and Drama experiences would confirm that.

Self-evidently, there are great co-educational schools throughout the world and great single-sex schools, there are poor schools of both kinds and there are many in between. Likewise, popular theory that boys and girls learn in fundamentally different ways is confounded by demonstrable overlap between the two; there are far greater differences in learning styles within each gender group than there are between the two. In any case, the overriding imperative at Canberra Grammar School is that every single student be taught as an individual, understood and respected for what he or she brings and needs.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE SCHOOL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CANBERRA GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE?

The School's decision to become co-educational is supported by the Right Reverend Stuart Robinson, the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and the School's Visitor, so that it may grow and develop, continuing to flourish as a positive contributor to the life of the Diocesan community.

Obviously, the School's move to full co-education has potential to impact on other schools of the Diocese, particularly on Canberra Girls Grammar School. Although the two Grammar Schools are separate constitutional entities, which must each develop on their own terms, we value deeply our relationship with Canberra Girls Grammar School and our familial obligations to the shared community of our two Schools.

We have conferred with Canberra Girls Grammar School and we will aim to ensure that both Schools continue to flourish, that we continue to share opportunities wherever possible and that we continue to nurture a positive relationship between the students, families and staff of our Schools, albeit that adjustments to areas of current collaboration may be necessary over time.

'WE VALUE DEEPLY OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CANBERRA GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND OUR FAMILIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE SHARED COMMUNITY OF OUR TWO SCHOOLS'

HOW WILL PASTORAL CARE BE CHANGED?

Girls will be very much a part of the School's distinctive House system in both the Primary and Senior Schools.

In keeping with our commitment to full co-education, our intent is for all Houses to be co-educational in due course, although initially girls will be concentrated in particular Houses during the transition years in order to facilitate the formation of friendships with other girls until numbers are sufficient for girls to be represented more evenly throughout all Houses. The School's characteristic culture of mentoring within Houses will be essential to the nurturing of younger students and it will be our aim to ensure that boys and girls feel equally able to care for and look up to each other regardless of gender. Inevitably girls will bring changes to the tone of Houses and perhaps to events like the House Music Festival and sports carnivals. Many of these are in constant evolution in any case and we welcome the infusion of fresh perspectives, creative energy and talents that girls will bring to the events of School life.

'WE WELCOME THE INFUSION OF FRESH PERSPECTIVES, CREATIVE ENERGY AND TALENTS THAT GIRLS WILL BRING TO THE EVENTS OF SCHOOL LIFE'

Almost all pastoral care teams in the School already include male and female staff, and future staffing will be managed to ensure that boys and girls have adults of both genders to whom they can turn and with whom they can connect in Houses, tutorial discussions and other activities. The School's existing staffing ratios will also make it possible to ensure that out-of-hours activities like camps and expeditions include male and female supervisory staff. In addition, the School's current counselling, health clinic and learning support staff are predominantly women with experience in supporting students of both genders, pastorally and academically.

WILL BOARDING BE CO-ED?

Our commitment to co-education includes boarding. Nonetheless, our boys' boarding provision is full and flourishing and we do not intend to reduce boys' boarding numbers nor to accommodate boys and girls together in the existing boarding houses.

To allow time for the development of appropriate accommodation, we will take expressions of interest from girls seeking to join as boarders in the Senior School from 2018 onwards. Boarding places will be offered subject to there being sufficient numbers to ensure viability of care and good company for boarding girls. In that case, female boarding staff will be appointed in addition to the existing housemother, school nurses and counsellors, who are all women currently involved in boarding. The School's Health Clinic will also be modified to provide separate spaces for girls and boys.

HOW WILL CO-EDUCATION AFFECT THE CURRICULUM AND THE CLASSROOM?

The School's subject offering reflects the Australian Curriculum, the Higher School Certificate and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years and Diploma Programmes. It is also broadly consistent with the subject offerings available in comparable co-educational and girls' schools.

There will be some modification of topics, activities and emphases within courses to bring broader appeal to both boys and girls, and this will be managed by teaching teams in the transition years. Similarly, there may be some modification to elective options, for example, in subjects like Art, Design and Technology in order to better appeal to the interests of girls. Equally, however, we envisage that the School's distinctive and nationally recognised strengths in subjects like IT, science, languages and international studies will be highly attractive to intelligent, innovative and globally-oriented girls.

Regardless of the move to co-education, the School will continually review its primary, middle and senior curriculum, including the International Baccalaureate Programmes and the Higher School Certificate.

