

My name is Karen Halket and for those who don't know me, I am the Assistant Principal of Cranbourne South PS. I used to drive past this little school and think that it looked like a lovely place to be. When my son was in yellow group at kinder all of my friends were in Blue group which was the group that was to come here for school. I was jealous and wished it was us. When the job was advertised here in 1998, I jumped at the chance to apply. I was lucky enough to be appointed and couldn't wait to share my news with my friends who were at Cranbourne South.

In 1999, the community welcomed me and my children with open arms and I have made life long memories and friendships. So many students, staff events and celebrations dance in my mind when I think of Cranbourne South. BBQs, working bees, the mothers days stalls and three legged races!

Once you are a Cranny South kid - you are one forever. Evidence of this was my daughters wedding overseas where 3 students from Cranbourne South attended. How many people are still friends of primary school friends? Cranbourne South kids are! I find myself now teaching children of children from other eras. School tours often begin with Mrs Halket - you are still here! For a time I used to say - if I am still here when so and so graduatestell me to go! I no longer say that. I am a dinosaur of Cranbourne South and proud to be one.

Today we welcome families from the past, present and future. We celebrate the past with speeches by a past principal and family members. A past teacher and author presented an activity with our students today. Our student leadership team wrote something to say and the smiling faces of you all after a day of celebration activities say it all.

I am proud to welcome a past family in particular, the Zangacomi family. Melina and family. The old rotunda was named after their son who unfortunately passed away whilst a student at Cranbourne South PS. Justin was a student who attend primary school in the 1990s. As part of our Murrup celebration, we officially unveil the Buddy Benches. Buddy Benches can benefit all children, not just the ones who are feeling isolated. It teaches children empathy by showing them how to recognize when someone else is in need and how we can be kind to them. The Buddy Benches embody the Spirit of Cranbourne South and we are proud to dedicate these benches in memory of Zanga.

The Spirit of Cranbourne South is its strong community, from the past and many who represent that here today and the future of which is also represented by the students seated here. We may have a new building and a new look but the spirit of Cranbourne South lives on.

I would like to introduce the Bunurong Land Council who will begin our proceedings with a Smoking Ceremony. A smoking ceremony is an ancient custom among that involves smouldering various native plants to produce smoking which has cleansing properties and the ability to ward off bad spirits. It's a tradition that has been performed by Aboriginal people for centuries, and is one of the oldest ceremonies practiced in the world today. We welcome this ceremony that marks the beginning of the new era of Cranbourne South PS whilst respecting our past.