

ASG

scholastic

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND - JUNE 2019

ASG SPACE CAMP REACHES 10-YEAR MILESTONE

NEITA NOMINATIONS
OPEN ON 19 JUNE

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THE RIGHT SCHOOL
FOR YOUR CHILD

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Tell us about your inspirational teacher, nominations open 19 June.

CEO'S REPORT



We've seen a lot of activity this quarter and this issue of *Scholastic* highlights the important work ASG has been doing to support families.

It's nearing the end of the financial year, and I know you will be eager to get an investment update. Investment markets so far this financial year have been relatively good, but with some ups and downs due to some key investment risks, especially with international markets. You can rest assured that we will continue to manage your funds in a prudent and professional manner to deliver the safer long-term objectives set for them. We encourage you to keep these long-term investment outcomes in mind when reviewing the performance of your education funds. Our investment update will give you more details.

I'm thrilled to inform you of two exciting milestones that ASG is reaching this year. It is the 25th anniversary of the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) and we want to mark this occasion by offering maximum benefit to the teaching community. Nominations for the Awards will open on 19 June. I encourage you to be part of it and nominate your favourite teacher for a NEiTA Award.

The other is a 10-year milestone for the ASG Space Camp sponsorships. In July, two bright young

sparks—Sarah Nolan and Sean Affleck—will jet off to the International Space Camp in Alabama, US, with the ASG Space Camp Australian Teacher Ambassador Rachel McKenzie. It's great to know that the ASG Space Camp sponsorships have been helping young Australians get their first taste of space travel for a decade.

We also released the fourth ASG Parents Report Card earlier this year. I hope the report gives you an idea of what parents and grandparents like yourself feel about the state of the educational environment in Australia. There's much to gain from this insight—for instance, the study can give you an idea of the top 5 school characteristics that impressed parents. It has certainly helped me understand what parents want for their children.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Scholastic*. ■

Ross Higgins



NOMINATE YOUR FAVOURITE TEACHER FOR AN ASG NEiTA

Teachers inspire; they change lives; they make a difference.
Why not take a few minutes to appreciate them!

It's that time of the year again when ASG gives you the opportunity to say thank you to your favourite teacher.

Nominations for the 2019 ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards will open on 19 June.

For 25 years, the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards have provided communities with the opportunity to formally recognise and thank outstanding teachers and leaders working in:

- Early Learning Centres;
- Primary Schools;
- Secondary Schools; and
- Special Schools.

This year, we are extending the opportunity to enable you to also nominate a 0.6 FTE teacher who has made a significant difference.

The winners will each receive a \$5,000 grant and be flown to Melbourne or Wellington to attend their local awards ceremony.

NOMINATE NOW

NEiTA recognises the importance of the profession, its professional standards and the critical role and impact teachers have on young people's lives.

Nominations open 19 June and close on 31 July. ■

Nominate a great teacher today.
asg.com.au/nominate

HOW TO
VOTE



STEP 1

Visit our site.



STEP 2

Tells us why you're nominating your outstanding teacher or leader.



STEP 3

Submit your nomination.



STEP 4

We'll let you know if your excellent educator is successful!

ASG INVESTMENT UPDATE

HOW WE INVEST YOUR MONEY

ASG's investment strategy is to use a range of investment funds. These funds are managed by professional investment managers and combine to achieve a conservative balanced risk profile. This strategy assists to create an investment portfolio that will meet prudent long-term investment objectives. This means that fluctuations in returns may occur from quarter to quarter or year to year (both positive and negative). However, it is the long-term performance that is important, because saving for children's education is a long-term investment.

ASG builds its investment portfolios ensuring diversity across asset classes, styles and investment managers. The investment managers used by ASG confirm a diversity of investment types, such as fixed interest and cash, as well as growth assets such as equities (domestic and global), property

and infrastructure. This method of constructing a quality portfolio is a good base for withstanding periods of market volatility and achieving longer term prosperity.

