



St Scholastica's College Ex-Students' Union Newsletter 2021

From the President

June 2021



Dear Ex-Students

Another year has passed with us having yet again to cancel our annual Ex-Students' Reunion. Our health and safety are of utmost importance and we must heed all regulations in place. Needless to say, I have not been able to enjoy the regular College celebrations such as the annual opening of the College Year Mass at St Mary's Cathedral, Year 12 Mass and Graduation Ceremony and Speech Night. I must congratulate the College and in particular Kate Rayment, the College Principal, on her handling and adjustment to this never seen before situation.

Whilst all is quiet with the Ex-Students' Union, the College is forging ahead with its rebuilding/refurbishment program, further details of which are contained in Kate Rayment's article. Hopefully by the time we have our Ex-Students' Reunion in 2022, we will see some fantastic and well overdue changes to the College Campus.

I thank all our Ex-Students who gave so generously to our Bursary Fund and the Good Sams Foundation at a time of not knowing what lay ahead. During these difficult times, the need for your support is even greater.

Karen Debenham (Gillespie '67)
President

Email: karendebenham@optusnet.com.au | Phone: 0419 999 084

Congratulations to the class of 2020 on their great achievements in the HSC under the most unusual of circumstances with Covid 19 restrictions. We welcome them to join us now as Ex-students.

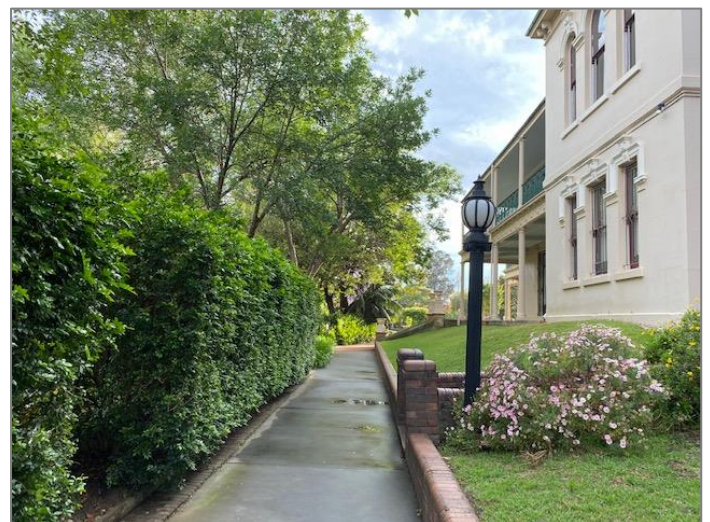
I thank the College, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and our Ex-Students for their continued support of our Ex-Students' Union.

I must apologise in the lateness of issuing our annual newsletter. I have had a health issue which has put me out of action for a while. I am now on the road to a full recovery, thank God. Now would be a good time to reach out to your fellow Ex-Students who may be suffering from various illnesses, some with cancer or other health concerns, and offer them your support. A simple phone call may be all it takes to boost their day, to let them know you are thinking of them.

Take care and keep safe and well. I look forward to when we can all meet again.

Our Facebook is a great way to keep in touch with us, other Ex-Students and to hear of upcoming reunions. Please join our page:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/schols/?ref=group_header



Ex-Students Committee

President	Karen Debenham (Gillespie)
Vice President	Maureen McCluskie
Treasurer	Karen Debenham
Secretary/ Registrar	Anne Wells
Newsletter Editor	Christine Volk (Smith)
Liturgy Coordinator	Jo Kenderes (Catling)
Committee Members	Patricia MacRae, Anne Whiting, Carmel Vanny, Cheryl Fraser, Christina James, Helen Castle, Rae Wales, Susan Bastick, and Win McCluskie

The Ex-Students' Union Aims To:

- Work closely with the College to provide support in various activities, promote loyalty, friendship and support amongst Ex-Students.
- Provide support to the Good Samaritan Foundation.
- Provide bursaries to daughters of Ex-Students who, due to unforeseen circumstances, require financial assistance.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

In keeping with the Government's regulations in our current COVID-19 health crisis, it is with much regret that we must once again cancel what was to be our 98th Annual Reunion held on 24th May. However, we still need to raise funds to be able to continue with our support of

the Ex-Students' Bursary Fund and the Good Sams Foundation, both of which are extremely grateful for our efforts. Funds raised from our raffles enable us to provide prizes to students at the College and give support in other ways when the need arises. Please consider making a donation.

