

President's Report at the Annual General Meeting
3 March 2008

Patron of the OKGA and Knox Headmaster - Mr. John Weeks,
Members of the OKGA, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen.

It is my privilege to present to you on behalf of your Committee
the Annual Report covering the affairs and activities of the OKGA
for 2007, at this our 78th. Annual General Meeting.

Our membership has risen significantly again this year. As at the
beginning of this year, with over 92% of our 2007 leavers joining
the association, our membership stood at nearly 13,500 (with 9288
current addresses). Of course, many of those who do not take up
the immediate offer to join when leaving school, make application
some years later, often within the next few years. However, it was
my distinct pleasure this year to welcome into our ranks two senior
old boys, Alex Grounds from 1949 and Graham Orton from 1938.

Our finances are in good shape due to some very good
investments, as you will see from our treasurer's report. There has
been a build up of funds in Sports Inc. to ensure it was solvent to
repay the OKGA Inc's loan and it also gives us the opportunity to
give more support to our sporting clubs and the School.

2007 has been another very good year for students and alumni, and
some individual performances are worth highlighting. Dylan
Campbell received a rank of 100 UAI in the 2007 HSC results. He
also tied for 1st place in Ancient History, while Angus Bean topped
the Design and Technology course. 40% of our newest Old Boys
achieved a UAI of 90+, while 7 of these students achieved "All
Round Excellence" (90 + in their best 10 units.) A significant
number of our students gained representative honours in CAS
teams, while some excelled even further, gaining State and

National honours in their chosen sports. As your President, I have been fortunate to witness many of the outstanding performances in Sport, Music and Theatre, and on behalf of the OKGA, I congratulate all students on their participation in these activities during the year and thank all teachers coaches and staff who have assisted and encouraged these students to an unprecedented level of success.

Outstanding achievements this past year by Old Boys include:- Mark Scott (OKG'80) was appointed Managing Director of the ABC.

Dr Michael Spence (OKG'79) was appointed Vice Chancellor of Sydney University, to take up his position in July 2008.

Dr Andrew Hirst (OKG'85) has been appointed Head of the Secondary School Campus at Newington College.

Phillip Chu (OKG'98), this year was the youngest conductor to ever lead the Willoughby Symphony Choir.

Professor John Wong (OKG'58) of Hong Kong's Queen Mary Hospital was given the Sydney University Alumni Award for Community Service.

James Castrission and Justin Jones (both OKG'00) for their epic journey by Kayak "across the Ditch".

I am sure there have been others and I apologise for any omissions in this area.

Modern technology continues to give a much more efficient means of communication. We now have over 1700 members registered on line averaging 55 per year from the years 1965 to 2007 inclusive. We would like to increase this further and continue to take our request for email addresses to each year reunion. Of course, many of the reunion organizers have their own bank of email addresses for their year. The "hits" to our website more importantly, indicate that many of our Old boys are using this site to gain information and to keep in touch. The number of visits

each month continues to grow. This report and our financial statements are presently on our website, or will be very shortly.

That hard working musician, Bob Dylan said in a song lyric some years ago that, “You’re gonna have to serve somebody”. So whom do we serve? The ready answer is our Old Boys, current students and the School. After all, the bulk of our finances are used in funding scholarships, financial assistance for special projects within the School, fostering interest and maintaining contact with Old Boys, and in subsidizing the OKGA Clubs.

The OKGA aims to maintain the spirit of Knox and provide an opportunity for old friendships to be renewed and the traditions to be continued beyond the School years. Generations of Old Boys are proud to be known as Old Knox Grammarians and enjoy maintaining their connection with the School and each other.

The Senior Knoxonians continue to grow in strength and numbers. There are now over 300 members who provide an extremely valuable link between the early years of our school and the current students. It has been a special privilege for me to represent the OKGA at each of their two luncheons during the year. At their second luncheon Bob Thomas, Head of the Preparatory School, gave a very interesting address, “Opportunity Knox at the Prep. School”. The current President of the Senior Knoxonians, Alan Batley AM (OKG’49), has been of immense support to me, as our two groups continue to work together.

