



**MAYOR ROBERT BRIA**

**Remarks at Reception for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the William Street Campus**

**St Joseph's Memorial School**

**Friday, 2 June 2017 (7.00pm – 8.30pm)**

**NORWOOD CONCERT HALL**

Good evening everyone.

Welcome to the Norwood Concert Hall.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Robert Bria and on behalf of the City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters I am delighted to be hosting this reception to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Joseph's Memorial School's William Street Campus.

*I would firstly like to acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional land of the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual connection with their country.*

*We also acknowledge the Kurna People as the custodians of the greater Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still important to the living Kurna people today.*

I'd like to welcome a number of special guests here this evening:

- Hon Justin Hanson MLC, representing the Hon Dr Susan Close MP, Minister for Education and Child Development
- Ms Vickie Chapman MP, Member for Bragg, Deputy Leader of the Opposition
- Mr Brady Stallard, Principal – St Joseph's Memorial School
- Ms Helena Card, Assistant Principal, Religious Identity and Mission - St Joseph's Memorial School
- Father Paul Mullins, Parish Priest – St Ignatius Church
- Father Joe Dooley, Parish Priest – St Ignatius Church
- Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart
  - Sister Catherine Clarke
  - Sister Margaret Lamb
  - Sister Veronica Slattery
  - Sister Margaret Cleary

- Sister Brigitte Sipa
- Sister Anne Leesue
- Sister Joan Barry
- Sister Sheila McCreanor
- Sister Catherine Meade
- Sister Christine Schwerdt
- My Gred Jennison, representing Mr Bruno Viecei, Acting Director  
- Catholic Education South Australia
- Teachers and staff of St Joseph's Memorial School
- Ms Kath McGuigan, Principal of Mary MacKillop College
- Mr Craig Fosdike, former Principal – St Joseph's Memorial School
- Mr Nick Hoskins, Chair of the St Joseph's Memorial School Board  
and Members of the Board
- Mrs Pina Bria, Chairperson of the Parents and Friends Committee  
and Member of the Committee
- Parents of students
- Old scholars of St Joseph's Memorial School
- Fellow Elected Members of the City of Norwood Payneham & St  
Peters
- Mr Mario Barone, Council's Chief Executive Officer and other  
Council staff present

- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Tonight, we gather to celebrate a school that means so much to so many people.

When a young Mary MacKillop arrived at the Norwood Parish in 1872, little did she know that her work and that of many others, including the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart and the Jesuits - all of them dedicated to the education of children – would leave such an incredible legacy for the local Catholic community.

That legacy is St Joseph's Memorial School.

Today, nearly a century and a half later, St Joseph's Memorial School stands tall among parish schools in Adelaide's eastern suburbs.

It is, in so many ways, a unique school.

One of these unique features is that it has two campuses: one in Bridge Street, Kensington and the other in William Street, Norwood.

And it is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the William Street campus that brings us together to celebrate tonight.

When the William Street campus opened some three quarters of a century ago, our community, country and the world was a very different place.

Australia and most of the world was at war.

It is, therefore, difficult to imagine a new school building opening during a time of war and unrest - but that is exactly what happened.

In 1941, the parish priest Father Ryan specified that the land behind the original presbytery of *Manresa* would be the site for the new parish school.

It would be a memorial to the Jesuit Fathers who arrived in South Australia from Austria in 1848.

A building application was lodged with the former City of Kensington and Norwood citing Messrs. Emmett & Sons as the builders and Mr Cyril Kelly, of Melbourne, as the architect.

Costs for the new school were estimated at 4,900 Pounds.

And on 27 January 1941 the preparation works commenced.

It was a public holiday – the Australia Day weekend.

The St Ignatius *Calendar* observed that rather than take a day off, men and boys “armed with picks, shovels and other gardening tools and in remarkably short time, had taken down the fence and hedge adjoining the site.”<sup>1</sup>

Within hours, the land had been cleared and was ready for the builders the next day.<sup>2</sup>

War-time restrictions on building materials, combined with a shortage of skilled labour, and of course a lack of money, meant construction of the school was slow.

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<sup>1</sup> St Ignatius *Calendar*, February 1941.

<sup>2</sup> St Ignatius *Calendar*, February 1941.

The building was largely funded by the Norwood Jesuit Mission and through groups such as the St Ignatius Branch of the Catholic Women's League, as well as donations from a prominent Catholic businessman, Mr Dan Clifford of Star Cinemas.

Shortly after construction began, the St Ignatius *Calendar* published details of the proposed building, which included a tiled ridge roof, hopper windows and lawns or a garden in front.<sup>3</sup>

Other features included “a spacious playground for the children, with a full-size basketball court,” a special playing area for infants with swings and roundabouts and a sand pit.<sup>4</sup>

On 13 July 1941, during a heavy downpour of rain, His Grace, Matthew Beovich, Archbishop of Adelaide, laid the Foundation Stone for the new building. In his speech, he stressed that primary education was of the “greatest importance.”<sup>5</sup> One thing is for sure, some things never change.

The *Southern Cross* stated that, “the new school should be little different from the ordinary school building. It would embody many modern

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<sup>3</sup> St Ignatius *Calendar*, February 1941.

<sup>4</sup> St Ignatius *Calendar*, February 1941.

<sup>5</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 July 1941, p. 7.

features, would have separate classrooms and be exclusively used as a school building.”<sup>6</sup>

In September, the walls were plastered and during the following month, the glass windows were installed, the flooring put down and ornate ceilings were fixed.<sup>7</sup>

The local community was kept informed of the progress of construction through the *Southern Cross* and the *St Ignatius Calendar*.

The school would be managed by Father Ryan and staffed by the Sisters of St Joseph.