Our intent is for the School to become co-educational in all areas and all classes. We do not intend to implement specifically single-sex classes or to run parallel streams. However, there may be single-sex classes as a consequence of subject selections, especially in the transition years, and there may be some elements of some courses, for example in PDHPE, where it will be appropriate to teach boys and girls separately on occasion. In the early years of transition we will endeavour to set girls in appropriate class groupings so that they are not isolated from other girls. Inevitably there will still be many all-boy classes for a number of years.



WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT ON CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY?

Regardless of co-education, the School's co-curricular programme is under review with the objective of providing more sustainability and greater support for core offerings in the years ahead.

The School's extensive range of co-curricular activity is one of its most distinctive features, and our aim will be to consolidate strengths in key areas, ideally without significantly diminishing the range of opportunities that students can enjoy either through the School or in collaboration with clubs and external providers. Currently, the majority of our sports are playable by both boys and girls, often together, especially in the early years. In addition to developing these as dual-gender offerings, we will implement particular girls' sports as numbers and demand develops, and we will remain firmly committed to investment in our continued success in traditionally male sporting arenas as well.

Beyond sport, we look forward to the diversity that girls will bring to our clubs, activities and Horizons programmes, to chess, debating, robotics, the Code Cadets and more. Our Outdoor Education camps and overseas expeditions are already entirely accessible to both boys and girls, and existing staffing allows for good supervision by staff of both genders. Likewise, our international exchange programme provides increasing opportunities for boys and girls, as all of our partner schools in Asia are co-educational and many of our traditional partner schools elsewhere in the world are now co-educational.

Much of our creative and performing arts programme is already essentially co-educational, with many theatre productions involving girls and the great majority of our musical ensembles and performances run in collaboration with Canberra Girls Grammar School. While our move to full co-education will inevitably affect our traditional arrangements with Girls Grammar, it is our strong desire to continue in positive partnership, seeking opportunities for continued engagement between the Schools wherever possible.

Obviously, student leadership positions throughout the School will be open to all and should be filled on merit by impressive young men and women in broad reflection of gender proportions in the School over time.

WILL GIRLS BECOME OLD BOYS?

While we recognise that many Old Boys will identify strongly with the School's largely male heritage and some may regret the change to tradition, we know that all Old Boys value the long-term prosperity of their School and will therefore understand the reasons for change.

We know, from community surveys, too, that many Old Boys strongly favour co-education. In addition, many have daughters and granddaughters, as well as sons and grandsons, whom they would like to see at their old School. Indeed, with co-education now forty years old in the Primary School, many daughters of Old Boys and even of Old Girls have already attended the School and become Old Girls themselves.

We are confident, therefore, that our Old Boys' community will support the School in ensuring that it continues to have a vibrant future. Similarly, we are sure that men whose generous spirit was shaped by our School will welcome women most warmly into the community of CGS Alumni.

'WE ARE SURE THAT MEN WHOSE GENEROUS SPIRIT WAS SHAPED BY OUR SCHOOL WILL WELCOME WOMEN MOST WARMLY INTO THE COMMUNITY OF CGS ALUMNI'

WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOL UNIFORM?

The School uniform is due for review regardless of co-education.

The uniform will be reviewed with professional design input in 2016 and there will be a phase-in period for any changes applied to the uniform for boys and for girls continuing from Year 2 into the Junior School.

HOW CAN I ASK QUESTIONS?

To help answer any questions, we've set up a dedicated phone number that you can call from Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm in Term 4 2015. Any questions, comments and feedback will be welcome.

+ 61 (2) 6260 9638

community@cgs.act.edu.au

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

The extension of co-education beyond exiting provision from Pre-School to Year 2 will be phased over a number of years, with girls and boys now able to apply as follows:

BOYS:

For entry in 2016 and onwards: applications are open for all years: Pre-School to Year 12.

GIRLS:

For entry in 2016: applications are open for Pre-School to Year 2 as normal, and expressions of interest are welcome for Years 3 and 4, subject to the indication of sufficient numbers by 20 November 2015.

For entry in 2017 and onwards: applications are open for Pre-School to Year 2, and for Years 3, 4, 7 and 11. Expressions of interest are invited for other years, subject to sufficient numbers.

HOW CAN I APPLY OR SUBMIT MY EXPRESSION OF INTEREST?

To apply or to submit an expression of interest, visit our website or contact the Admissions Office.

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