In 2007 the OKGA continued to work closely with the School and endeavoured to lift its profile by further promoting and fostering the interest of the Old Boys in the School.

The cadet unit is one of the great traditions of our School and one of the most significant of all activities. It is certainly one to which all Old Boys relate. The Anzac Service was again carried out with

great feeling- the readers, Catalafalque party and Honour Guard once again maintained their high level of performance and the Parade in warm sunshine was carried out with precision. This year we invited all our Ex Servicemen and those Old Boys, who we know are currently in the Services, (we may not yet have all the Vietnam Vets.). We seated them together for the Service, and for the Parade, we had a special section set aside on the balcony of the KG1 Building. This personal invitation to attend was very much appreciated by all those concerned.

Like wise, the Passing out Parade which began with a very moving Chapel Service, was spectacular under lights. While the OKGA is not directly involved with the Passing Out parade, I was privileged to be present on this occasion and also honoured to be present at the very successful Year 12 Dining-In night, which was held the evening before.

Our Ceremonial Parade to honour our ex servicemen, which is always held as close as possible to Remembrance Day, was once again back on the programme. However, we had to cancel the Parade due to the inclement weather. The Ceremony in the Chapel, to remember our Old Boys, went ahead and we were able to honour Gordon King (OKG '35), David MacDougall (OKG '35), Devon Minchin (OKG '35). Charles Wannan (OKG '38) and David Nesbitt (OKG '39). Following this Service a very fine afternoon tea was held in the Paterson Centre.

The OKGA Annual Church Service, a most important event on the Old Boys calendar was held on the Gala Day weekend in conjunction with the School Confirmation Service, where each boy is presented with a Prayer Book from the OKGA, to mark the special occasion. The address by the School Chaplain Rev. Dr. Gareth Clayton is always interesting and encouraging, and the Gallery Choir adds a special dimension to the Service.

Gala Day is primarily a KPA event; however, it is a day when all bodies of the School community can come together, and we are pleased that we can contribute in some small way to this major fund raising occasion. Likewise, we maintain a stall on Garden day, primarily for information of Old Boys and their families.

The careers programme organized by Tony Higgins (OKG 64), continues to develop new initiatives and greater opportunities in career oriented activities. I know Tony appreciates all the assistance he receives from Old Boys. We continue to offer a mentoring programme to the Boys and this is also offered to under-graduates, or any other Old Boys who seek advice in their careers. (Some 50 Old Boys have registered with us to offer mentoring.)

It was indeed a singular honour for me to be present on the day we formally farewell our Class of 2007. A measure of the success of any function is how well it is attended. The communion service in our Chapel, which starts the day, was filled to capacity with many standing and it was particularly pleasing to observe the parents and their sons participating together in the Communion. The Valedictory Assembly is a one off event at times humorous, at times emotional, but always a fitting finale for a group of young men, who individually and collectively have given so much to the School. This year's Leavers were fortunate to be led by some outstanding School Officers, and this team, together with the Chairman of the Year 12 Committee, conducted an excellent Assembly. The School Captain, Mitchell Donaldson, gave a truly outstanding and memorable address.

The OKGA plays a significant part in this Assembly, welcoming these boys into our Association and presenting them with their OKGA tie. This important day finishes with the Valedictory Dinner at night at which I was honoured to represent the OKGA.

As in past years we have continued to recognise the “trier”, those boys who are continually aiming for improvement, either in their sport, or cultural activities. The “Most Improved Awards”, presented at special assemblies, are highly valued by the boys at both the Senior and Preparatory Schools.

It is the aim of the OKGA committee to significantly increase the pool of funds which provide the income to cover scholarships and bursaries. We would like to help more in this area.

The Gerry Alldis scholarship, providing 50% of the tuition fees and given annually for “All Round Ability”, has been awarded to Nicholas Stirzaker for the years 2008 and 2009.