The opening on Sunday 26 January 1942, coincided with the centenary of the birth of Mary MacKillop.

“Our schools are re-opening in difficult days,” Archbishop Beovich told the gathering at the official opening.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 July 1941, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *St Ignatius Calendar*, October 1941, cited in SJMS website: <http://www.sjms.catholic.edu.au/documents/history.pdf>)

<sup>8</sup> Archbishop Matthew Beovich, Speech at opening of St Joseph’s Memorial School, *Southern Cross*, 30 January 1942, p. 9.



“For the first time in our history, Australia is immediately threatened with peril. But you will do your utmost to protect the children from anxious thoughts and fears from the horrors of war.”<sup>9</sup>

The new school opened almost a year to the day after construction began, seven days after Darwin was bombed by the Japanese and less than one month before Allied forces surrendered in Singapore.

Yet, out of the darkness of war arose of a temple of enlightenment.

During the winter that followed a shelter shed was erected but heavy rains prevented the construction of paths and a playground.

Progress on other improvements was slow, but steady.

It would take six years for the Parish to clear the debt for the cost of the school.

Nearly two years after the school opened the Marist Brothers announced they were leaving Norwood.

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<sup>9</sup> *Southern Cross*, 30 January 1942, p. 9.

They were soon replaced by the Jesuits who would later open what is now St Ignatius College.

In 1957 and 1958, each of the four classrooms facing William Street were doubled in size and in 1970-71 a new storeroom was erected. Perhaps the most dramatic physical change to the school was the extension funded by the then Federal Government's 'Building the Education Revolution' (BER) program.

As well as providing additional classrooms to increase the capacity of the school, this development also created a number of possibilities for the future needs of the students, which are now actively being explored by the school's current Board.

It is fair to say that in some ways, the BER project 'saved' the school.

Without this federal funding, a capital development of that scale would not have been possible and without the ability to expand, the school's sustainability would have come into question.

Today, St Joseph's Memorial School is a confident, compassionate, and both an outward- and forward-looking school.

It is a school that understands children, their place in the world and the importance of providing pathways for exploring their own possibilities, future education and development.

And, it is a school that has a tremendous culture of care, support and friendship as well as a contagious community spirit.

Many of you have experienced this in various ways, be it through fundraising activities, weekend sport or social get-togethers outside of school hours.

For me, tonight's reception has special significance.

As Mayor, St Joseph's Memorial School has a special place in the history of our City.

As a parent of three children attending the school, St Joseph's Memorial has a special place in my heart, as I am sure it does in yours.

Together we share a special bond which is the education of the children.

As I have said at another time in another place, the things that make St Joseph's Memorial School so special is that it respects children, their right to be children and to hold a meaningful place in our community.

It is a place where educators not only teach children the complexities of maths, the wonders of science and the beauty of art. It is also a place that touches their hearts and shapes their minds.<sup>10</sup>

It is a place where everyone understands that the education of every child also serves the common good.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, it is a place for children to learn skills for life; respect, compassion, kindness, acceptance and service to others.

All of these skills are captured in the school's key focus areas of Childhood, Learning and Community.

This is not a glib three word slogan, but rather the trinity of the developmental, educational and religious values of the school.

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<sup>10</sup> Brother Robert Brimonte quoted in 'Pope Francis pushes for affordable Catholic School,' *US News and World Report*, 20 November 2015, <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/11/30/pope-francis-urges-educators-to-make-catholic-schools-affordable>

<sup>11</sup> 'Pope Francis pushes for affordable Catholic School,' *US News and World Report*,

It is 'Childhood. Learning. Community.' that has helped the children become the unique and brilliant young people they are.

They are children that their parents love.

They are students that the teachers are proud to call their own.

And, they are young people this community, state, nation and world are waiting for to lead it into the future.

As the Principal, Mr Brady Stallard, mentions in his welcome message on the school's website, St Joseph's is a place "where the learning prepares children as citizens for the 21st century."<sup>12</sup>

Ladies and gentlemen.

Much has changed over the three quarters of a century that has passed since the opening of the William Street Campus: the teachers, the

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<sup>12</sup> St Joseph's Memorial School Website: <http://www.sjms.catholic.edu.au/>

classrooms, the curriculum, the play equipment and, as we have recently experienced, the principals.

But the one constant over the last 75 years is that the children have been at the core of everything the school does and every decision that is made.

Even as we stand here tonight, half a kilometre away from the school gate, we feel their presence.

If we close our eyes, we can still see the children play.

If we cover our ears, we can still hear the children laugh.

These children are our children.

And how blessed we are that each day the William Street Campus opens its doors to the children, the children open their hearts to God.

On behalf of the City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters, I extend my sincere congratulations to St Joseph's Memorial School for the 75<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the William Street Campus and wish the staff and students every success in the years ahead.

It is now my pleasure to invite Mr Brady Stallard, Principal of St Joseph's Memorial School to address you.

### **BRADY STALLARD SPEAKS**

I would now like to invite Ms Helena Card, Assistant Principal, Religious Identity and Mission, of St Joseph's Memorial School to address you.

### **HELENA CARD SPEAKS**

It is now my pleasure to invite students Stella Catlin and Joey Holmes, and former student Amelia Nelson, to share their experiences at St Joseph's Memorial School.

Stella and Joey are currently mid-way through completing Year 7 while Amelia finished her primary school studies at St Joseph's in 2016.

### **STUDENTS SPEAK**

Ladies and gentlemen, that brings an end to the formalities.

But before I invite you to continue enjoying the Council's hospitality, I would like to once again call Mr Brady Stallard to the stage to present him with a plaque and some gifts to mark this special occasion.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of your evening.