



## Reflections on the Value of Community

**Jo-Anna Moy, Class of 1978**

**Among students and parents, Roseville College is known for its sense of community, which was and is still the envy of other schools. It is one thing that really helps Roseville College stand out.**

My memories as a Roseville Ladies' College student in 1966, as it was known then, bring a very different school to mind – it then numbered 150 students from Kindergarten to Year 12, and the parents were vested shareholders in its operations. It was, necessarily, an intimate, yet friendly community, much like a big family where children delighted in the three dogs (who lived at the school with the gardener) and enjoyed playing on the vast green lawns.

As a student, I personally received the attention and dedication of the College's amazing team of teachers, who genuinely cared about and wanted to know each girl, because "each girl matters".

Today, under the auspices of The Anglican Schools Corporation, a great deal has changed as the school has grown both in reputation and size – nearly 1,000 girls. However, the "big family" endures and Roseville College remains a big part of mine; one daughter is an Alumni and another is nearly there, and I am still connected as an Alumni, a parent and, since 2003, as President of the Alumni Network.

As a solicitor, I observed people travel through many difficulties in life and, often, did so alone. On reflection, the clients supported by friends and family are the ones who journey through the tough times faster and seem better placed to move forward – picked up, held together and encouraged as they rebuild the next phase in life. Alone, people spiral downwards and are more vulnerable to depression and anxiety – we all benefit from the resilience and comfort of knowing we are not alone and there are people in our corner to help us pick up the pieces.

Through Roseville College, I have discovered that "community" is less dependent on physical size and more dependent on culture – and the culture we share is one in which everyone knows everyone and values everyone. Each girl still matters, and we are all connected. The teachers know each student, and the students know each other. Likewise, the parents know one another, and families grow together.

As a parent, I am testimony to the same caring support – where each individual matters. When my husband died

in 2009, it was my Roseville College community – not my professional associations or affiliations – that coordinated, prepared and delivered two-course dinners for my four children and me, for more than a year! With four children aged between Year 1 and Year 11, the loss of a father and spouse is an enormous and unexpected shock and burden. Yet, this concern, prayer and practical support gave me space to breathe, work and independently provide for my family. It was invaluable.

The beauty of knowing others and being known – especially at the most vulnerable times – helps us to better understand, know and accept ourselves. This sense of belonging, hinged together with shared experiences and values, stays with each girl as she graduates.

I have learned from my time as a student and parent at Roseville College that a happy, safe community is invaluable. We are so fortunate that our connection is for a lifetime. I am so glad and thankful that I shared Roseville College with my daughters.

Community at Roseville is felt from day one, followed soon after by the Icebreaker Cocktails, hosted by our Roseville College Parents' Association and Roseville College Foundation, where new parents are welcomed into the Roseville family and where returning families reconnect after the summer break. For parents who are also Roseville Alumni, their special connection is honoured at our annual Generations event. In 2019, this was an afternoon tea for grandmothers, aunts, mothers and even in-laws, who share the joy of watching the current generation of students enjoy their season at Roseville College.

As President of the Alumni Network, which hosts the annual Twilight Cocktails for the most recent Graduating Class, I enjoy presenting each new cohort with Life Membership into our Alumni family.

*Pictured: Jo-Anna Moy, centre, with her family this year. Supplied.*



Leaning on my own experience and those of my daughters, I know there will be times ahead in life when their Roseville friends will hold their hand through the highs and lows – just as my friends have done for me and I have for them. Found in this community are friends for life: our sounding boards, the testers of relationships, our support, our mothers-group if we have children, and our network with whom to learn new skills, reason out work issues or strategise career moves. We are lucky that we have other Roseville girls to help us through our lives.

Among my dearest friends are a number of Roseville girls, one who has known me since I was four in Kindergarten at Roseville College – and still remembers embarrassing stories from my school days! Roseville girls attended my second wedding earlier this year! It is so lovely to be known so long and intimately like that!

At each reunion, my classmates and I light up as we reconnect, especially with those living interstate or abroad. So quickly, we find ourselves reminiscing about our days at Roseville, as if little or no time had passed!

This year, my cohort celebrates its 40th year reunion, which also marks our turn as inductees into the College's esteemed and loved Hinemoans. This group of women, who all graduated 40 or more years ago, meets annually for the Hinemoan Lunch. It was especially moving for me, because I had been attending the lunch for nearly 15 years before I qualified, as the President. Now, I am a Hinemoan, too. It is a most wonderful event, where heritage items from our years at the College are on display and where we are at liberty to be carefree Roseville girls once again.

As they say, "once a Roseville girl, always a Roseville girl". And so, the sense of community we came to know through the classroom extends well beyond it. It does not matter what our Graduating Class was, or who our teachers were. It is not important whether we were known for our academics or diligence, creativity or athleticism. Each girl is part of the community here, through a shared past and a shared future. We are Roseville girls and we are immensely fortunate to belong.

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School For Girls

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