CURRENT INVESTMENT RISKS

At present investment markets have been relatively volatile driven by some key investment market risks: a slowdown of global growth, US and China trade negotiations, geopolitical risks, Brexit, globally low levels of inflation and historically lower levels of global interest rates.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MEMBERS?

We believe that volatile investment markets combined with ASG's preferred risk appetite may see short-term investment returns over coming periods be below historic levels. The impact of lower levels of global interest rates typically acts to lower the returns from the defensive assets within the investment portfolios. We expect global interest rates to remain below historic levels for some period, as evidenced by the current levels of both short and longer-term yields.

We will continue to manage the funds in a prudent and professional manner to deliver on our long-term objectives and encourage our members to keep focussed upon the desired long-term outcomes. ■



2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND CALL FOR DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

Notice is hereby given that the 45th AGM of the members of the Australian Scholarships Group Friendly Society Limited will be held at 11am on Friday, 25 October 2019.

A further notice to members for this year's AGM will be in the next issue of ASG Scholastic together with details of the venue and agenda items that will be considered.

DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

The Board now calls for eligible nominations for Directors' positions in accordance with the Constitution. Enquiries from members regarding the meeting or the nomination process should be directed to Sharon Yeo, Company Secretary, in writing (SYeo@asg.com.au) or by telephoning 03 9276 7530. Nominations close on 28 June 2019.

LIFELONG LEARNING AND RESKILLING – THE PROMISE OF MICROCREDENTIALS

BY KELLY FAWCETT

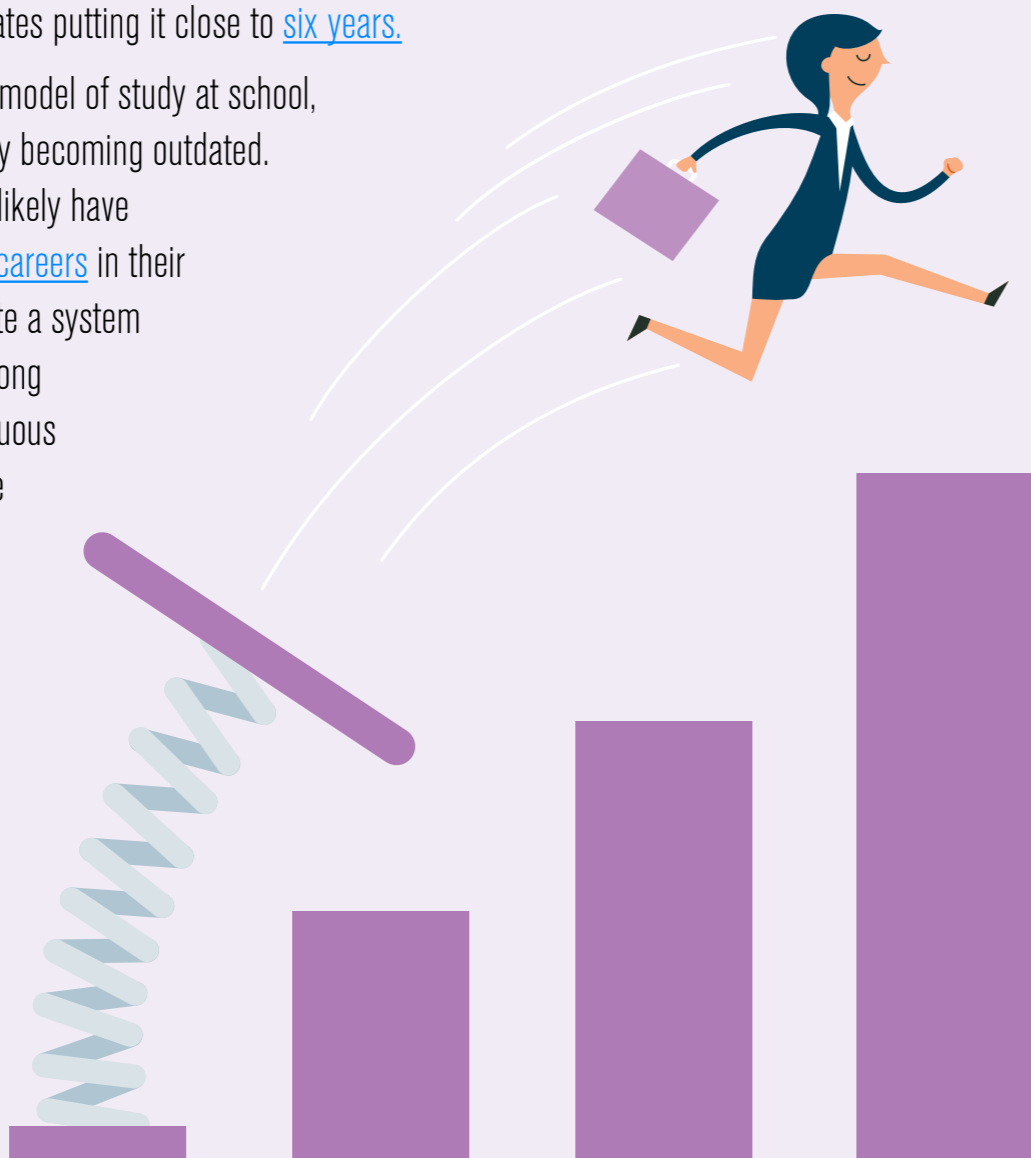
Technology has changed the way we work. Today the rate of change is at an all-time high. This has made a significant impact on how we're training and reskilling for work.

