

# Cultural Renewal at St John's

Ready for 2019



ST JOHN'S  
COLLEGE

within the University of Sydney



# Introduction

2018 was a year of significant, progressive changes as we continued to build on our extensive work renewing the College culture and strengthening the wellbeing of our students by supporting greater diversity.

Our work in this area is not new and began in 2013. It is based on close consultation and collaboration with our students to identify and implement initiatives that build inclusiveness, safety, and encourage greater diversity across our community.

As the year comes to a close and we reflect on 2018, we would like to share a summary of what we have achieved throughout this year. It builds a strong foundation for more work to improve our College culture through 2019.



**Mr Adrian Diethelm**  
*Rector*

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# An historic day – new governance Act 160 years later

On the 2 July 2018, the College celebrated the 160th anniversary of the proclamation which brought the College coming into existence on 2 July 1858. The same day also began a new era with the proclamation of the *St John's College Act 2018* coming into force.

St John's has taken the lead amongst the residential colleges of the University of Sydney in having new governing legislation pass the NSW Parliament.

It is the culmination of significant work over many years to deliver governance that reflects the times, that supports the College in the future and encourages renewal which is fundamental to the longevity of any institution.



# A year on from the Broderick Report

On the 29 November 2017, Elizabeth Broderick & Co released the report on *Cultural Renewal at the University of Sydney Residential Colleges*. A year has now passed since the report was released and St John's has made some great achievements to better the safety and wellbeing of our students.

St John's College fully endorsed and accepted the Broderick recommendations in respect of the College and more broadly those relating across campus and we are working closely with the University and our peer colleges throughout this process.

In addition to the reforms already implemented at St John's, the Broderick team proposed in the five College reports and an "overarching" report to the University of Sydney, 23 recommendations which have been adopted by the Colleges.

The approach to implementation of the Broderick recommendations has seen these divided across two relevant subject areas: Wellbeing & Safety and Student Culture. This recognises that the broader goal of culture renewal in tertiary institutions, including residential colleges, is achieved by supporting a strong culture of wellbeing and safety.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) provide a clear framework for improvement to Wellbeing and Safety against which the actions we are taking can be measured including:

- Risk assessments and controls

- Advice to Students
- Prevention Education Programs
- Support for affected students
- Incident response

At St John's we are implementing necessary changes to build even stronger *Student Wellbeing* and *Safety* focused on key actions and initiatives including:

- Development of College wide risk management frameworks
- Identifying students as source and managers of risk
- Dedicated staff working in conjunction with the Vice Rector
- Established peer support networks through Residential Assistants (RAs)
- New education programs on sexual misconduct, alcohol and other drugs, respectful relationships  
Support for students to report including staff support and external referrals.

# Presenting the 2019 Pastoral Team

The pastoral team is a dynamic, student-focussed group which ensures good order and a sense of community in the House. They attend to the myriad of everyday issues that students confront from simple lockouts to serious welfare problems. The team is on call 24/7 to address student needs.

Comprising of a combination of staff and students, the Pastoral Team consists of various levels of support. Our experience has been that a vital source of support for tertiary students is their peers.

The Vice-Rector has oversight of the welfare and pastoral care of students in College together with a primary role in risk management policies and procedures relating to students. He meets frequently with the Student Club House Executive and elected secretaries to lend guidance to the Executive and secretaries in planning and risk managing co-curricular activities.

Risk management and pastoral care responsibilities involve close contact with the Sub-Deans, Resident Assistants and Corridor Representatives who all report to the Vice-Rector. The pastoral care system is comprehensive and nuanced and undergoes continuous improvement in the light of experience.

The Dean is closely involved in the pastoral care of students with special responsibility for academic matters. The Dean oversees the Tutorial Program and follows the academic progress of students throughout their years in College. Support is given to all students, but especially to those who are struggling academically

or who need guidance concerning their university course and career path.

