

I've been supporting Anthony as School Board Chair since 2020. It has been such an honour to be in this role and I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak tonight, on behalf of our current school board as we celebrate Anthony's incredible 16-year journey as our principal.

Now, in true St Mary's style, recognition for contributions and accomplishments would not be as meaningful unless you get presented with the most prestigious and sought after St Marys award - your very own Principal Award.

So, I'd like to share a few reasons why Anthony deserves his own award.....

Firstly, just as I stepped into the board chair role the world turned upside down as COVID spread through our community. Board meetings became virtual, classrooms shifted online, and the challenges came thick and fast. But Anthony led us through it all with resilience, keeping the school running smoothly, the staff engaged, and the students feeling supported. Anthony made sure that even though we were apart, St Mary's stayed connected.

Then came a significant shift in the structure of Catholic Education Sandhurst. This change brought with it a host of challenges, including the need to navigate new administrative frameworks, adapt to revised policies, and realign the school's strategic goals with updated guidelines. Through it all, Anthony managed each transition with a calm and thoughtful approach, always keeping the best interests of St. Mary's students and staff at the forefront.

It has been exciting to watch the school come alive with many new projects — the development of the amazing ninja course, that I am sure is the envy of all other schools, and the Indigenous dreaming garden; a beautiful space that reflects Anthony's commitment to inclusion and respect for culture. These are just two of the initiatives since 2020, that have been led with commitment and dedication.

Beautiful buildings, spaces and resources are one thing, but let's not forget the academic achievements. In 2022, St Mary's was recognised as a high performing school by ACARA where NAPLAN results showed that St Mary's students were performing significantly above all other students nationally with similar socio-educational advantage. In an interview with the Shepp news, Anthony recognized the dedication of the staff and believed this to be a product of the hard work from our teachers, students and families. However, we must acknowledge the vibrant learning environment that Anthony has continuously nurtured through his leadership — developing a faith-filled school community and culture where students have been able to “let their light shine.”

Anthony's leadership goes beyond just managing the day-to-day. The recent school community feedback recognised that Anthony has fostered an inclusive community where every child, regardless of their background or needs, feels welcomed, supported, and safe. This feedback aligns perfectly with the school's motto of building responsible, respectful, resilient, and safe learners, which has been at the heart of Anthony's approach throughout his time at St. Mary's.

Anthony's ability to build relationships is well known in the community and also in the diocese. Anthony's capacity to chat and engage with students, families, staff, and the wider community

is second to none and this kind of connection has made him so well-loved by the entire St. Mary's community. Not to mention his legendary joke telling - always a highlight and giggle at every St Mary's event or PA announcement.

So, Anthony, for all these reasons and more, I am thrilled to present you with this *very* special Principal Award.

On behalf of the entire St. Mary's community, we thank you for your leadership and your tireless commitment to making St Mary's the wonderful school it is today. We wish you all the best for your future at St Annes - they are so lucky to have you on board as their leader.

And in closing and as tradition has it, the award recipient always leads the group in the "hip hips", so could you please raise your glass as Anthony leads us all in with the hip hips, for three hip hip hoorays to celebrate his contributions.

Speech by Kylie Glover, spoken on behalf of the St Mary's Advisory Council.