

*Aspiring towards clubbability
at the Public Schools' Club
in the historic Bragg residence*



Our Club is an outpost of what Dr Samuel Johnson in 1783 referred to as “clubbability”. He defined the word *club* in his 1755 dictionary as *an assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions*. Our parameters are perhaps the ideals of *magnanimous and courteous fellowship seeking the highest good*.

Here at 207 East Terrace in Adelaide, the Club maintains the Edwardian ethos of beauty with restraint; innovation coherent with tradition; excellence without elitism; and progress enriched by conviviality. Established in 1959, the Public Schools' Club occupies the home in which Professor William Henry Bragg commenced pioneering work into X-ray crystallography - which remains foundational to modern science. In 1915 Professor Bragg jointly shared the Nobel Prize for physics with his son William Lawrence Bragg. But the celebrations were sadly overshadowed by the First World War, in which the professor's youngest son Robert Charles Bragg (who grew up with his brother in the house) died at Gallipoli aged only 22.

The boy's name connects with his grandfather Sir Charles Todd - one of the greatest public servants in Australian history. It was Todd who *set in position* the foundation stone of the house in September 1899. Todd supervised a remarkable feat of telecommunication: to connect Adelaide to Darwin and to Britain.

With such an impressive heritage, the Club does well not only to meet the needs of our Members, but (more importantly) to serve as a crucible for free expression, reformation and the exploration of ideas. As Professor William Bragg explained, many years ago: *The most important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts, as to discover new ways of thinking about them*. To think with innovation requires both open-mindedness and a firm resolution for anchorage within the unchanging precepts of wisdom.

Drawing upon heritage traceable to our ten founding schools, the Club aspires towards helping educate emerging generations of upright citizens, in a culture which greatly needs wisdom for the common good. Functions at the Club promote deep-delving perspectives on a variety of topics that relate very much to the integrity of key social institutions. Hence they constantly feature some very high profile speakers and guests - including MPs, judges, the State Governor and Lord Mayor. Those events are no mere diversion. They are crucial to helping Members and guests to understand how and why the community of citizens arranges its affairs, and what values will prosper and enrich our nation and countries overseas.

In a world that is becoming increasingly crippled by politically-correct philosophy and ideology, there is a profound need for institutions such as the Public Schools' Club to fearlessly promote the common good.

We today are the beneficiaries of a vision which more than half a century ago enabled the Club to come into existence. Further, Members may be challenged as they enjoy fellowship in the same premises where Professor Bragg laboured to change the world, and recognise that the good things we enjoy here at the Club and beyond do not “grow on a tree”. They have come as people have dreamed of a better society, and have caused such dreams to become realised through their investment of time, treasure and talent.

A number of Members of the Public Schools' Club are busy educating, mentoring and encouraging the emerging generation of Australian citizens. Those Members are never passive observers or consumers, but are investors and stakeholders - in a truly grand vision. They participate, engage, assist and enjoy shaping the future of the Club and consequently the nation.

All Members of the Public Schools' Club are warmly urged to realise our shared ideals of clubbability.