What this means is that the shelf life for skills is much shorter than it used to be, with some estimates putting it close to [six years](#).

In the past, we've adopted a model of study at school, do at work. But, this is rapidly becoming outdated.

The average 15 year old will likely have [17 jobs across five different careers](#) in their lifetime. So, we need to create a system that both cultivates their lifelong learning and supports continuous upskilling and reskilling to be able to move across their working life.

This is where the potential of microcredentials comes in.



WHAT ARE MICROCREDENTIALS?

Microcredentials recognise the achievement of a skill, skill sets or knowledge that is required by industry, professional associations, or the community. They are also referred to as nanodegrees, badges or stackable microdegrees.

Depending on the type of organisation that is delivering or validating the microcredentials, they can be verified by employers, industry or through a formal certification process.

Here are a few examples of how microcredentials are already working in Australia and abroad:

UDACITY

[Udacity](#) offers nanodegrees in collaboration with industry partners (such as Google, IBM, Facebook, MailChimp etc.) and seeks to provide skills in demand in short-course form.

RMIT CRED

[RMIT](#) is providing industry-relevant digital credentials designed in collaboration with employers and industry to help individuals develop skills and capabilities for life and work.

DEAKINCO

[DeakinCo](#) is providing formal recognition of employees' skills and knowledge with its independent, university-backed Professional Practice credentials. The goal is to provide independent proof of professional capabilities.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Government recently completed [pilots for microcredentials](#) with three organisations to gauge their value and see how they can support the future workforce. They are now being [implemented](#) as part of the New Zealand Qualification Framework, allowing for the recognition of this new type of recognition of learning.

Microcredentials still have a way to go, including the development of a common understanding of what they are. But, they show great promise in providing a solution that gives our current and emerging workforce more responsive training and opportunities to develop the skills needed for the future of work just in time. ■

(Kelly is Research & Policy Manager at [FYA](#), an Australian non-profit organisation that fosters young people's education and social participation. This article first appeared [here](#).)

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD

One of those great dilemmas that every aware parent faces can be framed into variations of the question: how can I choose the best school for my child?

