

MAYOR ROBERT BRIA

Remarks at Reception for the 170th Anniversary St Peters College

St Peters Banquet Hall

Wednesday 23 August 2017

Good evening everyone and welcome to the St Peters Banquet Hall.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Robert Bria and I am the Mayor of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters.

I am delighted to be hosting this reception to mark the 170th anniversary of St Peters College.

I would like to *Acknowledge that the land we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kaurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their Country. We also acknowledge the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kaurna people today.*

I'd also like to welcome and acknowledge:

(highlighted = RSVP acceptance)

- Mr Ben Hanisch, Acting Headmaster of St Peters College
- Council of Governors
 - Mr Joe Thorpe (Chair)
 - Mr Chris McMichael (Deputy Chair)
 - Ms Fiona Hele
 - Hon Andrew McLachlan MLC, who is representing Mr Steven Marshall MP, Member for Dunstan and State Liberal Leader
- Teachers and Staff of the College
- Former Students
- Parents
- Students
- Distinguished Guests
- My fellow Elected Members
- Mr Mario Barone, Council's Chief Executive Officer
- Ladies and Gentlemen

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is very proud to have so many schools within its boundaries, which provide local families and those in nearby areas the opportunity to provide their children with a quality education.

Over the previous two years, the Council has recognised a number of schools that have reached significant milestone anniversaries.

These have included East Adelaide School (140 years) and Marryatville High School (40 years) in 2016.

This year, the Council has already recognised the 75th anniversary of St Joseph's Memorial School (Bridge Street Campus) and next month will recognise the 140th anniversary of Norwood Primary School.

Tonight, we are here to celebrate the 170th anniversary of St Peters College, or *Saints*, as it is widely known.

In some ways, it seems rather incredible we are here honouring a school that opened only 11 years after South Australian settlement.

To take us back to 1847, it was the year that the great inventors Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell were born.

The United States Post Office issued its first postage stamp and the novel *Jane Eyre* was published.

Queen Victoria had already sat on the throne for a decade.

Closer to home, the Assisted Passenger scheme began bringing migrants from the United Kingdom to South Australia, and parliamentary democracy in South Australia was still a decade away.

Importantly, 1847 proved to be a watershed moment for education in South Australia.

On 15 July, the Trinity Church Schoolhouse opened its doors to 11 pupils.¹

¹ 'The Observer', 23 July 2017, p. 1927, p. 46.

According to the *Chronicle*, Aborigines were still living on the Botanic Garden Reserve at Hackney when the small school came into existence.²

It was soon renamed St Peters College after Augustus Short, Bishop of Adelaide, who arrived in December that year.

Bishop was educated at St Peters College, Westminster, and was consecrated in the Abbey of St Peter on St Peter's Day.³

Recognising the College's 80th anniversary in 1927, *The Observer* said this: "From that small beginning arose a mightly scholastic institution."⁴

That year, the College had 900 students.⁵

Reporting on the college's centenary in 1947, *The Advertiser* recognised the role that former students had played in the life of South Australia:

² *Chronicle*, 24 July 1947, p.

³ *The Observer*, 23 July 2017, p. 1927, p. 46.

⁴ *The Observer*, 23 July 2017, p. 1927, p. 46.

⁵ *The Observer*, 23 July 2017, p. 1927, p. 46.

“From the doors of the *Almer Mater* have come a long line of bishops and other distinguished clergy, members of the fighting services, State and Federal statesmen, administrators, judges, civil servants, and professionals and business leaders. The honour roll includes among many famous names two Nobel Prizemen, a Companion of Honour, the names of two Victoria Crosses, and a Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab.”⁶

Interestingly, the article made little of St Peters’ great sporting tradition, in particular football.

When we think of football rivalry in South Australia we think of Adelaide Crows versus Port Power, and Norwood versus Port Adelaide.

But it’s hard to go past the famous annual Intercol football match between St Peters College and Prince Alfred College.

⁶ *The Advertiser*, 12 July 1947, p. 2.

Indeed, the rivalry between St Peters and Prince Alfred goes back even further than Norwood and Port Adelaide, which some football historians claim to have begun in 1894.

Consider this description from *The Advertiser* on 12 June 1891:

“Though perhaps to the great world of sport the annual contest between St Peters and Prince Alfred colleges does not deemed of much moment yet to the contestants it is the most important match of the year the wide world over. To them all other events fade into significance as the day approaches for the great tussle.”⁷

In 1905 the *Chronicle* said this:

“There is no football match of the year which excites such genuine interest and enthusiasm as the annual struggle between St Peter’s and Prince Alfred colleges.”⁸

⁷ *The Advertiser*, 12 June 1891, p. 7.

