



The Overnewton Old Collegians Association is a committee of past Overnewton students which represents all their ex Overnewton class-mates. As a committee, we see our responsibilities to our members to be wide and varied. The Old Collegians Association aims to provide an avenue for past students of the College to stay connected with the school and the Overnewton community and in doing so, hopes to benefit both past and present students and the greater Overnewton community. However, we do find that as students leave the College, it is quite difficult to keep them linked to the network, and as such, we aim to identify and implement differing conduits to attract the assorted range of interests that our ex students have. We ask ourselves, what are the reasons an old collegian would be interested in staying connected with the College? For some it's the social aspect and a chance to catch up with the latest gossip, for some it's a networking tool and others are interested in the business benefits of such a network.

We maintain an active database of all past students and their contact details, along with an internet based networking page, similar to Facebook, called Linked IN, where old collegians are encouraged to register their details so they can find out about upcoming events, leave messages for each other, share photos etc.

Whilst providing an avenue for former students to communicate with each other, this web page also provides the Old Collegians Association and the College with a means to communicate and network with the past students. We also prepare and publish an old collegians newsletter (Murmurs), which we find all past students love to receive and read. There are also class reunions organised. Currently we organise and run one, five, ten and twenty year reunions. From all reports, these events are a huge success and eagerly anticipated by all ex students. We also try to link past students back into the College community by encouraging participation in activities such as the careers night and the Country Fair and donations.

As a committee, we believe that old collegians need to benefit in some way in order to participate, especially as they are not required to participate for any other reason. We have found old collegians will participate where they feel a sense of being, a feeling of belonging to the College and a responsibility to participate or give back to the place that was such a large part of their lives for many years.

I believe this will become stronger with time, as family lines are established within the College through future generations. Students, both present and past, will then feel a greater connection with the school. As past students get older, they seem to acquire a desire to give back to the College which gave them so much as they were growing up. This has become more evident in recent times as we saw our first twenty year reunion where old collegians were generous enough to donate over \$800 towards an award for a current student. Unlike many other well seeded and established schools, our Old Collegians

Association is relatively young. However, we see it as important to capture the interest and attention of our old collegians so that they and the community may benefit from their contributions and participation.

Whilst the benefits of networking within a community are evident to some, the challenge is to sell this concept to others. We hold more reunions now than ever before and they are better represented by each year level, every consecutive year. We are currently attracting an attendance of approximately 75% of each graduating class at their respective reunion. Our Linked IN web page now holds the up to date details of over 1000 past students, which as a percentage, equates to almost 60% of all past students. By no means is there a lack of participation. We see our major task is to keep students interested and wanting to participate in activities and remain connected to the Overnewton community.

*Andrew Matiszak, President
Overnewton Old Collegians*