You may have your own list of priorities, ranging from holistic learning to finding a school in the neighbourhood. If, however, you are still pondering over the list, the [2018/19 ASG Parents Report Card](#), which provides the perspectives of parents on the state of school education in Australia, can offer you some guidance.

It lists the top five school characteristics that most impressed parents. They are:

- Academic performance
- Teacher quality
- Student care and wellbeing
- Personalised learning, and
- Curriculum coverage

Incidentally, Australians list the same five aspects (but not quite in the same order) as the reason for their dissatisfaction with schools. Put two and two together, and you'll find that these five reasons could well offer

broad recommendations on what makes a great school.

The Parents Report Card also reveals that the top three considerations influencing parents' choice of high schools were reputation, school sector and school performance.

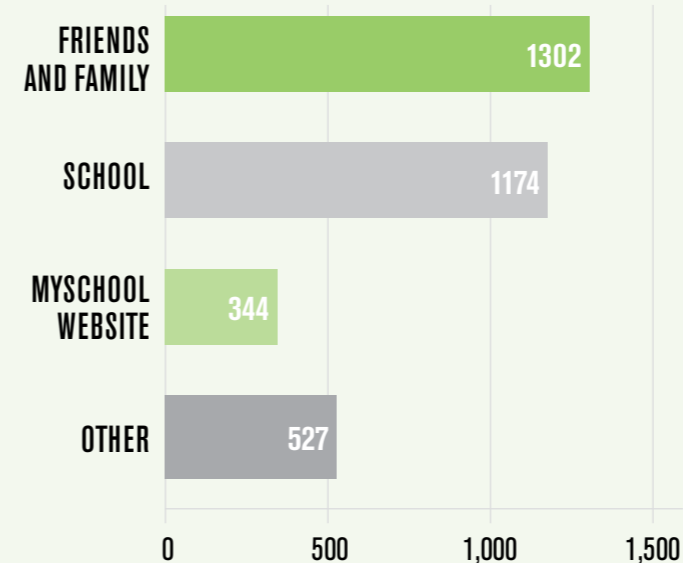
[Read the full 2018/19 ASG Parents Report Card](#)

It's best to use these factors as broad indicators, and then give some thought to your child's abilities and potential to help you choose a school that will support your aspirations for the child. Ask yourself these three questions:

- What is my child interested in?
 - What are his/her abilities? Is my child inclined towards academics or art, is he/she sporty or musical?
 - What does my child expect from school? (If your child is stepping into secondary school, in all likelihood, he/she has some idea of what they want out of their school as well.)



INFORMATION SOURCES



TOP 5 INFLUENCERS

- 1 Reputation
- 2 School sector
- 3 School performance
- 4 Cost
- 5 Facilities

Source: [2018/19 ASG Parents Report Card](#)

FIND OUT MORE BEFORE MAKING YOUR SCHOOL CHOICE

Now that you have done some soul searching, the next step is to make time to do your research on schools to shortlist a few that could fit the bill. The ASG Parents Report Card indicates that parents sought to inform their choices by speaking with friends and family and taking account of the information shared by schools.

In addition to this, make it a point to register for Open Days and visit the schools on your list, study the school websites, and have a chat with anyone in your social circle who knows the school firsthand.

Make sure you meet deadlines in registering for a place in the school of your choice. Go with your gut instinct and don't compromise on your selection, but also have a back-up option.

