

MAYOR ROBERT BRIA

Remarks at St Joseph's Memorial School – Year 7 Graduation

Tuesday, 8 December 2015

Good evening everyone.

I am delighted to be here to share this special occasion with you.

I would like to thank Principal Craig Fosdike and Year 7 teacher Deb Machnik for their very kind invitation to be a part of this special occasion.

As Mayor, I have had the honour of attending many graduation ceremonies at different primary and secondary schools in our council area.

Only last night, I attended the Trinity Gardens Primary School Year 7 Graduation.

But I feel especially proud and privileged to be able to attend the Year 7 Graduation Ceremony for students of the school my own children attend.

Firstly, I want to congratulate all of the Year 7 students graduating this evening.

This is your night.

You should all be very proud of what you have achieved not only this year, but in every year of your primary school education.

Congratulations also to your parents, grandparents and other members of your family who have supported you along the way.

I am sure they are all very proud of you.

And of course, congratulations to Ms Machnik, Mr Fosdike, and all of the other teachers and staff at St Joseph's Memorial School who I know have played different, but equally important roles in your education up to now.

To the Year 7 students, I am sure by now you will have developed your own sense of experience and built up your own bank of memories from your time at St Joseph's.

All of you, I am sure, will leave the school with that one special moment - one that stands out above all others - as the memory that will always bring a smile to your face.

But I also hope that in some way your experience at this wonderful school reflects its motto:

Childhood. Learning. Community.

Childhood is a precious time of your life.

As parents, we often reflect on how quickly our children grow up: "Blink and you'll miss it," is the popular phrase.

Just remember that you will be adults for fifty, sixty or even seventy years or more.

But you are only a child for a fraction of this time.

And that is why St Joseph's is such a special place, because it respects children and their right to be children.

St Joseph's Memorial School is also a place for learning.

As students of this school you are part of the wonderful tradition of learning established by Saint Mary McKillop of the Cross 143 years ago.

But St Joseph's is not just a place to learn the skills of Maths and English, it is also a place to help you learn skills for life; respect for others, working as a team, helping friends and respecting diversity.

As the school website says, St Joseph's is a place "where the learning prepares children as citizens for the 21st century."

We all know how strong the St Joseph's Memorial community is.

As parent of students we see it and experience it every day.

We participate in the things we enjoy, such as the Mother's Day stall, Father's Day Breakfast, Quiz Night, Dad's Footy Night (my personal favourite), Walkathon and other things.

We also participate in these activities because they make our school community stronger.

But at the centre of the school community is you, the students.

Your participation in Carnevale, St Joseph's Day and Mission Day is an important part of your growth and maturity as a person and your understanding of being a citizen of our community.

I sincerely hope that serving your community is something that you will do for many years.

I ask that you remember the words of Saint Mary McKillop of the Cross: "Never see a need without doing something about it."

So, I encourage you all to remember our school motto.

Because these words are not only the motto for our school; they are the foundation upon which you can build your future.

It is childhood, learning and community that have helped you become the unique and beautiful young people you are.

You are children that your parents love.

You are students that this school is proud to call its own.

And, you are young citizens your local community, your state, your country and the world is waiting for to lead it in the years to come.

So, now that you have a solid foundation for your life in place, the question for each of you to ask is: "Where to from here?"

I am sure that some of you wish you had a map and compass to help you.

But maps are only useful if you need to know how to get to your destination and compasses are only useful when you are lost.

I have no doubt that some of you already know your destination – what you want to be when you grow up, and that's terrific.

But sometimes, if you think too much about the destination, you may not allow yourself to enjoy, or at least experience, what can be a wonderful journey along the way.

The next five years or so of secondary school will be an incredible journey for you all.

You will be given opportunities you do not even know about.

As you move through your teenage years, you will have a whole range of new personal experiences you've never had up to now.

You will make new friends; friends who will learn things from you and friends you will learn from.

You will have teachers that inspire you.

You will celebrate your successes and reflect on your disappointments.

There will be happy times and there will be sad times.

And yes, there will even be times when you lose hope and just can't see the light at the end of the tunnel.

When that happens, always remember that you are not alone.

Because your parents' hands will be on one shoulder and God's hand will be on the other.

They will be your compass and your light to guide you to the destination on your map.

God bless you.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for your future.