From the Principal



Dear Ex-Students

While we promote our school as a community like no other, 2020 was certainly a year like no other for us and for all Australians. The year began with drought, devastating bushfires, great loss and a sense of defeat for many. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The virus spread rapidly internationally, leaving communities all around the globe scrambling for responses.

Here at St Scholastica's, a smooth transition to online learning allowed offsite learning to continue through the period of state-wide lockdown. This was not only a time for curriculum to be offered via online classes with teachers, assessments, pastoral care, social and emotional support and community life were all fostered carefully during the time offsite.

Return to site came with some significant changes in the way we teach, learn, socialise, move around the site and manage day-to-day operations. Film provided a window into the College for parents and families

who were not permitted on site after mid-March. Excursions, assemblies and school activities were significantly curtailed or cancelled. Our international students and rural and remote students sustained the greatest impact of the COVID-19 restrictions and management. We were sad to lose the enrolment of a number of these special girls during the peak of the pandemic.

Despite the enormous challenges of the year, a great deal was accomplished in 2020. Staff responded with extraordinary professionalism and expertise. Students met the challenges head-on. Advances were made in the background work for substantial operational changes coming in 2021, especially through system development and strategic ICT support. These changes will sustain our work until facilities are adequate to fully staff our needs into the future, edging closer to our vision of excellence in all we do.

The College Literacy, Numeracy, Data and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education strategies were developed and ready for publication in 2021. Significant work was undertaken in policy development, risk and assurance and in development of student and staff wellbeing, with a focus on online resources and support throughout the pandemic. The 2021-2025 Strategic Improvement Plan progressed and will also be ready for implementation from 2021.

Construction of Stages 2 and 3 of the Masterplan commenced and a large portion of the refurbishment work was completed. The photos below highlight the

ongoing building works due for completion in September/October 2021. The newly refurbished Science Labs were open for use from the beginning of the year, providing state-of-the-art facilities to support high-quality education in the sciences. Classrooms and a storage space below the Trixie Forest Centre were converted into a Fitness Centre and Change Rooms. A new sports storage facility is also under development. I note the contribution of the Block Grant Authority to this work; without them, this work would not have been possible. We look forward very much to the opportunities that will open

up as a result of the efforts of the last five years of preparation and work.

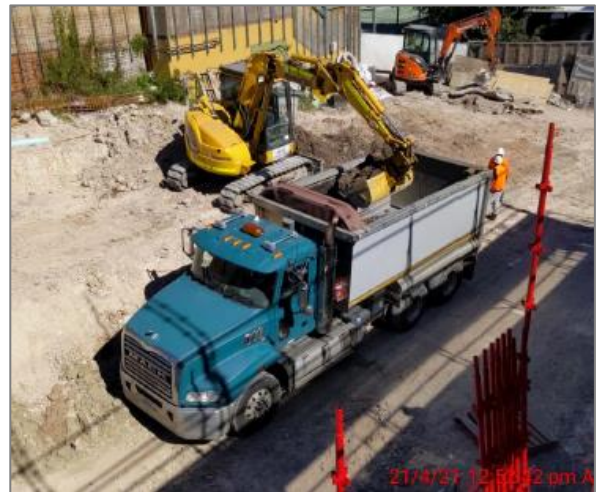
I thank all who contributed to the life of the College during 2020. The Ex-students' Union again provided funding for the 2019 College Dux, Palvi Bothra and representation at the few key events held was, as always, very much appreciated.

I am very proud of the resilience and 'stickability' of our staff and students throughout what was a very challenging year. We are all praying for a much smoother, healthier and safer year in 2021.

Best wishes, keep well and keep in touch. God bless.

Pax,

Kate Rayment



St Scholastica's College Rises to a New Challenge for Boarders

The COVID-19 pandemic had a big impact on education right across Australia as schools closed and home-learning took over, but one group of students who faced particular challenges was boarders, for whom home and school are one and the same during term-time.

St Scholastica's College at Glebe in Sydney is a Good Samaritan Education school which is generally home to 85 to 100 boarders in addition to day students.

