



GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND

**The Women's College
110th Anniversary Reception**

Remarks

by

Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM
Governor of Queensland

Government House
Brisbane

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25th Governor of Queensland, the Honourable Penelope Wensley AC; The Women's College Council President, Emeritus Professor Carol Dickenson AM and Head of College and Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Flo Kearney; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands around Brisbane, the Turrbal and Jagera people, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and to any First Nations people with us this evening.

Graeme and I are delighted to welcome you all to Government House this evening to mark 110 years since the first 19 women were admitted into residence at Women's College.

That was on March 16th, 1914. Less than a year earlier, one of my predecessors as Governor, Sir William MacGregor, and his wife, Lady Macgregor, convened a meeting of prominent citizens here at *Fernberg* to discuss the possibility of establishing a residence for women students at The University of Queensland.

At that time, the University itself had been in operation for only three years, but as its inaugural Chancellor, Macgregor was a committed advocate for education, so it came as no surprise that he gave his full support to the efforts to identify suitable temporary premises for the College and raise the necessary funds.

In retrospect, it's difficult to imagine a more challenging time to be raising funds for such a purpose – the clouds of war had already begun to gather over Europe – but thanks to the efforts of the founding committee, *Chislehurst*, *Oskarsholme* and *Warrawee* were quickly leased, modified and equipped in readiness for the first residents.

Bringing together a disparate group ranging from trainee teachers to graduate students required strong and effective leadership – and the College was fortunate in the appointment of the formidable Freda Bage as the first Principal.

Aged just 30 when she took up the position, she was public-spirited, actively interested in sporting and social clubs, and, as a scientist, a fine academic model and mentor to residents.

But a College also needs a unifying philosophy, and every Women's resident since March 1914 can thank the founding committee for developing the ethos that has been at the core of college life ever since:

“A Women's College need not be large and expensive, but if it is to be worthy of the name, it must increasingly attempt to render a student's life as full and as sufficient as possible in every direction”.

Those were the words of Elizabeth Lothian, a teacher at the Brisbane Girls Grammar School, and one of the early supporters of the concept of a College for women.

Today, under Flo Kearney and her team, that ethos remains, as does the defining value embodied in the College motto: *Capimus ut dividamus* – we take so that we may share.

Over the past 110 years, College may have felt the impact of global events from two world wars and the Great Depression to the GFC and pandemic, but it has survived because it continues to give every resident the opportunity to grow, thrive, and, ultimately, give back, helping to build a stronger, more compassionate and cohesive society.

Happy 110th anniversary! We hope you enjoy the warm hospitality of Government House.