The Norman Winter Scholarship, which provides 50% of fees for boarding and tuition to a son/grandson of an Old Boy, was awarded to Ray Carlaw of the ACT. (His grandfather is William Downes (OKG '36).

As well, this year we are financially assisting another student with up to 50% of his tuition fees for years 11 and 12. (His father died when Andrew was three years of age.)

We also provide the funds for a number of Prizes and Trophies given on Speech Day in both the Preparatory and Senior Schools and our most recently sponsored award initiated in 2004, for the best UAI in 2006, was awarded to Nikolas Katelaris.

The Association continues to support and provide assistance in many areas and to encourage contact between Old Boys. A number of our Old Boys willingly give of their time and commitment to the School, by service in the cadets and a variety of sports - coaching and refereeing.

We start our year with the Annual Barbecue at Curragul for our “Newest Old Boys”. In 2007, some 60 attended and this year we have invited both 2006 and 2007 leavers, in a bid to capture the

interest of those who have just joined our ranks as well as welcoming home our GAP students.

Our next major function of the year was to welcome those Old Boys who are returning to the School as fathers or grandfathers of current students. Last year we had almost 100 join us on this occasion. It is particularly pleasing to note, that over 500 students now attending our School are following in the footsteps of their father and/or grandfather.

The informal functions held in the Lawson Centre after each home game in the winter season proved to be more popular in 2007 and provided a great opportunity for Old Boys to come together, and in particular to give due recognition to three special events . Gala Day was a great occasion, as we had invited all our representative players and 1st.XV Captains to witness the first game on the reconstructed oval. Joining us on this occasion, were Wallabies; Adrian Turnbull (OKG'51), John Dowse (OKG'53), Peter Fitzsimmons (OKG'78) and John Langford (OKG'86) together with a some of our Australian U/21, U/19, and Schoolboy representatives, and 17 past Rugby Captains from 1942 to 2004 We were also pleased to have with us Richard Lane (OKG'34) and Gordon King (OKG'36) two of our oldest 1st XV players. Michael Marsh (OKG'54) came across from Perth, while Barrie Blackwell (OKG'56) and Ian Farquar (OKG'77) came down from Brisbane. Prior to the game, I introduced many of these past players to our current 1st XV and John Langford presented them with their jumpers.

In our next Home Game against St.Aloysius we farewelled Alan Marsden, after a long and dedicated teaching career. He was the 1st XV coach in 1977, 78, 80 and 81 and to celebrate the occasion we invited each of these teams to attend.

The next special occasion to celebrate was the Barker game at home. Our Senior Knoxonians and Barker over '70s present two trophies on the day these teams meet – one, the Barker Challenge

Cup for the winning 1st XV and the second, to the School who wins the most games on the day. We reserved seats for members of both organizations to watch the game and invited them all back to the Lawson centre after. We were delighted with the response and even more so as we won both trophies.

Our 5 year reunions continue to be well attended. My sincere thanks to Pamela Hitchcock, our Alumni Manager, who assisted the year coordinators to organize these events. The average attendance for the 10 reunions was 65.

The Sydney Schools Alumni Drinks Party held in the Empire State Building in New York proved to be an enormous success. This event was primarily organized by the Kambala Old Girls Union and was supported by 21 participating School Alumni Associations of which we were one. The Honourable John Olsen, our Consul General, was the Guest Speaker. We sent out invitations to all those Old Boys we knew to be in the area and I believe a good number attended.

We have recently had contact with Fraser Sheard (OKG'55) in London, who has been our organizer of the London Dinner for many years, and we hope to have a dinner or cocktail function back on the program this year.