Principal Kate Rayment said most of those boarders came from rural or regional Australia, including remote Aboriginal communities, and some were from overseas.

Kate said the school identified the coronavirus situation as a potential problem in January, when the students were at home for the school holidays and began acting quickly.

"We were contacting families of girls overseas and telling them it would best to get back here now and go into isolation, preferably with guardians in Sydney, before borders were closed and they couldn't get back," she said. "As it turned out, those who didn't get back before the end of the holidays couldn't get back."

Things grew even more challenging as the end of Term 1 approached and the decision was made to close the boarding school before the holidays.

"We were told that if someone gets the coronavirus it will spread through the entire boarding school," Kate said. "The advice we received was that if you can't isolate the students you can't keep your boarding open. The risk was just too great.

"We advised the students to stay in Australia if they could. Most did that. A few didn't and they got caught when the borders closed."

As the pandemic picked up and schools were closed, online learning took over, but for the students trapped overseas, the time difference was difficult, trying to tap into the online lessons at all hours of the night.

There were significant challenges for Australian-based boarding students as well.

"For instance, our girls from Lord Howe Island had difficulty because the



internet is very poor there and mail doesn't come every day," Kate said.

"And in Hall's Creek in Western Australia, the Aboriginal community was very fearful of the students bringing coronavirus back with them from Sydney into the community. Their answer was for the students and some family members to 'go bush', so you can imagine that you can't use computers when you're out in the bush.

"As a consequence, those students began to disengage and it's been very difficult to re-engage them after more than a term without learning."

Head of Boarding Libby Molony said the pastoral care of the students and their families had been a priority for her and the school throughout the pandemic.

"It was an experience and a half," she said. "A lot of our rural and regional families were still right in the middle of dealing with the impact of the summer bushfires, which had been devastating for some. And then this happened. It was very hard for them."

During online learning, St Scholastica's restructured its timetable, breaking the day into four one-hour periods, including time each day for community engagement where the girls were encouraged to take part in group activities such as cake-baking, a book club, and film reviews to help them stay connected.

As school returned, international and state border closures meant that some boarding students remained at home and the teaching staff began live-streaming their lessons.

Libby said that as the boarders slowly returned in a staggered operation beginning with Year 12, there were new challenges in terms of protocols and staff management.

Meal times had to be staggered to achieve social distancing and meals had to be single serve. Students must now be accommodated one per room, rather than two per room previously for junior school students.

But despite all these changes, the girls are happy to be back at school, Libby said.

"We're hearing lots of students saying how pleased they are to be back at school and how much they appreciate



what they've got here and the sacrifices their parents are making. And comments like that are really lovely to hear at any boarding school."

This article was first published in the August 2020 edition of the 'The Good Oil', the emagazine of the Good Samaritan Sisters www.goodsams.org.au.

News from the Sisters of the Good Samaritans

2020 was a very challenging year for the Good Sams Foundation but thanks to the generous gifts and prayers of our generous donors and supporters we were able to continue to provide support to Sisters of the Good Samaritan programs in Australia and the Pacific.

Many Good Sams programs were called upon to provide even more support throughout the peak of the COVID crisis. The Sisters in the Philippines were faced with the enormous challenge of providing meals and basic supplies to families living in the squatter settlements and on the streets of Bacolod throughout very strict lockdowns. At the peak of the lockdowns, the Sisters were delivering 170 food-packs and 100 hot meals per day. In addition to providing funds for the emergency feeding program, the Foundation was also able to provide funds for the Christmas celebrations, meaning the children and families from the squatter settlements and Kinder School had a wonderful feast and gifts to enjoy at the end of a very difficult year.



Good Samaritan Sisters Taabeia and Katarina, who came to Australia from Kiribati before the start of the COVID pandemic, are still unable to return to their home due to border closures. Kiribati is one of the world's poorest nations and faces many challenges, including rising sea levels, malnutrition and disease. Fortunately, at this stage the country remains COVID free. We hope the Sisters will soon be able to return to their communities and ministries.

This year, the Good Samaritan Foundation's Education Grants for students experiencing particular hardship received more applications than ever. We approved grants for 10 students attending Good Sams Colleges (including St Scholastica's) this year. Each of the students received a grant of \$4,000 (administered via their school) to help with education expenses in the year ahead.

