



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

ST CATHERINE'S JUNIOR SCHOOL ('BARBRECK') OPENING

Tuesday 26th February 2019

Ms Jane Hodder, Chair, and members of School Council

Mrs Michelle Carroll, Principal

Ms Karen McArdle, Head of Junior School

Mr Michael O'Brien MP, Leader of the Opposition

Cr Steve Stefanopoulos, Mayor of Stonnington

Reverend Dr Peter French, St John's Anglican Church Toorak

Teachers

Students

All distinguished guests

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 Elders here with us this morning. And I thank Murrundindi for his warm Welcome to Country.

Tony and I are delighted to be here today, to open this new junior school.

St Catherine's School is more than 120 years old.

It is no mean feat for a school to not only survive, but to actually thrive, across so many decades.

In this role, we are fortunate to celebrate many milestones and anniversaries with Victoria's oldest institutions, organisations and businesses. It gives me the opportunity to understand the key to longevity.

I think it lies in being able to evolve and move with the times, whilst managing to remain true to your reason for being and the values upon which you were founded and built.

I am in a reasonably strong position to note how St Catherine's has done just that, and how it is exemplified by this new Junior School.

I am of course no stranger to this school.

My sister and I followed in our mother's footsteps. She was a student in the 1930's. We were here in the 1960's. Overlapping with us then, and in generations since, there has been a small army of daughters, cousins and nieces.

What's changed?

Well, looking at this handsome building today, the buildings have clearly changed.

I was a student here at the time of the original Barbreck. That is the one before the one before this! We were proud of our modern classrooms then.

But today I see 'learning spaces', flexible enough to be used as classrooms, or for team-teaching or cross-grade collaborative work. Technology, of course, is embedded everywhere.

There is a natural rainforest walk and a vegetable and herb garden.

A Library and Resource Centre that enables you not only to borrow a book, but also to build your own robot. And special provision for science, technology, engineering and maths, music, art and public speaking.

How different are the offerings from in my day at school.

But the underlying ethos is not.

Now, as then, St Catherine's is about nurturing and enabling every girl to use her intellect and creativity to make a difference in her own world - and in the wider community.

And thank goodness you have kept THOSE dresses. They have deftly transcended the generations. I noted them in a newsletter earlier this year although, I also noted that, whereas the little ones were chatting around their iPads, we were clustered around swap cards in my day.

Girls. Amongst you, sitting quietly and patiently there, are our future leaders, our scientists, historians, our mothers and grandmothers, farmers and astronauts and teachers and innovators of things that you can't yet even imagine.

Just as, quite possibly, you can't yet imagine or grasp the privilege of this education: of a school where each one of you and your talents are respected and encouraged, where there are no obstacles or boundaries to what you can achieve, and where there will be no end to the possibilities to which you will be introduced. A place where you will make lifelong friendships. And where you will enjoy enduring relationships with the teachers who open your minds to all sorts of exciting concepts and adventures.

Congratulations to your Chair, Ms Jane Hodder, and both past and present members of School Council, who have had the vision and the courage for this massive project, the generous donors who have supported it and the clever artisans who have brought it to fruition.

Congratulations and thank you too to the Principal, Mrs Michelle Carroll, past Heads of Junior School, Mrs Alana Moore (most recent past Head of Junior School) and Ms Anne Smith, (longest serving former Head of Junior School 1980-2000), and Ms Karen McArdle, the new Head, who will oversee this exciting transition.

Thank you, of course, to the teachers. Without you, the thoughtfully designed indoor and outdoor space would be just that. Space. It is what you do within that breathes life into it and supports our next generation of St Catherine's girls as they become strong and vibrant women, contributing to the world around them.

And, with that optimistic thought, it will be my pleasure shortly, to officially open the new St Catherine's Junior School.