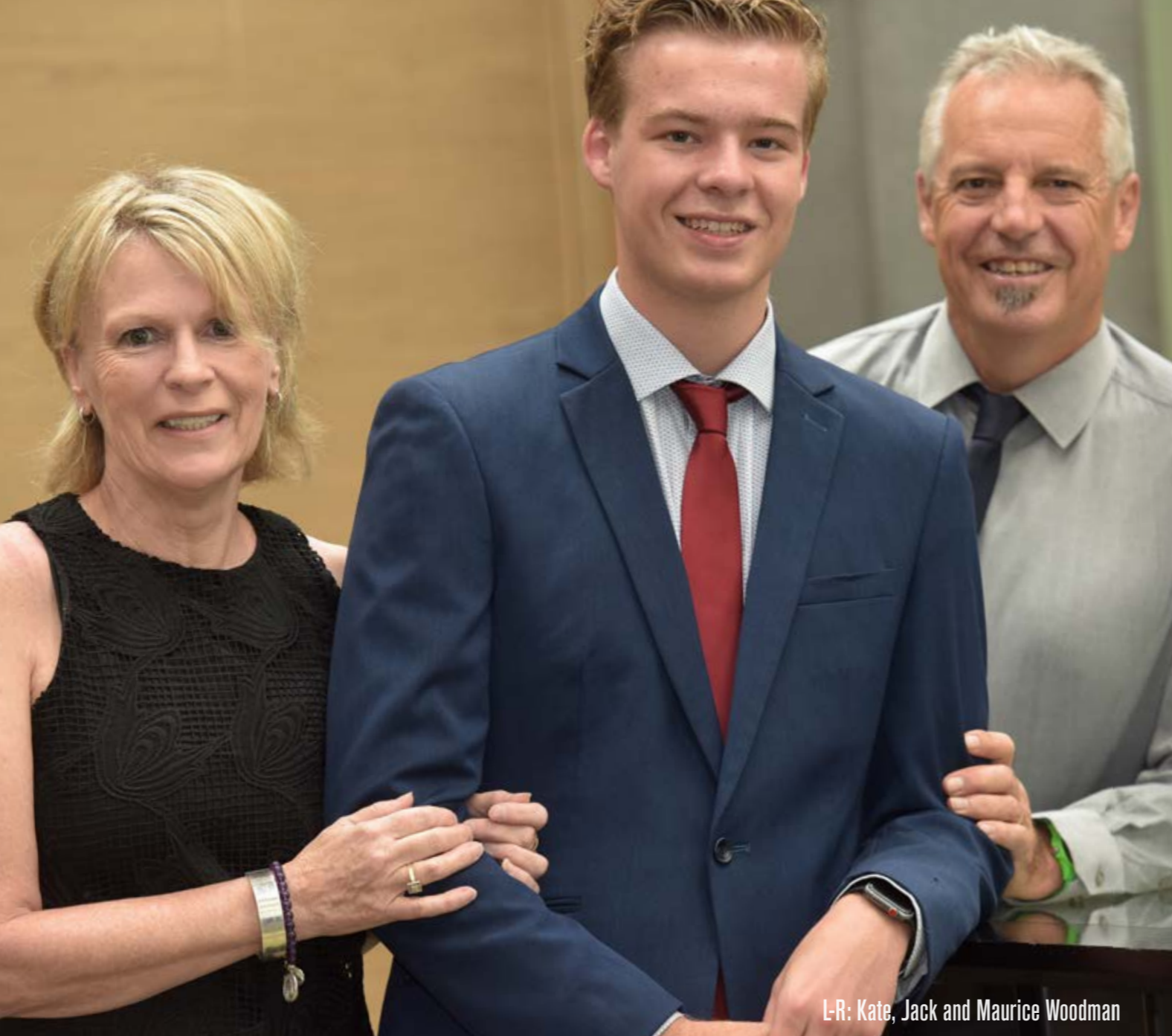
REST EASY

After putting in your application, relax. You've done all the hard work. Now, it's time to sit back and wait for the school to confirm your child's spot.

A heartening piece of news is that, of the more than 2,200 parents surveyed for the 2018/19 ASG Parents Report Card, less than one in five reported that they encountered barriers in their choice of high schools for their children.

In fact, the most prevalent barrier was the cost of private schooling. Parents commented that they did not have the finances necessary to meet the cost of private schooling. ASG can help you plan and save for your child's education.