Our program of scholarship in Timor Leste continues thanks to a new partnership with a Dili-based NGO and our continued relationship with the Jesuit community at Railaco. This program was initially established by Sr Rita Hayes during her 15 years living and ministering in the region. This year we will support over 100 students with a small grant to cover the basic costs of their secondary or tertiary education. It is a small investment with a large impact in this rural community that provides young people with an opportunity for education that would otherwise not be available to them.



Donations made to the Foundation are delivered in full to programs of support for women and children and are tax deductible. We are sincerely grateful to have the support of the St Scholastica's Ex-Students' Union. Any gift you can make, large or small is most warmly appreciated. If you would like to know more about any of the programs supported by the Foundation, you are welcome to get in touch.

Catherine Cresswell
Sisters of the Good Samaritan Foundation
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www.goodsamsfoundation.org.au

Ex-Students' News

Ex-Student Lily Shearer ('76)

Congratulations to ex-student Lily Shearer ('76) who has been recognised for her outstanding service to and involvement in the performing arts and being the co-founding member of Mooghalin Performing Arts. Lily contributes her success to her family and community. Lily's practice is deeply embedded in Cultural Values and beliefs of Murrawarri/Ngemba peoples instilled in her by her Grandparents, Parents and her Brewarrina community where she was born and raised. Lily began her career as a dancer at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dance Theatre in Glebe Sydney where Lily would go to Redfern every Friday and march for land rights to Town Hall alongside other First Peoples artist activists who would later go on to lead the cultural arts sector today.



You can read more about Lily's story and her work at the following link:

http://artsreview.com.au/on-the-couch-with-lily-shearer/?fbclid=IwAR3c3eZg5zfd2wWHccKtcSGSf1hplz8th9_NWhlePYwdgF5OZSe4i41yMkk

Ex-Student Elizabeth Vega ('77) OBE

Ex-student Elizabeth Vega has been recognised for her outstanding career. Elizabeth is an Experienced Main Board Director, Non-Exec Director, programme director & digital transformation expert with over 25 years' experience at executive leadership level, heading & advising on complex change, digital transformation & enterprise IT programmes. Elizabeth has acted as an advisor to government, and in the private sector clients. She is a key industry thought leader & has served on UK's Cabinet Office SME Advisory Panel since 2012, as well as supported the Dept of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy on innovation strategy & the impact of Brexit on SME & scale-up businesses. Most recently, she contributed to the Dept of International Trade's Export Strategy review.



Elizabeth is the first person to be an elected Director of both techUK Main Board & AIIA National Board (Australia). She is committed to sustainable business

& corporate responsibility, and champions important economic issues including creating diverse, innovative & competitive supplier marketplaces and facilitating the growth & export ambitions of SMEs, improving government procurement & spend with SMEs, and equitable commercial treatment of SMEs delivering innovation & specialist skills within supply chains. Elizabeth is vocal about diversity & inclusion of women in the tech sector &

investing in skills & capability development to address the critical digital skills gap in the UK & Australia, including encouraging more girls & women into tech & leadership careers & advocating for a stronger STEM national study curricula, as key to increasing national productivity, competitiveness & economic growth.

Elizabeth has been awarded an OBE award: for services to International Trade & Digital Transformation.

Ex-Student Tayla Joel ('14)

In February this year, St Scholastica's welcomed back ex-student Tayla Joel to teach the years 9 and 10 PDHPE classes. Since graduating from Schols in 2014, Tayla moved to the UK and completed three years of study at London Studio Centre. Throughout her training and life in London after graduating, Tayla built

her teaching repertoire and versatile reputation across dance, pilates and fitness throughout London's top educational colleges, gyms and studios; Pineapple Dance Studios, Dance Works, BASE Studios, Energie Fitness UK and London Studio Centre. Professional performances including Bad Girls the Musical - Dance

Captain, CUNARD Queen Mary 2 - Royal Court Theatre Company Dancer (Transatlantic season 2017), BBC D-Day 75th Anniversary for Her Majesty the Queen, Veterans and the President of the United States, London Fashion Week 2018, launches for Google and Nike, Pride Show Covent Garden 2019, CTC company, collaboration with Central Saint Martins and University of the Arts London, Aston Merrygold, Bridgerton - Netflix Series and most recently Show Company Manager / Choreographer for CUNARD Queen Mary 2 - World Cruise 2019/2020.