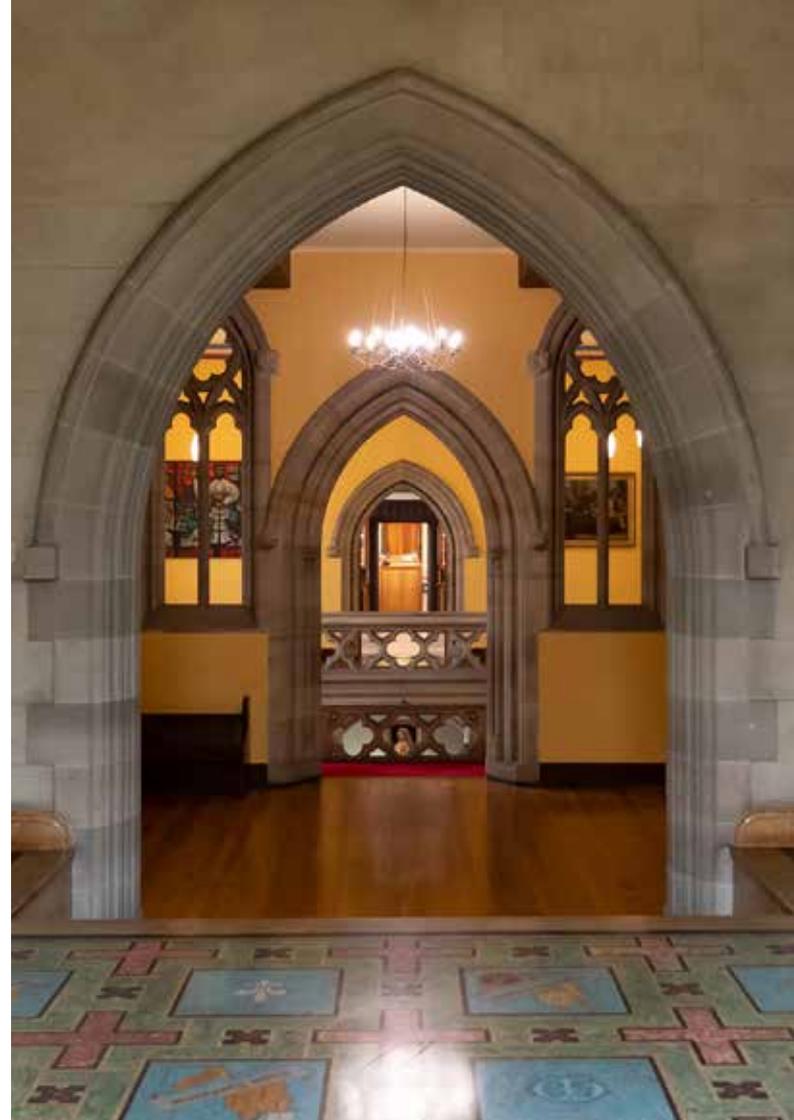
Resident Tutors (also known as House Tutors) provide proactive pastoral support for students and have a key role in maintaining a positive and inclusive culture throughout the College. They engage with the student community as role models and support students in their academic endeavours, provide advice in study, organisation and career choices. They also take an interest in the cultural and sporting endeavours within the student community.

Sub-Deans oversee the after-hours care of students in conjunction with the Resident Assistants (RAs) and Corridor Representatives (CRs). They provide emergency care if necessary, ensure the security of the College and provide back-up for RAs if required. Sub-Deans are also involved in building a strong sense of community within the College and providing pastoral care to students. They report to the Vice-Rector.

Sub-Deans, RAs and CRs contribute to providing a mature and responsible after-hours presence around the College.

Resident Assistants (RAs) provide mentoring, guidance and leadership to other students and assist the College in providing the best possible community life for its students. Each corridor has its own designated RA or Corridor Representative who helps students to settle into College, especially those students in their first year of university. The RAs and CRs also organise social activities for their corridors. These student leaders are responsible for creating a harmonious living environment that allows for optimal study and sleep.

Corridor Representatives (CRs) reside on fresher corridors in College and are mentors to first-year students. They assist students on their corridor with making the transition from secondary to tertiary study and settling into college and university life. Being second year students, CRs remember the challenges of starting first year and understand that no question is too trivial. They can also guide students to more formal channels of assistance if needed and they ensure that students live in a safe, secure and friendly environment.





**Tony Walters**  
*Vice-Rector*



**TJ Christie**  
*Dean*



**Synthia Huynh**  
*Dean of Students*



**Georgia Hurst**  
*Sub-Dean*



**Matthew Griffiths**  
*Sub-Dean*



**Georgia Boonen**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Eli Burke**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Alice Carstens**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Liam Donovan**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Max Fisher**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Katie Henderson**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Dominic Moore**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Nicholas Spanner**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Griffin Tapper**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Anoushka Weily**  
*Resident Assistant*



**Tommy Arms**  
*Corridor Representative*



**Adelaide Bryant**  
*Corridor Representative*



**Katie Castle**  
*Corridor Representative*



**Caitlin Jameson**  
*Corridor Representative*



**Connor Karozis**  
*Corridor Representative*

# Co-House Presidents lead 2019 House Committee

Initiated by students alone, the St John's College Students' Club made the historic decision in August 2018 to amend its constitution to enable the election each year of male and female House Presidents.