At home, the OKGA continues to support the Knox community and in 2007 we attended the following functions, generally held in conjunction with Agricultural Field Days or Boarding Expos. Afternoon Tea at Tocal; Picnic in the park at Dubbo, Wagga Wagga and Gloucester; Cocktail evening at Port Macquarie; a Dinner at Tamworth and a Luncheon at Mudgee. In addition, a Boarders reunion was organized to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Gillespie House, at which Arthur Pardey (OKG'42) gave us an insight into boarding in the early years.

On 2nd November we returned to Canberra after many years for a very successful Dinner. Our sincere thanks to Peter Lundy (OKG'56) for assisting us with this event.

During the year I was delighted once again, to represent the OKGA at the Scots College Old Boys Dinner.

Our Annual Golf day and dinner was again held at Avondale Golf Club with some 60 playing; we had 7 father and son partnerships. Our special thanks to our sponsors: AsterPos (Australia); Interim Executive Research; John Vohralik (OKG'77) and Private Portfolio Managers, and our sincere appreciation once again to Phil Tuck (OKG'77) for his superb organization of this event.

Lodge Knox celebrated their 50th year in Freemasonry on 17th April 2007. It was also their Anzac Meeting and other School and District Lodges were invited. As has been customary for a number of years, it was an "open meeting" with the School Catafalque Party, Piper and Bugler adding an appropriate and colourful dimension to the evening.

Knox Past Parents Club unfortunately has fallen by the way side in recent years and I am keen to give our encouragement and support to get them back on line. I have been approached by a number of past parents in recent time regarding the KPPC and I believe it is important that we keep our past parents in contact with each other and the School.

OLD BOYS SPORTING AND RECREATION CLUBS:

The OKGA presently sponsors 6 clubs which continue to provide a good contact between Old Boys and also a clear opportunity for recent leavers to become involved in some of our activities.

CRICKET; The OKGA Cricket Club had its first game in January 1947 against Waverley Old Boys and has continued to successfully

field a team every year since. There are at present some 20 enthusiastic players who can be called upon to play and they are capably led by Nick Bangs, who has also managed to recruit a number of our younger Old Boys in recent years. They play a good standard of cricket, reaching the semi finals of the Jack Pace Shield again, only to be defeated by Kings Old Boys.

RUGBY: The Knox Old Boys Rugby Club is our largest club and this year celebrates 50 years. 2007 was again a very successful season with four grades into the finals, and runners - up in the Club Championship. Second Grade won the grand final and Burke Cup, while 5th Grade and Colts finished the season as runners up. The depth of the club is strong and this year 5 grade teams, one colts, and an under 85kg team were registered. Perhaps the highlight of the year, was the game on Knox 1 playing Barker Old Boys – a great day in all respects. The organisation of the day, the Rugby, the hospitality tent, the ground behaviour, the set up and clean up were a credit to all involved. And to top off the day Knox won all grades. A club cannot operate without many people giving a lot of time and effort. Club Captain, James Gordon, President, Bryn Robertson, Marilynn Buchanan, their keen and hardworking secretary, coaches and managers - to all these people we offer our congratulations for the season past and our sincere appreciation for a job very well done.

SOCCKER: Knox United Soccer Club has had a very successful 2007. They were able to recruit heavily early in the year and were able to expand to 4 teams - two in Division 2 and two in Division 5. Apart from the greater depth this also allows for the retention of older players as they are now able to drop down into a less competitive division. This year has seen a number of 2006 school leavers join the club which has been the biggest single influx of school leavers for many years. Currently, they are in a strong financial position securing a number of sponsors. Both squads performed strongly over the season with the Div. 2 team finishing

2nd on the table and consequently gaining promotion to 1st Division for 2008. The reserves team in Div.5 also finished strongly. Our sincere appreciation to Matt Ferros and his committee on achieving excellent results on and off the field .