Parents identified waiting lists and zoning as the second and third barriers to enrolling their child in the school of their choice. ■



L-R: Kate, Jack and Maurice Woodman

REAPING THE FULL BENEFITS OF AN ASG MEMBERSHIP

Jack Woodman has always been a high flier—in more ways than one. Last year, one of Australia’s youngest licenced pilots had the chance to spend a week at the US Space and Rocket Centre in Alabama, after winning the ASG Space Camp sponsorship.

Kate and Maurice Woodman, Jack’s parents, were thrilled that Jack was able to reap the full benefits of an ASG membership. “What an incredible experience! We would have never known about this opportunity without our ASG membership,” said Kate.



Enrolling in an educational fund just gave us peace of mind knowing that Jack would always have the support needed to participate in opportunities of further education and pursue his dreams.



Kate said, “As we are both teachers we know the absolute value of education and from the time Jack was born we encouraged him to be a lifelong learner in various ways. Enrolling in an educational fund just gave us peace of mind knowing that Jack would always have the support needed to participate in opportunities of further education and pursue his dreams.”

The family chose ASG because they knew “it was a safe investment”, and had tax benefits. The couple said: “We would recommend ASG as we have had only the most positive of experiences in our dealings with ASG and look forward to our continuing association through Jack’s education. We have had great support from the team. The staff at ASG have all been wonderful in their support of Jack and our family.”

The couple also said that they love the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA), which promote and validate great teachers.

Jack dreams of becoming a pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force, then an astronaut or engineer for NASA. “The trip to the U.S. Space and Rocket Centre showed me what is possible and what I have to do to make my dream a reality. I’m one small step closer to travelling into space because of the experience. I can’t thank ASG enough for this remarkable opportunity.”

Among Jack’s achievements is winning the Kwong Lee Dow scholarship to The University of Melbourne. Jack also has a black belt in karate, represents his school in soccer and music ensembles, and regularly participates in the 24-hour *Relay for Life – Border*. ■

ASG SPACE CAMP SPONSORSHIP REACHES 10-YEAR MILESTONE

ASG has been supporting the International Space Camp program in Australia since 2009. We have had a very satisfying journey over the last 10 years supporting the aspirations of young Australians to get a glimpse of outer space, and we are truly excited over the benefits that this fascinating program has given to the students who have had this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

MEET THE 2019 STUDENT AMBASSADORS

This year, Sarah Nolan from New South Wales and Sean Affleck from Queensland are the hugely talented and happy 10th duo who will represent Australia at the International Space Camp hosted by the US Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville, Alabama in July.

Sarah, a student of Brigidine College Randwick in NSW, is passionate about science and outer space, of course. She dreams of



L-R: Sean Affleck, ASG Space Camp Ambassador Rachel Mckenzie, ASG CEO Ross Higgins, Sarah Nolan.

becoming an astrobiologist and finding elusive life on another planet. During her Skype interview, the final stage of the selection process, ASG's panel of judges found that Sarah's bedroom ceiling is a scaled down replica of the Andromeda Galaxy, and her favourite movies are *Interstellar* and *Hidden Figures*—both of which have a connection to space. And, her dog's name is, of course, Pluto! She's also a regional level soccer player and plays the saxophone.

Accompanying her on the trip to Space Camp will be Sean Affleck of St Patrick's College in Queensland. Sean has a wry sense of humour, and a love for STEM subjects and the space sciences. He is particularly interested in space mining and Australia's contribution to this field. His favourite

pastime is watching videos explaining dark matter theories! He has been an active participant in the Australian Space Design Competition. He has won a gold medal for academics, and the best debator award in his school. He is also a fencer.

Our hearty congratulations to Sarah and Sean. We wish them both fantastic adventures and out-of-the-world experiences on their Space Camp trip in July. We look forward to sponsoring the dreams of two young Australians next year. Keep an eye out for details of next year's sponsorship in the upcoming issues of *Scholastic*. ■

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EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Member stories can be submitted to Ramya Manoharan: RManoharan@asg.com.au

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