This decision builds on years of work by current and former students to create a more equal and inclusive student body and provide more leadership opportunities for women.

Student elections were held in September with Miss Lucy Blanzan and Mr James Hansen elected Co- House Presidents, Mr Douglas Gibson elected as Secretary and Mr James Flipo elected as Treasurer.

In a recent interview with the 2019 St John's College House Executive, the team were asked what the significance of having Co-House Presidents was to the student body. House President, Lucy Blanzan said, *"It's a good thing because James and I are so different and we bring different things to the table. We've automatically just opened up to so many new opportunities and things that we can implement because one person might have a few ideas but now we have two people that are bringing in many different ideas."*

Fellow House President, James Hansen, followed, *"I think it makes so much sense to have representations from both sides of the college. Because there is a 50/50 split of male and female students here so it's necessary to have both sides. I think that same structure that they followed for 160 years where it was all*

*male isn't going to work in today's world. That's why this change is so important."*

Each House President say they will bring a different approach to the role with Lucy focussing on *"social events and charity"* but *both will continue to be "really involved in the pastoral care work"* which supports their fellow students.

James adds, *"We both have a slightly different perspective. Because we both grew up in completely different countries, both went to completely different schools, this will help ensure that we broaden the representation of students."*

The rest of the 2019 House Committee were also elected in September and the Committee leading the St John's College student body in 2019 are:

**House Presidents** - Lucy Blanzan and James Hansen

**Secretary** - Douglas Gibson

**Treasurer** - James Flipo

**Rawson Secretary** - Paddy Flynn

**Rosebowl Secretary** - Laura-Anne Aitken

**Social Secretary** - Saurav Bansal

**Palladian Secretary** - Felix Wallis

**Volunteer Secretary** - Clare Chuang



Back Row: Paddy Flynn, Lucy Blanzan, Saurav Bansal, Douglas Gibson  
Front Row: Georgia Hurst, Laura-Anne Aitken and James Flipo  
Absent: James Hansen and Felix Wallis

# Meet our 2019 House Executive

This year students at St John's College elected the new House Executive for 2019 that includes, for the first time, male and female Co-House Presidents. We sat down with 2019's Co-House Presidents Lucy Blanzan and James Hansen along with Treasurer James Flipo and Secretary Douglas Gibson.

## What's the significance of having Co-House Presidents?

**James Hansen** "I think it makes so much sense to have representations from both sides of the college. Because there is a 50/50 split of male and female students here so it's necessary to have both sides. I think that same structure that they followed for 160 years where it was all male isn't going to work in today's world. That's why this change is so important. "

**Lucy Blanzan** "It's a good thing because James and I are so different and we bring different things to the table. We've automatically just opened up to so many new opportunities and things that we can implement because one person might have a few ideas but now we have two people that are bringing in many different ideas."

**James Flipo** "I think passing this new constitution (enabling Co-Presidents) has shown the positive impact that Execs can have on the House. So that is something that inspires us, to have that leadership where we can also try to influence others towards a more positive impact in the community."

**Lucy Blanzan** "Also I don't think people look at us as two House Presidents and a Secretary and a Treasurer. It's not that we used to have one house president and now we have two house presidents, it's more that we have four people leading the college."

## How do you think your approaches, as Co-House Presidents will be different?

**Lucy Blanzan** "I think my focus will be very much on social events and charity as well as continuing to be really involved in the pastoral care work which I've been doing for a few years now. I think the fact that both James and I are involved in the pastoral care work of the College is a really good thing. It's one of the areas we in which we have a lot in common."

**James Hansen** "I think just having a slightly different perspective, because I think we both grew up in completely different countries, both went to completely different schools, will help ensure that we broaden the representation of students."

**What are the goals that you have as a House Exec for 2019?**

**Lucy Blanzan** “I think developing closer connections with the other Colleges is definitely one thing that we have all talked about that we want to improve. I think it’s important to make sure we have strong communication with them.

Firstly just so that things don’t clash and also just so we’re all on the same path as well. I think someone was saying if we’re trying to change something in our College but maybe other colleges like Drews or Wesley are doing it completely different, then all of our students are going to be sitting here going “we’re doing this and they’re doing that - why aren’t we all doing it?”. Being on the same team is a big thing that we should probably work on.”