BASKETBALL: There are two teams registered, one playing in the Manly-Warringah competition and the other in the Hornsby-Kuring-Gai competition. The team playing in the Manly Warringah , Division 3, competition, have a number of players who have played together since 1992 (2 of the originals are Matt Ashwin (OKG'91)and Matt Paterson (OKG'91). This team finished the recent season on top of the table and went on to win the grand final by 18 points. They will now move to Division 2. Our second team playing in the Hornsby-Kuring-gai competition are primarily made up of 2006 Knox leavers. 2007 has been its first year and after a rough start managed to make the final 4. Unfortunately, they fell short by 1 point in overtime in the second semi-final, to a team who had previously beaten them by a large margin. Their second season has now begun and they are currently in a strong position. The OKGA very much appreciates the time and commitment of Matt Paterson, OKG '91 for all he has done for this Club over many years.

VOLLEYBALL: Our Knox Volleyball club is still operating under the watchful eye of John Nguyen. Unfortunately, many of our Old Boys are playing with their University teams and consequently few are available for the OKG competition nights. As well, John looks after the representative program and already is getting players from the school to train with their senior team.

OKGA PIPE BAND: Our Old Boys Pipe Band under the strong and enthusiastic leadership of Allan Watts continues to attract new School leavers and 10 to 15 pipers are regularly available to practice on Sunday afternoons. The band provides an opportunity for those who want to retain their skills but who do not want a

more serious commitment. The band continues to honour the following functions: the annual Anzac march to the memorial in Redfern. The Anzac day parade in Gulgong, “Brigadoon” at Bundanoon, and they join with the School Pipe Band for the Wahroonga Fair.

We have much to be proud of with our Clubs. Recent approaches have been made to the committee that we consider initiating and supporting a Squash Team and a Water Polo team. We await further developments.

In conclusion I would like to particularly thank the following:

- Jo Tait, our archivist, who spends many hours preparing magnificent displays for the various OKGA functions and year reunions.
- Edric Chaffer who has spent many hours researching the involvement and war records of our Old Boys.
- Joan Redmond, who collects the information, takes the photos and edits the “Thistle”, and who is ever willing to help us do things better.
- Leigh Stevenson and Nathan Edwards for their helpful assistance and cooperation in catering for many OKGA functions.
- Julie Lines for her enthusiastic support and willing involvement in many of our functions.
- Pamela Hitchcock, our enthusiastic, committed and friendly Alumni Manager. Her patience with my requests and the

constant support she has given me over the past 12 months is much appreciated.

- To our Auditors Gerry Cowling and David Seaman of RSM Bird Cameron our sincere thanks for your sound advice and willingness to assist our Association.
- And to Andrew Martin of Private Portfolio Managers who has done such a great job looking after our investments this year.

I would specially like to record my thanks to all members of the Committee who continue to demonstrate a deep commitment to their responsibilities for the operation of the OKGA.

Their constant support and enthusiasm is a major reason for the success of the Association – much work behind the scenes goes unheralded – but the willingness to get involved is much appreciated.

Tonight sees the retirement from our Committee of Philip Carroll, who is now living with his family in Paris and is operating his business from this city – his friendship and thoughtful contribution has been much appreciated.

In October, Simon Truskett had to resign as an Officer of OKGA Inc and OKGA Sports Inc, due to the risk management policies of his law firm. He has been a highly valued member of this Committee for many years and in the past 2 years in particular I have greatly appreciated his tireless support and assistance.

I would also like to record my appreciation to Alec Cameron, our liaison with the School Council.

I would further like to record my appreciation to Kim Walton, Head of the Senior School, Bob Thomas, Head of the Preparatory

School, and to Rev. Dr. Gareth Clayton, School Chaplain, for their constant support to me during the year.

Finally, on behalf of the OKGA, I would like to formally express our congratulations to Mr. Rob Wannan, on his appointment as Chairman of the School Council and to thank him for his friendship and support. Despite enormous demands on his time, our Headmaster and Patron Mr. John Weeks willingly attends many of our functions. He has been of great support to me personally throughout the year and his keen interest in our Association's activities and his helpful advice has been very much appreciated.

I look forward with confidence to the year ahead and commend the OKGA to your active interest and support.

Ian MacPherson
President