

2024

# IMPACT REPORT

---

BOARDING SCHOOLS EXPO AUSTRALIA



# Table of Contents

**05** OUR STORY

**15** MARKETING

**05** FROM THE DIRECTOR

**16** SCHOOL PROFILE

**08** 2025 EXPO EVENTS

**18** OUR REACH

**10** OUR FORMATS

**20** 10 TOP TIPS

**11** SCHOOL PROFILE

**22** SCHOOL PROFILE

**12** FAMILY PROFILE

**24** DESTINATION BOARDING





We acknowledge that the land on which we work and live is the traditional land of the Wiradjuri and Wangaaypuwan peoples of the Wiradjuri Nation.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people.

# Our Story

20 years ago we started out with one event in Dubbo.

15 boarding schools from Sydney and regional NSW put their faith in this 'new' model and turned up.

So did 60 rural and remote families. Some driving up to 400 km to meet with and discuss their child's education opportunities.

From there, Boarding Schools Expo Australia (BSEA) has grown. We've welcomed close to 15,000 children and their families to 65 face-to-face events over the past 20 years, including three virtual expos and the Australian Boarding Schools Summit.

We've had gaps in proceedings due to crippling drought and, of course, the pandemic. We're currently witnessing the impact of 13 interest rate rises since the end of 2022 with families investigating different options for their children, including sending their boarder interstate or choosing regional over metropolitan to save costs.

Here at BSEA we've grown alongside digital mediums of marketing and we've embraced new technologies and strategies.

With that in mind, in 2024 we have proudly presented the third Australian Boarding Schools Summit (ABSS) as part of our virtual 'Boarding Expo 365'. We partnered with 20 schools to bring Australian families the Boarding Summit discussing the topics they're most interested in and that help them throughout their boarding school years.

That said, we're continuing to meet you and our families where it's most convenient and for that reason we're transitioning ALL of our ABSS conversations to our podcast channel. 2025 will see us launch a short series on each topic and broadcast via Destination Boarding. We will 'park' our virtual offering for now.

We continue to commit to making our resources and events relevant for rural, regional and remote families across Australia. We want to bring families to the table at the earliest stage to help them plan the best opportunities for their child/ren.

Enjoy our 2024 Impact Report.



Airport  
←

Sydney CBD  
↓

Boarding School  
Emily Sue  
Trase



# From Amanda Ferrari

## Director

In 2024 across our face to face events in Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth and the pop-up afternoon in Moree, we welcomed 474 families and just on 1,100 children.

## close to 1,100 children through the doors in 2024

Each one of them there to start or continue conversations with schools about their boarding options. That's almost a 10% increase on 2023 despite 13 interest rate rises!

Of these, 74% were first-time visitors to one of our events. How good is that!

Our exit surveys continually demonstrate how important the Boarding Schools Expos are for rural and regional families. The stats continue to indicate that after attending an Expo, just over 80% of families are considering schools they hadn't previously thought of, or even short-listed.

These numbers prove beyond doubt that schools attendance and responsiveness to the needs of families plays a major role. (see our guide to ensuring your Expo event is as successful as possible for your school)

This year we've made the decision to 'park' the virtual offering for the time being and focus on our podcast format, Destination Boarding. With over 4,500 downloads on 47 episodes (at the time of writing) it's evident to us that it's more convenient to our families to listen.

Our Summit topics will transition to podcast at the end of the Boarding Expo 365 'season' April 2025 and our new topics will be launched as a short series. We're looking forward to focusing our team efforts here and understand that people can listen wherever they are, whatever they're doing .... suitable for those of us that live out here.

I have, over the past three years, absorbed significant price rises across all supply chains within my business. 2025 I have decided to pass on a very small % of these cost rises which has resulted in the price of our full two day Expo events (Dubbo, Wagga & Narrabri) incurring an increase of 5%. All other offerings remain as they were for the 4th year running.

