



"It would be easy to spend a couple of minutes lamenting Eighties fashion. If I wanted to make this speech amusing, I'd just show my formal photographs! How could I ever have thought that the combination of too much makeup and a really curly perm, along with an outfit inspired by Madonna, would look good? I'm sure that the photographs of Mr Bannah, Mr Barrett and Mrs Duffy, who were also students at State High in the Eighties, would be similarly amusing.

State High life started for me in 1985, with Year 8 Camp. This was a three-day 'boot camp', where you weren't allowed to go to bed until you knew the words of the School Song and the War Cry off by heart. This sounds strangely sadistic, but it instilled school spirit and camaraderie from the very beginning.

The Eighties was a fabulous time to be at State High. It was during the Eighties that the rest of Australia, and the world, discovered Brisbane, with the Commonwealth Games in 1982 and Expo in 1988, and State High was well and truly on the map as well.

Expo 88 was a fantastic time. For six months, we had what was basically an enormous fun park right on our doorstep at South Bank. Most people had bought a season ticket, which allowed unlimited entry. Mr Mason, the Principal at the time, declared that truancy did not increase during that six month period, but I find that impossible to believe.

Expo provided brilliant exposure for our musical groups. The Stage Band had a regular performance every two weeks or so, and the other groups performed frequently as well. In fact, the defining feature of the Eighties was probably the enormous musical and cultural talent in the school. In most years, at least one of the musical groups would go on tour. I was lucky enough to go to Hawaii with the Concert Band in 1987, which was my first overseas trip. Yet another opportunity provided by State High.

Also in the Eighties, the theatre production group 'Vulture Productions' was born, and every year there was a musical of incredibly high standard.

Of course, sport was also a big part of State High life. When I graduated in 1989, the girls had won the Athletics for the 20th year in a row. I remember being on a bus going to and from QEII screaming the school song and war cry from the windows at the Somerville bus beside us on the freeway. The school spirit was remarkable.

The School Captain in 1989, in his Awards Night speech, talked about the perception that the Sixties and Seventies were the 'golden era' of State High, and said that he hoped that the Eighties and Nineties would be regarded as the 'diamond era'. I now have students who see the Eighties as part of that 'golden era' which we looked back upon with such admiration.

In a school like this, which has such a great tradition, it is easy to look back upon previous eras and feel humbled. What we often fail to realise is, that State High just keeps getting better."

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