MEDIA RELEASE

Co-education to herald exciting new era for TAS

ONE of the oldest independent schools in NSW will welcome girls into all year groups from next year, following a decision this afternoon (31 March) by the Board of The Armidale School to adopt full co-education from 2016.

The decision follows a two-month consultative period that included 23 meetings with parents, Old Boys, staff and students across NSW and in Brisbane; written submissions, and an online survey sent to more than 4,500 stakeholders. As anticipated, the response from the TAS community ranged from concern about a move away from boys-only education and a perceived loss of some tradition, to strong support for the many benefits of co-education to families, including an increased range of opportunities.

Chairman Mr Sebastian Hempel, himself an Old Boy of the school, said the Board had been poring over feedback and analysis, but it strongly believed that co-education was the best means to grow the school and secure its long-term future given the challenging economic environment - a view supported by a clear and strong majority of respondents.

“The Board acknowledges the level of passion from all sides on the issue, which reflects the strong sense of affection people have for the school and the range of programs it offers. Change is not always easy, however in considering the long-term interest of the school, this is all about maintaining what is best about TAS and simply making that available to secondary girl students, as well as boys,” he said.

Established in 1894, TAS has had a co-educational Junior School since 1989. The decision will not impact on the school’s membership of the Athletic Association of Great Public Schools (AAGPS), of which it has been a member since 1897.

Headmaster Mr Murray Guest said work would now begin to ensure a smooth transition for parents, students and staff. He also reassured current students that their experience at TAS would not be diluted or distracted by this transition, and that this would be uppermost in the mind of the School.

“Considerable thought and planning had to be undertaken in the areas of academic curriculum, pastoral care, boarding, our leadership service and adventure programs and our facilities, to ensure the Board had a proposal to consider,” he said.

“Now a decision has been made, I look forward to the School being able to move ahead with our families, student body and staff as we work together to ensure the success of an exciting new era for TAS.”

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For more information on this release contact Tim Hughes on 0409 662 420