Presentation Evening

Principal's Remarks

19 November, 2026

Good evening Beaumaris Secondary College community,

I add my voice to the Acknowledgement of Country.
Tonight, we gather on the unceded lands of the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation. I pay my deepest respects to their Elders – past, present, and those whom we get to work with, the emerging leaders – and I extend that respect to all First Nations people joining us this evening.

We honour their enduring culture, and their connection to land, water, and community. We remember that stories and knowledge have been shared here for countless generations, and that we follow in their footsteps as we educate the children of our community. May we continue to learn from this rich history with humility, gratitude, and a commitment to walking forward together.

<froi-den-froi-da>
Freudenfraude

I am an old English teacher and I love language. I love words.

I love the way some words roll around in your mouth. I love the feeling certain words evoke.

I love how the right words, placed in the right order, can help us make sense of the world, and share that sense-making with others.

I love learning new words … and in that spirit, and in the spirit of why we gather here tonight, I want to share with you a new word I have learned:

<froi-den-froi-da>
Freudenfraude

Now, this word may seem faintly familiar; like you've seen it somewhere before. Chances are though, you are remembering its evil twin … its opposite:

<sha-den-froi-da>
Schadenfreude

<sha-den-froi-da>
Schadenfreude means to take pleasure – to take joy – in the mistakes or misfortune of others. It is gloating in someone else's bad luck, or bad choices, or bad day. It is feeling smug about someone else's failure to succeed. Sadly, this is a better-known word, and a wider-spread sentiment.

<froi-den-froi-da>
Freudenfraude, on the other hand, means to savour another person's success.

To be pleased for another's good fortune.

To take joy and pride and delight in the accomplishments of others.

To be happy for their happiness.

<froi-den-froi-da>
Freudenfraude deserves to be the better-known, more talked about feeling.

<froi-den-froi-da>
Freudenfraude is the feeling that fills this space tonight … and fills all of us.

Tonight we acknowledge and celebrate the successes and achievements, contributions and accomplishments, of our wonderful students. And what a great celebration tonight is … a brilliant affirmation of our students, our teachers, and our school.

At the heart of all of this is the learning of our young people.

We often hear that one of the most important skills we can carry through life is the ability to be a lifelong learner—that the world is always changing, and that our own lives become richer, more fulfilling, and far more meaningful when we remain open to discovering something new.

And intellectually, that idea is easy to agree with. Of course it makes sense.

But it is something else entirely to *feel* yourself learning—to experience that spark of understanding, that moment when something unfamiliar suddenly becomes clear, when your thinking steps just a little further than it had before. That feeling is powerful. It's personal. And it reminds us what lifelong learning is.

Tonight, as we celebrate the dazzling achievements of our students, I reflect on how learning is not just the completion of lessons and actions, formatives and PBLs, SACs and exams.

Learning is the willingness to step into the unknown and take a chance. To risk failing, to risk being misunderstood, to risk revealing what you don't yet know. It is the quiet bravery of believing you can grow long before there's evidence to prove you have. It is the courage to say, *"I'm ready to try,"* even when it is easier to stay still and safe in your comfort zone.

Learning means choosing ***Curiosity*** over certainty.

It means embracing ***Optimism***, that you can push past your doubts, setbacks, and those long hours of hard work when nothing seems to click or stick.

Learning means ***Respecting*** that if you can show up again and again, determined to understand something you didn't understand yesterday, you won't just gain knowledge or learn how to do something … you will open doors to wonderful possibility.

And learning means ***Excellence***. Not excellence as measured by perfect scores , or making no mistakes … but the excellence of being better today than you were yesterday … and better again tomorrow.

<froi-den-froi-da>

So tonight, there is good reason for us all to feel so much Freudenfraude!

And tonight there is another source of the joy that fills us. Many of the students we have celebrated are taking the next steps into their future beyond Beauy. The joy we have in the success and happiness of our Year 12 students is richer because we know that your growth, learning and achievement have not happened in isolation. They have been shaped by the encouragement, challenges, friendships and connections that have

surrounded you throughout your time at Beaumaris. And it is that spirit, of individuals coming together to create something greater than themselves, that is beautifully captured in the mosaic you have created as your legacy for the Steve Pearce Senior Centre.

It is a work of art full of meaning. A reflection of who you are, what you have given this college and where you are heading next.

Just as hundreds of individual pieces have come together to create something far more beautiful than any one could achieve alone, the image of the wave reminds us that you are not solitary drops of water moving independently through the world.

You are a great body of water.

A cresting wave.

A force shaped by those who have travelled with you, and now surging forward toward countless horizons and distant shores.

In celebrating our students and our learning values, we also recognise their courage. Courage to question, to stretch, to discover, to uncover, and sometimes to face challenging truths and realizations. We celebrate their courage to grow. In every insight, every breakthrough, every moment of discovery, there is a spark of bravery.

Because learning is not a passive act. It's not something that simply happens to us. It is something we seek, something that we strive for, and something we have the heart to pursue. It's the choice to ask the next question, to explore the unfamiliar, to step toward the things we don't yet understand. Seeking means acknowledging that there is always more to learn, and choosing to go discover it.

And striving is what carries us through the tough parts. It's what keeps us steady when the lessons feel too big or the steps feel too steep. Striving is staying with the work, even when progress seems invisible. It's the courage to say, "This is hard, but I'm not stopping." Every student we celebrate tonight has felt that moment – the one where choosing to keep going made all the difference.

That is what true learning demands – not perfection, not just talent, not an easy path, but heart. Heart to be vulnerable. Heart to fail and try again.

Heart to embrace this truth, that:

You belong to a community where to learn is to grow

We believe in our CORE Values of Curiosity, Optimism, Respect and Excellence and that these values can change the world

You will become your best selves on the journey, and the designers of our future.

To our student award winners tonight, congratulations and thank you for seeking, striving and bringing your whole heart to learning.

To our guests, thank you for joining us in celebrating our students.

To our parents, thank you for our enduring partnership and our wonderful community.

And to our staff, thank you for being the culture carriers of our school. When our students and families experience Beaumaris, they do so through their daily interactions and experiences of you.