**James Hansen** “I think one of the really awesome things I want to focus on is this sense of community – how everyone talks to each other. I really want every person to walk past member of

staff or pass another student just say hello, and just get talking. Because that’s what this place is about - it’s about talking to other people, meeting new people, learning from others. I think that is something I really want to impress.”

**James Flipo** “That was one of our main goals for next year to try and restore that public image as much as possible and we want to prove that we are different to what people may think we are.”

**Douglas Gibson** “In 2019 there is going to be huge push from us to improve Inter-College relations as well. There is so much potential there – we spend a lot of time with the 250 people at John’s but there’s like over a thousand other students at Colleges that you don’t get to spend as much time with. And if we could have more social events in sporting events that are more relaxed, we actually get to meet those people in a better way. That is definitely something we could in the upcoming year.”



**Lucy Blanzan**  
*House President*



**James Hansen**  
*House President*



**Douglas Gibson**  
*Secretary*



**James Flipo**  
*Treasurer*

**Where are you all from?**

**James Hansen** “New Zealand.”

**Lucy Blanzan** “Sydney.”

**Douglas Gibson** “I am also from New Zealand, from Auckland.”

**James Flipo** “Perth.”

**Lucy and James (Hansen) have either of your parents attending St John’s?**

**James Hansen and Lucy Blanzan** “No.”

**So how did you come to be at St John’s?**

**James Hansen** “My sister was about to go here and then she ended up staying in Auckland. I thought it just sounded like so much fun and such a cool place for University and to start out into the real world.”

**And what about you Lucy, how did you come to St John’s?**

**Lucy Blanzan** “I heard about it from my best friend at school – none of them went to Sydney Uni colleges but they went to college and they had an awesome time and had a really good support network. I actually came to Uni a year before with a different degree and I think it was probably a little bit hard because you don’t have such a big support system. So I thought when I changed degrees to nursing I’d try College to see if it was



a better environment and it has been, it’s been awesome. I’ve loved it, every second of it.”

**How did you come to St John’s, James?**

**James Flipo** I used to live in Perth and I wanted to discover new parts of Australia. So my choices were between Sydney Uni and Melbourne Uni. But when I came to Sydney I thought the city was much better and a much more pleasant environment. And when it came to choosing John’s College, my decision was really based on when I had a tour of the college. Darcy was the one who gave me the tour of the College and she seemed really passionate

about the place. I remember walking around the college and her saying hello to everyone and introducing me to everyone. And I thought ‘this is the community I want’. People have strong bonds and a good community spirit.”

### **Any family connection to John’s?**

**James Flipo** “No, None at all. The tour introduced me to the College for the first time.”

### **How did you come to St John’s, Douglas?**

**Douglas Gibson** “My main decision to come across to Sydney for a start was the fact that I wanted to attend a good university and probably one of the best ones in NZ was Auckland however I didn’t really want to stay at home. And I felt that university is such a massive step in your growing up and I wanted to try something new. So that’s where the decision to come to Sydney started. And then in terms of John’s, basically colleges over here seemed like the perfect way to get involved in all the university had to offer and I’d heard stories from people saying how amazing colleges were and especially John’s. But once again, I had no particular affiliation with John’s before actually coming over here but I’ve loved every minute of it since.”

### **We’ve heard a lot this year in the media and elsewhere about Colleges in Australia. What would say to people outside the College system about life here, what are the benefits are and negatives?**

**Lucy Blanzan** “I think the social support – you have your friends around you 24/7 - which I think is really important. Especially my

degree which is nursing .... I do have a really tight cohort so I do have good relationships but I know with a lot of the other degrees which are a lot bigger, it’s a lot harder to make friends. So I think coming to college you automatically have a group of friends that you have through your whole Uni experience. That you can go back to if you have had a bad day, you can come back and you have your corridor and most peoples’ doors are open so you can wander straight in and rant and then feel better.”

### **How about you, James?**

**James Hansen** “I just love the community. You just have so much opportunity to do whatever you want. And there are so many people here who are passionate and have similar interests and it is so good just to connect with young intelligent people who are passionate about what they do. I guess one of the hardest things about this place is you don’t really get a break. Like it is always very full on a lot of the time, you are always with a lot of people, which it is awesome at times but sometimes it’s good to have some lone time. I think that is the biggest drawback. But it is the sense of community and the ability to do stuff with people, just outweighs that.”

**James Flipo** “I would agree with the sense of community, a lot. I think that is something crucial at John’s because we live together all the time of 24/7. I really like the corridor spirit Lucy mentioned.”