*Amanda Ferrari*

DIRECTOR, BOARDING SCHOOLS EXPO AUSTRALIA

“

**...the Boarding Schools Expos, both in person and online, offers a highly targeted audience, ensuring a most effective and efficient spend and return on investment. It also offers the school the chance to genuinely connect with boarding families in the region, and show an interest in their region, as well as gain an understanding of their home territory, which can be key to providing a good boarding experience.**

”

**LESA FOWLER**

HEAD OF BOARDING

St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, QLD

# 2025 Expo Events

## Two Day Expo Events

Emerald, QLD

Thursday 1st & Friday 2nd May

Dubbo, NSW

Friday 16th & Saturday 17th May

Wagga Wagga, NSW

Friday 20th & Saturday 21st June

Narrabri, NSW

Friday 25th & Saturday 26th July

## Half Day Pop-Up

Griffith, NSW

Thursday 19th June





**74%**

OF FAMILIES WHO VISITED AN  
EXPO THIS YEAR WERE FIRST  
TIME VISITORS

**127km**

AVERAGE DISTANCE  
TRAVELLED TO ATTEND  
(2,000KM WAS THE FURTHEST)



## Our Formats

### Expos

Two day event + powered booth

\*Includes Premium Profile Listing (\$450)

**2025 Dates:**

Dubbo, NSW - 16th/17th May

Wagga Wagga, NSW - 20th/21st June

Narrabri, NSW - 25th/26th July

**Pricing:**

Early Bird \$4,180 incl GST

Cut Off Tuesday 12 November 2024

Full Rego Fee \$4,950 incl.

### Pop-up Expos

Two day event + exhibitors bring their own media walls & banners to create a space

\*Includes Premium Profile Listing (\$450)

**2025 Dates:**

Emerald - 1st/2nd May

**Pricing:**

Early Bird \$3,200 incl. (introductory offer)

Cut Off Tuesday 12 November 2024

Full Rego Fee \$3,900 incl.

### Pop-up

Half day event + BYO media/walls (as in pop-up expo)

\*Includes Premium Profile Listing (\$450)

**2025 Dates:**

Griffith, NSW - 19th June

**Pricing:**

Early Bird \$3,200 incl.

Cut Off Tuesday 12 November 2024

Full Rego Fee \$3,900 incl.

# 474

families attended our NSW expos this year

# 51%

of families that visited in 2024 did not attend boarding school

\*no standing affiliation with any school



## BEV OXLEY

REGISTRAR AND LEADER OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

St Stanislaus' College, NSW

As the College Registrar and Leader of Community Connections Bev aims to inform, connect and engage with staff, students, parents and community members.

This role takes responsibility for the effective planning, development and management of strategies to increase enrolments at the College and also works to widen the scope of the College outside the current community of staff, students and parents, to reconnect with Old Boys and to engage with new and prospective families.

### What is your current boarding situation at Stannies?

St Stanislaus' College offers boarding for students from Years 7 to 12. This includes full boarding, five nightly boarding and weekly boarding. Can you describe how your school's presence at BSEA events has evolved during your three-year commitment? The College decided to recommit to attending BSEA about three years ago after not attending for a number of years.

With each year of attending, there has been an increase in families wanting to find out more about Stannies and engagement with the College has increased.

### What specific strategies have you implemented to increase your visibility and engagement with families at the expos?

Ensuring a presence at each expo, being visible, sharing information about Stannies offerings and how each boy can achieve their potential at Stannies.

### How have you found the feedback from families and prospective students since you began participating in BSEA events?

Feedback has always been encouraging with welcoming and warm discussions with families and prospective students. Stannies is a smaller College so the fact that each boy is known by all staff is encouraging for parents.

### After completing your three-year commitment, what led you to decide to continue your partnership with BSEA?

**“Committing to BSEA into the future will assist and encourage families to start making schooling decisions for their son(s) earlier.”**

It also opens discussions about country schooling options and how valuable this experience can be. Connections with other schools at BSEA is a bonus.



