

OVERSEAS STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL SINCE 1945

With the pending visit to Papua New Guinea by the Principal, Mr Richard Fairley, and the Head of Boarding, Mr Chris Wilson, it is timely to review the history of overseas students at Grammar since World War II. While the two current Grammar staff will be enjoying a direct flight from Townsville to Port Moresby, the first three students to arrive in 1949 had a different experience. Ian Helton, who came from the mining town of Wau, and who is still in contact with the School, writes that "... Wau to Lae to Port Moresby was by Dragon Rapid, a bi-wing two engine wood and doped canvas plane that could carry six passengers. From Port Moresby to Townsville was by a DC 3 via Cairns."

Ian and his brother, Gerald, and Peter Ireland were the first three students to arrive in 1949. With the development of mining and agriculture in PNG during the 1950s and 1960s the numbers attending the School grew with students enrolling from towns such as Lae, Mount Hagen, Bulolo, Rabaul and Bougainville. While enrolments were never in large numbers, seven students enrolled in 1957 and a similar number from Mount Hagen in 1958. Most of the enrolments were the sons of 'ex-pats' who had moved to PNG to work on the mines and the plantations. One of the students who enrolled from Mount Hagen, Thomas Edova Fox, still lives in PNG and in 1982 was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his services to the country.

In the late 1970s the Trustees gave permission for younger students to enrol as boarders but they had to attend Central State School until they could come to Grammar in Year 7. Lyndsay Tytherleigh who came to the School in 1977 and graduated in 1985 is proud of the fact that he is still the longest serving boarder at the School. Another PNG student who enrolled in the early 1980s was Philip Rehder, whose father had been a student in the 1940s. Philip's son, Chemark, is now a Year 12 student at the School, thus the first of a third generation PNG student to attend. Philip is active in PNG athletics and in 2016 managed the PNG Athletics' squad for the Rio Olympics.

The extension of the Australian government's AusAid programme at the end of the 1980s allowed for the enrolment of native born PNG students. Six students were enrolled each year [from Year 10], thus for some years there were eighteen PNG students enrolled at any given time. Overall the programme was a success with many of the PNG students playing leading roles in the life of the School and achieving success after graduating. Terence Banda was the Rugby Prize winner in 1993 before later graduating as a doctor in the United States. Other PNG graduates have become doctors and engineers as well as leading figures in the military and business world. Asi Toll went to represent PNG in Rugby 7s while Calvin Singomat became the top rugby union referee in the country and has refereed at the highest level. The AusAid programme was disbanded at the end of the 1990s.

A study of the School register shows that the first Hong Kong student to enrol at Grammar was Edward Luk who enrolled in 1959. He was followed by two other students in 1960 but there is no record of further enrolments. It was not until 2001 that boarder numbers from Hong Kong and mainland China grew incrementally.

Mr Fairley recently summed up the Hong Kong development as follows: *"The academic success of our Hong Kong students has been a particularly rewarding aspect of this programme. The students have brought a wonderful work ethic to boarding and their classes. The acceptance of our Hong Kong students within the School community and their relationships with other boarders has been wonderful to see. The presence of overseas students on campus supports our commitment to an outwards looking view of education, for all Grammarians."*



Hong Kong Parents Function - 2017



Hong Kong Past Students Function - 2017

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