### **Explain that?**

**James Flipo** “Straight from the beginning you are put into a corridor where your corridor representative meets you and greets you and introduces you to everyone. And basically the people on your corridor are your first friends and your basis point so when you then had the first parties, the people you go have fun with are the first people you meet from your corridor. That is something very useful and having corridor chats and reviewing how everyone is going. And as the year goes you move to other groups of friends but you always have that strong corridor basis and that was something really important.”

**So did that help? I mean three of you are a long way from home. Did that make the transition easier?**

**James Hansen** “Certainly, it is so cool because you immediately have this group of people who you can turn to. It is quite hard when you go to a different place and you don’t know anyone. Yeah I think just having people to meet you, that makes such a difference.”

# Independent Review

In early 2018 the release of the “Red Zone Report” was widely reported in the public domain. The report was based on interviews with former students of a number of residential colleges across Australia, detailing their personal recollections of experiences including complaints about various matters. St John’s was one of the colleges included in the report.

The safety and wellbeing of all our students is paramount.

Central to that commitment is an examination of any complaint made, determining the circumstances giving rise to it and if found to have occurred, what steps are taken in response.

It is important to note that many of the incidents alleged in the report and covered in the media at the time, were already known to the College and had previously been the subject of internal examination and response.

To ensure that our response had been in line with our own and community standards, the College sought an independent review of these matters.

The aim was to re-examine how the College had responded to these incidents at the time they were raised, to determine the veracity or otherwise of any issue, including any that may not have been raised with the College or known, and to identify any improvements in processes and/or response that may be needed.



The review found that the College had responded to the matters raised with it including matters involving student complaints about specific incidents, including disciplinary action being taken at the time in response to the complaint made. There were some allegations however that the review was unable to verify.

The College already has in place extensive policies that cover all aspects of student safety, wellbeing and care, including a detailed Code of Conduct contained in our Student Handbook that sets out standards of behaviour including matters where the College has a 'zero tolerance' approach.

The College recognises that from time to time there will be occasions where complaints will be made and it is important that we continue to review our processes and ensure that our handling of any complaint remains in line with best practice.

To that end the review has recommended that we look at ways to strengthen our approach, specifically by tailoring a complaint handling process to meet the needs of the College and our students. This complaint handling process will include a clear approach to communicating with stakeholders involved and ensuring that they are kept informed at each stage of any investigation into their complaint.

We believe that this initiative will build on the already strong approach we have at the College to address complaints and issues when they are raised by any student, as well as ensuring that they are fully supported throughout the response process.

The review canvassed significant private issues including personal matters, and the College is unable to release that material in order to protect the confidentiality of the individuals involved.



# Student-initiated anonymous reporting app launched

During October 2018, members of the College's Equality Liaison Group, comprising of staff and students, worked with a provider to launch an anonymous reporting app tailored to St John's College.

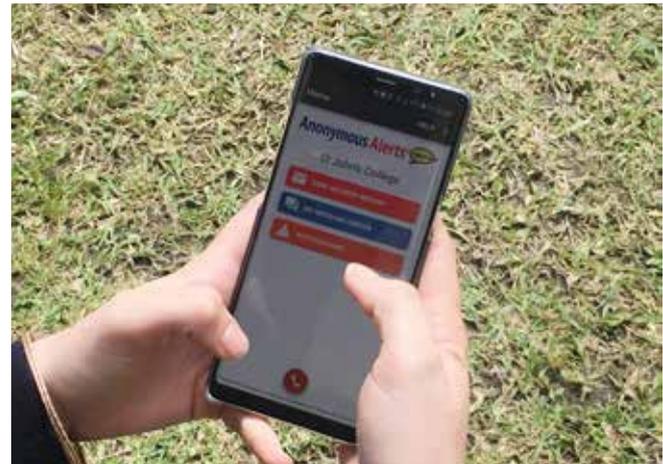
The *Anonymous Alerts App* enables confidential reporting to the College's *Student Life Team* of any matter relating to bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, vilification or other behaviour or actions.

The app is another tool supporting and strengthening the College's zero tolerance policy on any behaviour that threatens student safety and/or wellbeing.

Importantly the tool does not replace any existing reporting path for any matter relating to sexual assault, sexual harassment, assault, discrimination, intimidation, hazing, bullying or other reportable conduct.

"This is another strong initiative from our student body which further supports the College's zero tolerance policy to any behaviour that undermines student safety," said Rector Adrian Diethelm.

"The work of the Equality Liaison Group has been central to the introduction of this important additional tool for our community and I congratulate Eleanor Schwager, Megan Fitzgerald and Felix Wallis and all involved in this important project," he said.





# ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

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