**Ainslie School Days: memories of generations of Ainslie School students 1927-2017**

**Oral history interviews conducted by Ainslie School students**

**Transcript of excerpt from interview with Lady Lois Hicks**

Lady Hicks attended Ainslie School 1934-1941.

Location: Ainslie School Library

Date: 7 December 2016

Interview facilitator: Mary Hutchison

Sound recordist: Kimmo Vennonen.

Interviewers: Harper Coghlan-Smith, Ella Cooper and Ben Francis

Harper: Lady Hicks what were some of your first and favourite memories of Ainslie School?

Lady Hicks: Hmm… one of my early memories was the day that I turned five, which was the day we started school then, and that was at the end of September. And I remember for my birthday receiving a little suitcase that I took to school that was about that long and about that high with a rounded top on it, and I don't know what I had in it but I probably had a handkerchief and a sandwich - and that's all we took to school. And I'd been there for maybe a week and I decided ‘oh, this is a bit boring, I'm going home’. So, we used to march into our classrooms - this is down in the old public building - and as we went past the two pillars there I thought, ‘I'm going home’. So I ran out there and I ran straight up the street here because this was the street I lived in. And I thought, ‘Mm’ - two teachers came running after me - and when I got so far, ‘I know what will happen when they catch me they’ll smack me’. So I immediately sat down (laughing) and I thought, ‘Well they can’t smack me then ‘cause they can’t get me!’ (Laughter). So that’s one of my early memories.

Harper: What are some of the visual changes that you notice between when you were here and now?

Lady Hicks: Well and there was nothing on the walls at all because when I came here it was virtually a brand-new building.

Harper: So we've got uniforms now and different ones – like for the year six - did you have uniforms then?

Lady Hicks: Yes. We only had one uniform which we wore summer and winter. For the girls it was a tunic. Do you know what a tunic is? (several voices ‘yes’.) Square neck and a square bodice and three wide box pleats in the front and three at the back and straight down. And it had a belt and it was navy blue - about the colour of the navy blue there - and it was quite a heavy material. And we wore a white blouse and a tie. Girls - that's what the girls wore - and it was the same summer and winter. The boys would wear short trousers that were lined and they wore a white shirt and a tie. And we could wear a navy cardigan or a navy jumper in the winter.

Ben: Were there any rules saying you had to wear your school uniform?

Lady Hicks: Yes. Yes, we had to wear our school uniform and we had to look smart in it and tidy. No shirts hanging out. No socks down near your ankles - all pulled up nice and smart.

Ben: How did the wartime affect school?

Lady Hicks Well, things were fairly hard in the wartime. See the war started in 1939 and I remember fifth and sixth class which were downstairs - almost right below this. On the walls in the classroom we had maps that were taken out of the front page of T*he Canberra Times* and they were placed all around the walls. And the armies were called the *Allies* and the *Axis*. The Allies were the British, and the Australians, and the Americans and the French. The Axis were the Germans and the Italians. And these maps would show the big black area and each week you would see the big black area coming closer and closer to the Allies and it was very interesting to watch that that.

Harper: Did you do singing or choir?

Lady Hicks: Yes, yes. Ainslie School was a school noted for its singing and it still is. I have virtually been singing in a choir ever since school days

Mary: that’s wonderful!

Lady Hicks: Except this year I took a year off (laughing).