⁸ *Chronicle*, 15 July 1905, p. 20.

I must admit that as I researched the college, I was stunned that some of Intercol matches were played at Adelaide Oval, including a match on 14 July 1906, attended by an impressive 10,000 spectators.

In case you're wondering, Saints won that day, 14.14 (98) to 6.6 (42).

I am sure the First XVIII would love to play against the 'Reds' on the new Adelaide Oval – perhaps even as a curtain-raiser to a Showdown. I'll make some calls and see what I can do for next year.

I must confess, I do not know the record between the two colleges, but I do sincerely wish all of the St Peters teams, from the Year 4/5s to the First XVIII, all the best when they take on Prince Alfred this Saturday.

But, as I alluded to earlier, it was not only on the sporting field that Saints boys went to battle.

Hundreds of Saints boys fought and died for their country in wartime.

Indeed, during the First World War, rarely did a week pass without an old scholar from St Peters being named in the casualty list.

There are too many to mention, but it is hard to go past the dashing Philip De Quetteville Robin, who attended Saints from 1897–1900.

Described by the *Chronicle* as a “brilliant player for St Peters College in his younger days”⁹, Robin went on to play for Norwood, winning the 1907 Reserves Magarey Medal before playing league football and representing South Australia.

His marriage to his childhood sweetheart, Nellie Honeywell in Egypt, his bravery at Gallipoli alongside Arthur Blackburn VC, and ultimately his tragic death, helped to give rise to the ANZAC legend in April 1915.

⁹ *Chronicle*, 19 June 1915, p. 17.

At the college's Speech Day that year, Headmaster Rev Dr Thomas reflected that, "Five hundred boys from this school, who have stood in their year on this very spot, answering their names at call before chapel each morning are serving their king and country."¹⁰

In recognition of the sacrifice of some many former scholars, in 1917 the college set up bursaries for the sons of old scholars who died or were wounded in the war.¹¹

In 1920 the *Adelaide Register* reported that a Memorial Hall would be built at the college in honour of the fallen.

"St Peters College was one of the greatest contributing factors of manpower supplied by the State in the recent war, and those who were honoured by their commissioned rank in handling them – who has passed the portals of this fine old school, regretted that their comrades did not contain more of them."¹²

¹⁰ *Advertiser*, 10 December 2015, p. 10.

¹¹ *The Express and Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 1917, p. 1.

¹² *Register*, 29 April 1920, p. 4.

Today, St Peters College stands tall amongst boys' schools not only in South Australia but Australia.

Its vision is clear, "to be a world--class school where all boys flourish."¹³

Its reputation speaks for itself and I readily admit that the few words I have spoken tonight have not done it justice.

Like all educational institutions Saint Peters College is experiencing a period of change and renewal, but in all its endeavours it has its eyes firmly fixed on the future.

The college's building master plan, *Towards a preferred future*, clearly articulates the college's aspirations of how it intends to adapt to the continually evolving learning and teaching environment, in the first third of this century.¹⁴

¹³ stpeters.sa.ed.au

¹⁴ Stpeters.sa.edu.au

It is not only about having modern physical infrastructure, but an inclusive and cohesive social infrastructure within the college community.

Complementing the building master plan is the College's 2015-2018 strategic plan, and its seven goals.

The school is also experiencing change in its future leadership.

I am of course, referring to the recent retirement of Headmaster Simon Murray.

In this regard, I also want to congratulate the College on the recent appointment of Mr Tim Browning as its new Headmaster.

I believe that Mr Browning will be only the 15th Headmaster of the College, which in itself it quite remarkable given its history.

I also understand that he will take up his role in January 2018 and I wish him and his family every success, and of course welcome them to the Norwood Payneham & St Peters community, when they make the move from Queensland.

The Council is keen to strengthen its relationship with all local schools and I will soon be contacting all Principals and Headmasters to discuss how we can best achieve this.

But beyond the historic sandstone buildings, expansive English-style ovals and modern facilities, is education of the students and their preparation for life in our rapidly changing world.

St Peters is about “Building great men” and on that score, its record of success, achievement and influence is second to none.

This is a truly historic school that has played an important role not only in the education of boys and young men since the 1840s, but also has its own unique chapter in the history of South Australia.

On behalf of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters, I extend my sincere congratulations to St Peters College on its 170th anniversary and wish everyone involved with the school all the best for the future.

It is now my pleasure to invite Mr Ben Hanisch, Acting Headmaster to address you.