After the impact of COVID-19, Tayla returned to Sydney and began choreographing and workshoping with local dance studios, instructing at F45 Training Australia, Xtend Barre, Wellness Local Mortlake and is currently assisting the Wicked musical production at Ascham School. Tayla is currently building her business 'SLIQ' Boutique Movement Studio based in

Eastwood, a place to welcome everyone of all shape and ability to join in the fun of small group fitness, pilates, barre, dance, private lessons & social events.

Follow @sliq_studio for more details.



Sr Janet Colbourne



A Schols Connection

Thank you to Deborah Lennis for providing the following information re her family's connection with Schols:

I'm an ex-teacher and Schols first Aboriginal teacher of Aboriginal Studies 2007-2013

My partner had been researching family history and discovered his mother Mary Josephine (Molly) Miller graduated from Schols in 1932.

Three of his relatives from his Mother's side became Good Sam Sisters: Sr Josepha Colbourne (1910), Sr Brenda Colbourne (1918) and Sr M Janet Colbourne who passed away on 9th April 2020, after being a Sister for 68 years.

Below is a picture of the either the Graduation or Debutant Ball for Schols C1932-1934.

Thank you for sharing your Schols connection with us Deborah.



Reunions

40 Year Reunion - Class of 1980

The 40th year reunion of the 1980 girls got off to a great start. Amidst COVID 19 we scoured the social media pages for our old friends. One person led to another and before we knew it, our fun was about to begin. Many of us rang each other, face timed, got on messenger and we even had a zoom get together earlier in the year. Our first attempt to meet up was cancelled due to COVID. However, these resilient 1980 girls were not about to give up and we planned again.

When the day finally arrived, nothing could quell the anticipation and excitement of the class of 1980 as we all poured into the Toxteth Hotel. Approximately 30 of us tried to maintain social distancing with those of us that left in Year 10 reuniting with those of us who left in year 12. Older, perhaps wiser, we spent the next few hours reminiscing about past events, our peers that could not join us, and of course our teachers. There was not enough time to catch up on the past 40 years and we are keen to do this again this year and many more years to come.

Thank you to everyone who came and made the day a memorable one.

Catherine Ebert and Charmaine Jones



Recognise anyone?

A group of Schols girls posing for a photograph by the old lower green. We believe this is the class of '76 but would love to hear from anyone who has more information?



Our Newest Ex-Students: The Graduating Class of 2020

The Ex-students Union congratulates the one hundred and fifty seven 2020 Year 12 students on their outstanding results in the NSW HSC.

The following overview summarises some of the achievements of our girls in the 2020 HSC:

- 3 students are known to have achieved ATARS above 99.
- 15 Year 11 students accelerated students completing the HSC Mathematics course with 9 students achieving Band 6 (above 90%)
- The school improved 26 places in the school ranks based on the % of Band 6 results, from 135th to 109th
- 3 Students achieved Band 6 (90% or above) in at least 10 units of study.
- There were 58 distinguished achievers named on the Honour Roll for gaining Band 6 in one or more subjects, with a total of 123 Band 6 results including 3 from distance education.
- 2 students were nominated for ARTEXPRESS.
- 2 students were nominated for ENCORE.

We are proud of the achievements and commitment of all our Ex-students and wish them every success in the next stage of their lives and careers.



ARTEXPRESS is an exhibition that showcases the most impressive HSC Visual Arts artworks. The 2020 selected works are being exhibited in several City and Regional art galleries.

← **Zoe Hamra's** HSC Body of Work is being exhibited at the New England Regional Art Gallery, Armidale. Zoe's artwork, titled *Nature of Nature*, is a series of drawings that consist of pencil, thread and eco-dyed paper. The work is full of subtle details and decisions based around sophisticated aesthetics.

Zoe's Body of Work was also selected to be included in ARTEXPRESS Virtual.

Congratulations Zoe.