## THE DOWELL FAMILY

DUBBO EXPO VISITORS - 2024

**We live on a farm west of Dubbo with our two daughters Tilly (year 5) and Georgia (year 3). We are looking at both girls to start boarding school in year 7, with Tilly starting in 2026.**

**Dan is originally from Brewarrina and works as an electrical linesman and travels all over the state, as well as works on the farm. I am originally from Griffith and am a teacher at Dubbo Distance Education. I work with children who are isolated, or whose special circumstances prevent them from attending school on a regular basis.**



**Can you share with us why you're considering boarding school as an option for your children?**

Dan attended boarding school from year 7 to year 12 and enjoyed the opportunities to play different sports and the lifelong friendships that he made. We would like to give our daughter's the same opportunities and experiences.

Currently, there is a teacher shortage across the state and many high schools are struggling to offer certain elective subjects. When comparing the subjects on offer at the different boarding schools, we would like to give our girls the same opportunities to have a variety of subjects and possible career paths.

We also spend a lot of time and money travelling long distances for sport throughout the year. The facilities that are available at a lot of the schools are incomparable to what can be offered in rural towns. It can also be a challenge with the logistics of working full time and the girls attending their different sports, dance and clubs. We leave home at 7:45 am and don't get home till after 7:00 pm most nights.

**From your visit to the Boarding Schools Expo, what were the highlights for you?**

At the BSE it is a less formal environment where you can have a down to earth chat with the boarding staff and teachers at the schools. The children can talk about what their own interests and find out the answers to the questions they want to ask.

We found it was a really positive step involving the girls in the whole expo experience, where they collected all the bags of goodies from the schools and when we got home, we all discussed the pros and cons of each school based on our family's needs.

Once we shortlisted the schools we wanted to go and visit, we found that having made some connections with the staff, it made the next step much more personal for our daughters having a tour of the school with someone that they had already met at the expo and were comfortable with, feeling free to really imagine themselves being a part of the school community.

**Would you mind telling us the benefits of having so many boarding schools under one roof closer to where you call home?**

Being able to speak to so many different schools all at once over 1 or 2 days in the same spot is a game changer. For us personally, we talked to all the schools on the Friday and then went back on the Saturday and revisited the schools that we had shortlisted. We were then able to find out more information and discuss the next step for those particular schools.

**“We spoke to schools we had not even considered as an option, and this opened our eyes to other possibilities and helped to fine tune what were looking for in a school.”**

Another benefit of having everything under the one roof is talking to other parents who are in the same boat, finding out their experiences and what schools they are looking at and why.

**Have you found our website a useful resource for your family as you research boarding school options?**

The website is an incredibly helpful tool when comparing schools. You can easily navigate through the different schools and find the important information you need such as the school fees and size of the school and boarding house. There is a lot of extra information and checklists for families to use to help when choosing what school is the best fit for your child.

The scholarship section is a good place to start when investigating potential scholarships that are available and when you need to apply. The articles and blogs cover a myriad of subjects that are relevant to families who are considering boarding school as an option or a necessity.



“

**The events give us the opportunity to meet prospective new families and introduce them to our School; it gives us the chance to catch up with our current and past families in the region; and each visit enables us to learn more about the communities that our boarding families call home.**

”

**TAMMY WILSON & NICK BYRON**

DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT AND DIRECTOR OF BOARDING  
Toowoomba Grammar School, QLD



# Marketing

## **Comment for Copy & Interviews**

Married to the Land

Interviews with 2WEB, 2DU and ABC

Graziher

## **Print Advertising\***

The Land Newspaper

QLD Country Life

NW Courier Education Guide

NW Courier

Graziher

North West Weekly

Pedals, ICPA National

Top Wire, ICPA NSW

News & Views, ICPA QLD

## **Radio Advertising**

ABC Radio Interviews

2WEB

## **TV Advertising**

9 Southern (Win Television/Channel 9)

## **Digital Advertising\***

The Land

Queensland Country Life

Stock & Land

Farm Weekly

Weekly Times

Graziher

Facebook and Instagram extensive

Humans of Agriculture

Married to the Land

## **Sponsorships**

Gold Sponsor ICPA NSW

Partnership ICPA NSW & QLD

Various Rural Sporting Clubs

LeaderLife Youth Mentoring Program

Womn-Kind

## **Podcast Advertising**

Graziher

Destination Boarding

Married to the Land

Humans of Agriculture

\*All the rural and regional weekly's within our exhibiting locations



## TAMMY WILSON & NICK BYRON

DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT AND  
DIRECTOR OF BOARDING

