



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

**OPENING OF FIRBANK GRAMMAR
MUSIC PRECINCT**

Thursday 28th February, 2019

Ms Jennine Ross, Chair of Board, Firbank Grammar

Ms Jenny Williams, Principal, Firbank Grammar

Mr Tim Wilson MP, Member for Goldstein

Cr Michael Heffernan, Mayor of Bayside City Council

Reverend Canon Jan Joustra, Vicar of St Andrew's Brighton

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Teachers and students

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.

It is a particular pleasure for me to join you today to open the Firbank Grammar Music Precinct.

There are several reasons for that.

First, I was a student here until Grade 3. That was a while ago now, so my memory is a bit sketchy, but I do know that the early foundations of my education were laid down at this very school.

Secondly, I am delighted to be here at what I understand is the beginning of celebrations of the school's 110th anniversary.

One hundred and ten years ago, the lives of women were radically different.

In fact, it was only in the year that this school opened that women were for the first time permitted to vote in a Victorian State election.

In that context, as you can imagine, girls were often not supported to receive an education or to pursue a career.

But Firbank was established by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Henry Lowther Clarke, with the vision to offer girls an education.

He chose the motto: *Vincit qui se vincit*. She conquers who conquers herself.

And Firbank Grammar has been educating and empowering girls ever since – and more recently some boys as well. Guided by strategic pillars such as wellbeing, the importance of a strong community and student achievement.

And so, the main reason it is such a pleasure to be here today is to see the outstanding resources that you have at your fingertips: resources that are dedicated to educating girls and expanding your opportunities and your voices as you grow into community leadership roles.

This new Music Precinct is a perfect example.

What a beautiful building, that has been cleverly joined with one of the oldest parts of the school. There is such an attention to detail, with the light filled spaces, and clever touches, such as the music of the school hymn literally inscribed on the exterior cladding.

But, it's what happens inside that really matters.

Firbank is renowned for an outstanding music program – each week approximately 400 music lessons are conducted across the campuses, with 80 per cent of your student population participating in co-curricular music programs, including choirs, orchestras and individual lessons.

The lives of Firbank students are thus enriched by the power of self-expression and the love of the arts nurtured here.

But a rich music program does so much more than that too. It instils a discipline that stands you in good stead for all of your studies, and for your future careers.

A wealth of scientific research has found that music education can change your brain. It has found that students who learn music have stronger neural connections, higher IQ, better memory and attention, and better motor coordination.

But music promotes not only individual growth but teamwork as well, and is recognised as a precursor to a strong understanding of mathematics.

I congratulate all those with the vision and resources to create these facilities to nurture and support musical beginners right through their growth to advanced musicians.

That always starts with the Chair and members of the School Board and the Principal. But it also includes the dedicated and expert staff.

And now it is for the girls to breathe life and success into the bricks and mortar.

May passions be fuelled, minds sharpened, skills learned and friendships built here.

And with those thoughts in mind, I will be pleased to shortly declare the Music Precinct open.