

**President's Report  
Annual General Meeting  
Woodville High School Old Scholars Association**

**19 March 2024**

It is my pleasure to present my report for the 2023 year.

On all of the key measures – networking events; engagement with the school; communication with members; and financial wellbeing – the year was certainly a success.

I mention three particular highlights.

Firstly, and still well in our recent memory, was the Official Opening of the School's Capital Works Building Programme on 13 December 2023, including naming of the buildings around us tonight - the Brian Marsland Health and Physical Education Centre and the Frank Schirripa Food, Technology and Horticultural Centre named after Association stalwarts, as well as the Anastassiadis Art Studio.

I am sure that we were all deeply honoured to listen to the words of the South Australian Minister for Education, Training and Skills Hon Blair Boyer MP who genuinely noted the exceptional engagement of former scholars with the Woodville High School. Minister Boyer observed that he had seen nothing at that level in other South Australian public schools, likened the engagement to what he had expected to see between private colleges and their alumni, and said that Woodville stands out as an example for others to follow.

This recognition was not just about last year, and certainly not about our Association's recent presidency. It is about the work of the past generation in particular – the attention given by successive School principals and Association leaders and members such as Brian Marsland, Frank Schirripa and Lois Davies to a continuing and mutually valued relationship.

The second highlight was the completion of the second phase of the school pavers project. First laid more than a decade ago, the seventy additional pavers laid in 2023 along the historic Leslie Street frontage of the school pays homage to students and School officers and staff. It was a project interrupted by COVID and other complications, but it came to fruition with persistence and was the initiative of former school principal Meredith Edwards OAM who we thank for her service and encouragement.

The third highlight was the continuing strong engagement and support from members, supporters, and former scholars generally. This extended to our networking events, our committee and even financial support. For example, it was very rewarding for the Association to have been gifted \$500 unsolicited by a former scholar last year, who wished to remain anonymous. When I spoke to the donor, she simply said that she had seen our work and wanted to continue to support us and the School in her advanced years.

Over the course of 2023, your committee met seven times in person, with communication between meetings as required.

We held three regular annual events - the AGM, our Annual Dinner, and our pre-Christmas luncheon.

Our Annual Dinner was well supported, although after COVID-19 about 10 to 15% of our more elderly or health challenged members are not able to attend.

We had an excellent spring evening at the Semaphore Carousel in November.

We also commissioned a new initiative – lapel badges for members and supporters of the Old Scholars Association. At a cost of \$5 there has been good interest; and we have plenty more available at future events.

Our members and supporters continue to provide helpful feedback at functions and also between events. I am particularly appreciative of the work that Secretary Di Cocks, Treasurer Marco Monti, and Database Manager Patrick Gauci undertake between meetings to help manage the flow of communication.

We published six newsletters in 2023. Progressively, more members are receiving them electronically. This is helpful. It not only gets news out more quickly but reduces printing and mailing costs.

Our finances remain in good health, with adjustments made during 2023 to expend funds we were holding for the pavers project.

We have continued to support the school in many ways. From our vantage point, 2023 really saw the school go from strength to strength, including with a visit by the South Australian Governor in June 2023. In October your committee provided input to the school's shield project. Your Association again funded and awarded the Year 11 Dux Prize and the Dawn Palmer Fund Award.

The saddest aspect of this role is to acknowledge members and former scholars who have passed away during the year. We extend our condolences to all family and friends and truly miss those who were active in the Association. It was particularly sad in 2023 to lose former School principal Reuben Goldsworthy, former teacher Jean Hill, former committee member Oleh Bilyk and great South Australian sportsmen Geof Motley OAM and Neville Hayes.

My concluding message to members is that we need to continue to spread the load and encourage new faces to come forward to help the work of the Association. It's not an onerous task, but with the load spread, involvement with like-minded others is very fulfilling.

Finally, thank you for your support, as we look forward to continuing success into 2024.

**Peter Anderson**

**President**