Toowoomba Grammar School, QLD

Tammy and Nick work very closely together to welcome and build relationships with TGS boarding families. The School's annual TGS on Tour program, which includes BSEA events, takes them to families throughout Australia, building those connections and developing a better understanding where their boarders come from. A boys' boarding school since the School's creation in 1875, Tammy and Nick say 'boarding is who we are'.

### Why did you decide to participate in Boarding Schools Expo Australia (BSEA) events this year?

We value our involvement in BSEA events and they form a core part of our annual TGS on Tour program which sees us travel widely across Australia. The events give us the opportunity to meet prospective new families and introduce them to our School; it gives us the chance to catch up with our current and past families in the region; and each visit enables us to learn more about the communities that our boarding families call home.

### What is the current boarding situation at Toowoomba Grammar School?

Boarding is going very well for us. We are seeing an ongoing increase in our boarding numbers, particularly from northwestern NSW and western QLD, some of which can be attributed to many of our families having seen strong beef and cotton seasons and of course can be attributed to our presence at BSEA events. Our fantastic boarders' activities program sees the boys busy on the weekends and the boys are also enjoying the opportunity for their houses to nominate a special request dinner menu.

# 94%

OF ATTENDING FAMILIES  
WERE ABLE TO MAKE A  
SHORTLIST OF SCHOOLS TO  
VISIT

# 80%

OF ATTENDING FAMILIES  
ARE NOW CONSIDERING A  
SCHOOL THAT THEY HADN'T  
PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED

# 100%

OF ATTENDING  
FAMILIES FOUND OUR  
EVENTS TO BE  
WORTHWHILE



### **What are your goals by being involved with BSEA?**

We really value the opportunity to introduce families to Toowoomba Grammar School and our boarding program. We are not a school with boarders, we are a boarding school, we always have been. Our ratio of boarders to dayboys is one of the highest in the state, with 1 in 3 Senior School boys being boarders. There is so much on offer at TGS and the expos give us a great opportunity to spend time with families, tell them about what we can offer their son, and we also have the chance to learn more about what boarding families are looking for in a boarding school. It doesn't hurt that we get to spend time on the road traveling to some beautiful parts of our country too.

### **What was your highlight(s) from this years' events?**

We met so many new families who were interested in exploring TGS and the Darling Downs region.

**“At this year’s TGS Open Day we welcomed numerous families that we had first met at a BSEA event.”**

It was an absolute honour that they had taken the time to come and visit our campus and learn more about us.

### **Dedicated Queensland expo events are a new concept for BSEA, what’s the main advantage as you see it to being involved?**

We are seeing more and more families explore Queensland boarding schools. COVID-19's border closures, the rising cost of living, increasing school fees, and a desire to break away from the family tradition of boarding in NSW or Victoria all make dedicated Queensland expos a valuable opportunity for families and schools alike.

### **Do you have any advice for other boarding schools who are considering signing up with BSEA and wondering if these events are for them?**

Come along!

BSEA events see families who are dedicated to researching boarding schools come through the doors with a genuine interest in learning more about as many schools as possible.

The expos also give you a wonderful opportunity to connect with staff from other boarding schools, it's a very warm and collegiate environment.





