



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

OAKLEIGH GRAMMAR 35TH FOUNDERS DAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Friday 17 August, 2018

Federal and State Members of Parliament

His Grace Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis

Mr Chris Damatopoulos, Vice-President and Chair of Oakleigh Grammar School Board

Mr Mark Robertson, Principal Oakleigh Grammar, and staff

School Captains and students

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this morning.

Tony and I are delighted to be guests at your Founders Day Assembly.

These are important occasions, amidst the business of daily school life, for a school community to pause, look back with justifiable pride on your achievements, and look forward with excited anticipation of what lies ahead.

Your 35th Founders Day is an occasion to reflect – with gratitude – on the efforts and sacrifices of the forefathers of the Greek Orthodox Community of Oakleigh, with their vision to create a thriving school, underpinned by Orthodox values.

In 1983, when this school was born as Oakleigh Greek Orthodox College, the local Greek community comprised 41% of the Oakleigh population.

And the school served that community: reflecting its values, its Hellenic traditions, and the ambition and drive felt by the Greek migrants who wanted the best for their children.

On this special anniversary, we can reflect upon what has changed and what remains the same from that time.

There are certainly changes.

Now, just under 15% of the local Oakleigh community has Greek ancestry.

You have embraced this diversity and put multiculturalism at the heart of the school, by opening your doors to students of all cultural and faith backgrounds since 2012.

Oakleigh Grammar now educates children from more than 50 different cultural backgrounds.

But there is so much that has not changed. You continue to promote the learning of Greek language and culture and Hellenic traditions.

Above all, as a school, you remain deeply committed to an education that develops the whole child: that encompasses their learning and physical skills, but also their emotional skills, to prepare them as well-rounded people, ready for successful lives when they leave the school gate.

Your methodology resonates with me, as a former Children's Court magistrate, as a judge of the Family Court of Australia for many years, and as someone previously involved in the governance of several school committees and councils.

But it also resonates with me as the Governor, in terms of what I see across education and industry sectors throughout Victoria.

We know that our future depends on a resilient workforce, with self-motivation, innovative thinking, collaborative practices and an agility to change course when inevitable disruptions present themselves.

The curiosity, creativity and passion for learning that you instil in your youngest students – through the Reggio Emilia approach – is the greatest gift to them at those tender ages.

So too, your best-practice neuroscience approach through the Arrowsmith Program, emphasising the confidence and independence in learning that young people need.

And nothing could be more important than the global outlook that you foster, through the inclusion of the IB program in the middle years and the international student program with Chinese and Cambodian students.

May I say this to the students with us today.

You are very fortunate to be learning in this nurturing community setting.

Embrace the diversity of Victoria, studying alongside friends from so many different backgrounds, with whom you can share and from whom you can learn so much.

Keep an open mind about your futures and your careers. Enjoy the broad range of skills that you will acquire here so that you can meet any of the career opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in such a rapidly changing world.

And I hope that whatever study, work and family commitments you will have in your lives, that you will always retain an understanding as to the importance of community. That you will appreciate how this community has supported you. And that you will feel the pull to keep contributing to the world around you.

May I commend Principal Mark Robertson for his vision and leadership as he continues to steer the school into the future. And thank you to the staff who dedicate their lives to growing the next wonderful generation for us.

And of course, today I must acknowledge the late Reverend Father Nicholas Moutafis – whose legacy resounds through this school. And the school's other Founders, who are here with us today, who continue to serve this school and its local community in a number of different ways.
Con baltas

And so, in closing, may I wish you all 'Faith and wisdom' in accordance with your school motto, and, in accordance with Victoria's State motto: 'Peace and Prosperity' on this 35th Founders Day, and into the future.