

# Otago Girls' and Otago Boys' High Schools



## Digging deeper...

The Otago Boys' High School memorial arch was designed by the school's art master, architect L D Coombs. It was unveiled in 1923, and the bronze figures were added in 1925.



## Who's who

Learmonth White Dalrymple (1827-1906) was born in Scotland but emigrated to New Zealand with her father, two sisters and brother in 1853. After a successful seven year campaign for the establishment of Otago Girls' High School, Miss Dalrymple lobbied for admission of women to the University of Otago. She also worked for the kindergarten movement, published a pamphlet on early childhood education, and was an active member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.



## Stat attack

In 2007 there were about 780 pupils enrolled at the Otago Boys' High School. Enrolment at Otago Girls' High School was around 810 pupils.

**They were never co-ed but Otago Boys' High School and Otago Girls' High School shared the same inner city site for about 15 years. A tall fence kept the girls and boys well hidden from one another.**

The Otago Provincial Government established Otago Boys' High School in Tennyson Street in 1864. The first recorded roll listed 67 pupils. Relocation to its present Arthur Street site in the mid-1880s meant more space and new buildings, most notably a splendid tower block designed by R A Lawson.

Otago Girls' High School is the oldest state secondary school for girls in the Southern Hemisphere and is said to be the sixth oldest in the world. The school opened in 1871 with 78 pupils after a long campaign by Miss Learmonth White Dalrymple. The original two-room school was part of the block built for Otago Boys' High School. Its first principal was Margaret Gordon Burn. The present main block, designed by Edmund Anscombe, opened in 1910.

Both schools take pride in academic and sporting excellence with many students going on to become leaders in their chosen fields. OBHS 'old boys' include the plastic surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe, former Prime Minister Sir Francis Bell, architect Ted McCoy and All Black Richie McCaw. Notable alumni of OGHs include New Zealand's first female doctor, Emily Siedeberg; Ethel Benjamin, New Zealand's first female lawyer; the artist Grace Joel; Yvette Williams, the first New Zealand woman to win an Olympic gold medal; and Dame Silvia Cartwright, former Governor General of New Zealand.



The Otago Boys' High School tower is visible from many parts of the city



Otago Girls' High School, strikingly night-lit