# Our Reach

1st September 23 – 31st August 24



**4,937**

EMAIL  
SUBSCRIBERS



**624k**

PAGES VIEWED



**2,042**

FACEBOOK  
PAGE LIKES



**8,334**

BLOG POST VIEWS  
The Ultimate Packing List for  
Boarding School

**87k**

EMAILS SENT

**279k**

VISITOR SESSIONS

**416k**

FACEBOOK  
CAMPAIGN REACH  
(UP BY 79%)

**1,311**

BLOG POST VIEWS  
2023 Gift Guide for Boarding  
Students

**11k**

EMAIL CLICKS

**115k**

UNIQUE VISITORS

**1,141**

INSTAGRAM  
FOLLOWERS

**4,165**

CHECKLIST VIEWS  
Guide to Australian Boarding  
Schools (Checklist)

**49.2%**

AVG EMAIL  
OPEN RATE

**2,091**

SCHOOLS STARRED

**111k**

INSTAGRAM  
CAMPAIGN REACH  
(UP BY 113.9%)

**4,706**

PODCAST LISTENS  
48 EPISODES





## 10 TOP TIPS

*towards a successful Expo for your school*

We are so very proud to bring your schools to our regions. We do our very best to get families to attend – sometimes we win and sometimes we don't. Having said that, a quiet Expo is around 100+ families – that's 100+ families who are visiting our event for one reason only!

**What you do when they walk in the door is up to you.**

**ONE. Ensure that you bring one of your friendliest, most approachable and relaxed members of your boarding team as one of your Expo representatives.**

Families want to talk to someone who works in the boarding house or who is closely aligned to the boarders.

---

**TWO. Only use your computers & phones when absolutely necessary.**

Sitting behind a 'desk' (table) with your laptop open does not make you very approachable. If you're too busy to attend, (and let's face it sometimes you will be), then consider sending someone else. Alternatively, take a break from your booth if you need to work on your computer. One of our staff members is always willing to step in for you if you're on your own.

---

**THREE. Have your systems ready to capture the details of families you meet.**

Follow up with them once you get back to school. Your investment in Boarding Schools Expo is considerable – one successful conversion to an enrolment can make it all worthwhile.

---

**FOUR. Have you considered 'ditching' the trestle table?**

Creating an open, inviting space? The most successful exhibitors have no table and are ready to welcome families into their space.

---

**FIVE. Share your involvement at our Expos with your own school community including alumni.**

Your involvement speaks directly to your commitment to rural and regional families. It's important and it's valued. Your families will want to know that you are going to be in their 'neck of the woods'... they're proud of your involvement and will share the news.



**SIX. Include our Expo events on your own Regional Tour Calendars' website page.**

Again, ensure that alumni and current families know you're going to be there, or know that your commitment to rural and regional families continues.

---

**SEVEN. Family First - ask the families questions about themselves before telling them of the amazing opportunities at your school.**

For example, where are you from? Where is that located? What school do you go to? How many kids are in your class? How much rain have you had this year (if they're farmers)? Do you travel far to get to school?

---

**EIGHT. Smiles and eyes. It's not easy being in your position, some families don't make eye contact and some are very nervous.**

All you can do is smile warmly and connect with your eyes as they walk past.

---

**NINE. Engage with the child/ren.**

Speak with the child/ren, ask them what their favourite activity is. If there are children milling about waiting for parents as they speak with other schools try opening a conversation with them. You'd be surprised how many kids drag their parents back to a school because they liked the person on the booth.

---

**TEN. Leave your burdens at the door.**

It's not always a good day. Sometimes we don't feel up to it. But try your best to shake it off and put on your winning performance - our families will appreciate it and your school might just engage a future shining light for the boarding house.

## LESA FOWLER

HEAD OF BOARDING

St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, QLD

**Lesla Fowler has been at St Margaret's since 2008 as Head of Boarding and also teaches within the day school. As the Head of Boarding, she ensures through her representation on both the Educational and Senior Leadership teams that the boarding house is at the forefront of decision making.**

**Lesla has been a member of the Australian Boarding Schools Association and held the position of Chair of the Queensland Board and has been a member of the Australian Board. She is passionate about boarding and has been involved and presented at conferences on Risk Assessment and Leading a Boarding School. Lesla has a particular interest in cultural diversity within boarding and works extensively to ensure that all girls in boarding have a global view of the world.**



**Why did you decide to participate in Boarding Schools Expo Australia (BSEA) events this year, and particularly our online format, Boarding Expo 365?**

More than most other platforms and forms of boarding marketing, whether regional shows, or digital/print advertising in general publications, the Boarding Schools Expos, both in person and online, offers a highly targeted audience, ensuring a most effective and efficient spend and return on investment. It also offers the school the chance to genuinely connect with boarding families in the region, and show an interest in their region, as well as gain an understanding of their home territory, which can be key to providing a good boarding experience.