Sister Clare Memorial Award - Dux of 2020

The Sister Clare Memorial Award is presented to the St Scholastica's student who achieves the highest Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) in the HSC Class of the previous year, provided she is continuing on to tertiary studies. The award is in memory of Sister Clare Slattery sgs MBE, who died on 18 October 1980 after a long and distinguished teaching career at St Scholastica's College.

Lily Whitting achieved the highest ATAR of 99.60, Lily is our first Indigenous Dux of the College and is the recipient of the Sr Clare Award for 2020. In normal circumstances, the recipient would be presented with her award at the Annual Reunion Mass and Lunch, where she would have the opportunity to meet and speak with Ex-students. We look forward to the opportunity to present Lily with her award when we are able.

Lily's HSC Extension 2 English ficto-critical response has been selected for publication in the *Young Writers Showcase 2020*. Her work is a study of discursive patterns in contemporary First Nations literature, with a specific focus on the French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault. It was a highly experimental work, using her own Wiradjuri voice to navigate representations of indigenous identity. *The Young Writers Showcase* is an annual publication of the top Extension 2 English works in the HSC. We are very proud of Lily and congratulate her and her teacher, Ms Joelle Chenoweth on this outstanding achievement.



(Lily at Graduation)

Deceased Ex-Students

Please remember our deceased ex-students in your thoughts and prayers. The names of all deceased ex-students are recorded in the memorial book which is placed on the altar during the Annual Reunion Mass.



- † **Ronda Boyd (Timbrell '43)** died 13 May 2020.
- † **Helen Gait (Doolan '59)** died 9 March 2021.
- † **Margaret Griffin ('54)** died 5 September 2020.
- † **Inez de Hesselde (Alam '44)**, sister of Margaret Michael (Allam '45) and Dorothea Jones-Roselius (Allam '50) and aunt of Heather Joseph (Michael '67), Cathy Rowe (Michael '69).
- † **Joyann Loftus (Paterson '56)** died 12 April 2020.
- † **Beryl McKellar (Preddey '45)** died 3 February 2021.
- † **Anissa Chatt ('99)** died 9 April 2019.
- † **Janet May Morse (Black '56)** died January 9, 2021.
- † **Carmel Elizabeth McCaffrey (Davies '56)** died 25 February 2021.

Relatives of Ex-students' Deaths

- † **John Joseph (Jack) Dansey** died 31 August 2020, father of Robyn, Fiona, Lynn-Maree ('80), Joanne Henderson ('86) and Regina. Jack played first grade rugby league for Newtown, Balmain and Cronulla-Sutherland and refereed 172 games.
- † **Grant Franke** died on 31 May 2020, husband of Sharyn Franke (Unterrheiner).
- † **Patrick Griffith** died on 9 December 2020, husband of (Carol Griffith (Sheridan '53) and father of Vicki Porrett (Sheridan '76) and Sheridan Roche (Griffith '78).
- † **Warren Hearne** died on 11 May 2021. Husband of Vicki Jackson ('67').
- † **David Smiley** died on 1 February 2021. Husband of Joan Smiley (Hogan '52).

Treasurer's Report

- Our Bursary Fund this year received \$6,345.00.
- Our Investment Fund this year reached \$113,988.44. The Bursary amount paid for 2019-2020 was \$6,000.
- The Good Samaritan Foundation (Education) Fund received \$3,350.

Karen Debenham – Treasurer (Acting)

Annual Raffle

Proceeds from the raffle enable us to provide prizes for Speech Night, our Community Spirit Award, and give financial support to the College in other ways as the need arises. We really appreciate the funds raised from the sale of the raffle tickets. Raffle tickets can be purchased from the booklet provided and paid for by cheque or direct deposit. Thank you.

The raffle prize winners for 2020 were:

First prize - \$300 Visa Card voucher – **Rosemary Dusselaar**

Second prize - \$200 Visa Card voucher – **Belinda Nadile**

Third prize - \$100 Visa Card voucher – **Sally-Ann Wisemantel**

News and Photos

We are always interested to hear of Ex-students' achievements, weddings, anniversaries and births. Sadly, we are often notified of Ex-students' deaths, but **we would love to hear more news of the special joyful occasions in your lives.**

Please contact us so that we can publish details and photos in future newsletters and share them with your fellow Ex-students.

Send your news and photos to Christine Volk (Smith) ('77) at christinevolk@bigpond.com