

Thank you Ms Janes

Good morning students, staff, parents and guests.

It's a huge surprise and still a bit of a shock to be standing here, but at the same time, a significant privilege and honour.

That said, me standing here is by no means an individual effort. And I now have the opportunity to thank all those who actively supported me, challenged me, pushed me, but most importantly, encouraged me to achieve my best.

I'd like to thank all the Year 12 teachers on behalf of the boys, for the patience, dedication and commitment they displayed in order to ensure the Class of 2018's success. For my teachers:

Thank you to **Mr Listo**, for bringing genuine excitement and enthusiasm to every poem, novel and Shakespearean piece, and for never accepting anything that wasn't my best, even if I thought the criticism was harsh at the time, it made me improve.

Thank you to **Mr Ten Seldam**, who never left any student question unanswered, especially those completely unrelated to the syllabus and requiring serious research.

Thank you to **Mr Garvey** who helped me get maths results I never thought possible, and just as importantly.

To **Mr Codsí**, as his passion for Economics and endless supply of Ross Gittins' work, which sparked my interest in the subject and choice to study economics at uni. **Mr Masters**, as his passion and readiness to give feedback on whatever I handed in, made religion not a subject I was forced to do, but one of my favourites.

And to **Mr Batchelor**, and all of the admin staff, who made the year run smoothly.

I'd also like to shout out to my family who generously supported me throughout the HSC, dealt with my frustration, dragged me out of bed and made sure I was always ready for school. They always were eager to help with any concept or question I couldn't quite get, and supported every decision I made.

I also want to thank the year group, who all brought determination and resilience which I admired, and which inspired me to work just as hard. It was this competitiveness, yet willingness to help each other, that fostered great camaraderie and solidarity. So for the current year 12 group, work hard not just for yourself, but just as importantly for each other, as this will drive a better outcome for each of you.

For me, there were times when HSC got tough, when I wanted to throw in the towel, asked myself if it's all worth the effort, and I just wanted it all to be over, yet this devoted and caring support network was my greatest asset I had, and I'd like to thank everyone that helped me throughout 2018. When you feel this, and trust me you will, reach out to your teachers, family and friends, as they will be there, and you'll be surprised how helpful they can be.

When you reach Year 12, you'll hear Mr Batchelor say about 100 times ***the HSC is a marathon, not a sprint***. Unfortunately, there's no shortcut in this marathon, and to be honest, the only way to complete it is hours of training. So while always hoped that my teachers would stand up the front and share some magical study tip that would ensure success, it never came.

Some told me to laminate my notes and memorise them in the shower, or chew the same flavour of gum when studying and doing an exam, and that listening to Mozart increases your brain's capacity.

Whilst some, or all of this may in fact be true, it doesn't matter, as there's no 'correct' way to study, it'll come down to what works for you. What matters most is that you have a source of motivation that will get you through the entire year.

I didn't think I'd get close to the results I got. At the start of the year, I challenged myself to do as well as I could, and it was mainly because I didn't know what I wanted to do after school.

Actually, I still don't.

But that's what motivated me, because I knew that when I eventually worked out what I wanted to do, I didn't want to miss out because I hadn't worked hard enough at school.

In finding the path for you in the world beyond school, I can only say that it's okay to be unsure about where you want to go and it's fine to change your mind, because you'll never know for sure if it's right for you unless you try it.

St. Pius X College offers a lot of opportunities and I encourage all of you to seek them out, because you'll benefit in many ways, be it from the people you wouldn't otherwise meet or uncovering a talent you didn't know you had.

While some of my best memories of Pius will be with my mates in the yard, I have some really great memories at Oxford Falls too, and a lot of my mates came about because of friendships made through sport. Have a go at every opportunity thrown at you, because you never know what path it'll take your life on

And yes, whilst sometimes you'll have to make compromises and say no to things from time to time, balance is the key. What I mean by this is it is important to work hard during your school years, even more for those boys in Year 12, but it is also important to maintain a life outside of the classroom. Keep up your sport, music and social life, and just as importantly, look out for your friends and family.

Whilst school can be tough from time to time, it's important to remember it won't always be that way, and there will be more good days than bad days. St Pius is a great school, with great teachers, and during all of my time at the school, they created an environment where students looked out for each other and were encouraged to be their best.

To the current Year 12's, have faith in your abilities and get involved in every opportunity St Pius gives you. You never know where they'll take you.

Finally, congratulations to all of the academic award recipients today, and good luck to all of the boys moving forward. I wish you all well.

Thanks.