Regional shows can be useful but often mean staff are out for an extended period, whereas the pop-up one day or two day shows minimise the time staff are away from school, or it means we can efficiently combine the expos and other targeted activities in the region such as parent functions etc.

The Expos are well organised and well-advertised. Similarly, the online expo is a great extension of the in-person events, allowing families to 'shop in the comfort of their own homes' at a time convenient to them, before venturing out either to the school's website, a boarding schools expo or our school, to explore further.

**What is the current boarding situation at St Margaret's? Please discuss if you are finding any challenges.**

St Margaret's boarding is currently very well subscribed with waitlists in most year groups. That's not to say the vacancies don't frequently 'pop-up'.

Circumstances can change quite quickly, and while you might have a waiting list, people do commit elsewhere when a place is not available, which also usually means committing financially somewhere with deposits or uniforms etc, so optimising that number when last minute changes arise often present a challenge. At the same time this can open up last minute vacancies for some families, so it's always well worth talking to the admission staff.

#### **What are your goals by being involved with BSEA?**

Naturally, it is to raise awareness of the St Margaret's boarding product and give our staff the chance to personally connect with families in the region.

The platform also offers valuable advice to boarding families and we try to participate in these forums as they offer a great service to the often challenging prospect of sending your precious child away from home for their schooling. We are on board with any platform which helps our rural families navigate this journey.

#### **What was your highlight from this years' events?**

We travelled to the Moree and Tamworth expo's this year. This is a good opportunity to mix it with the NSW schools and present an alternative option as we do attract a lot of families from northern NSW. The targeted audiences at these events offer more efficiencies to us than a two- or three-day regional town show. We are looking forward to the Mt Isa Expo in Queensland at the end of the year.

#### **Do you have any advice for other boarding schools wondering if these events are for them?**

I would say that at first glance some schools may think the outlay is more than say what it costs to have a stand at the regional show but they have to consider the marketing behind the shows and the targeted nature of the prospective audience, together with comfortable venues and catering provided etc.

### **“Consider the whole package before you say ‘that’s not for us’.”**

In addition, while someone might balk at the perceived competition at such a show, the better the numbers of schools the more people will travel to the show.

You may meet someone who may never have considered your school, but you have the chance to showcase your product and your unique offerings if you do it well and change their minds.





## Destination Boarding - The Podcast

*'the little podcast that tells the big story about Australian Boarding Schools'*

BSEA is a multi-faceted marketing platform that exists to tell the story of Australian boarding schools.

Destination Boarding (The Podcast) was created to share stories about boarding school life from a student and family's point of view, as well as discussions with schools and industry experts on the matters that matter to our families.

From 2025 we will be hosting our Boarding Schools Summit topics on our podcast platform, via short series on each discussion.

We talk all things boarding, from packing those bags for the first time, to waving the kids goodbye, what to expect from life as a boarder and beyond!

We connect with graduates, young and old, who attended an array of boarding schools across Australia and talk about how it shaped them into the people they are today.

We're talking to the schools themselves - how they help families build communities away from the places they call home and get the best out of every boarder.

It's for families considering their options, and for families already on the road, it simply shares the good news about boarding school.

**Close to**

# 5,000

**downloads since launching**

At the time of writing we had just launched our Road to Mount Isa series where we chatted to the schools heading up north with us, along with families from the north west region of Queensland.

You can listen wherever you stream your podcasts.



**“It’s never too early to start  
the conversation...”**

**AMANDA FERRARI**  
DIRECTOR OF BOARDING SCHOOLS EXPO



**Register now!**

**Contact Amanda:**

0427 888 777

[info@boardingexpo.com.au](mailto:info@boardingexpo.com.au)

**Visit our website:**

<https://www.boardingexpo.com.au>

**Scan the QR code for our website:**

