



St Catherine's School Sydney

An Anglican day and boarding school for girls | Kindergarten to Year 12 | Founded in 1856

Vote of thanks

Thank you, your Excellency, for joining us today and for your address. Thank you for your kind words about the school, and for explaining to us your decision on why you came to officially open the building for us today. We do try to live out our values every single day, and we instill the importance of them in our girls – and I appreciate your reason for coming. That you just so happen to be the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia makes it all the more special.

This is the building project we thought would never end. We started planning it in 2011, when our Year 12s were in Year 1 and our Year 6s were learning to walk. Since that time, we've had many completion dates, too numerous to mention and probably best to forget. Yet somehow, we did it – and we're here. Along the way we learned about the 'planning fallacy', a human trait that means we usually underestimate the time, the costs and the risks involved with big projects...but we also learned that optimism can carry you a long way. Many of us here, thanks to this building, have had years to develop this important trait – 11 to be exact.

Your Excellency - we could think of no one more appropriate than you to officially open this building. You talk about the values of the school today; you have also had an unwavering focus on strong values and ethical leadership. You have impressed those values on both military personnel and the wider civilian population and you have said – and I quote - “the ability to do the right thing – ethically, morally, professionally and personally...must be at the core of everything we do” ('Ethics and the Profession of Arms', 2013). That is what we want for our girls: strong values and the living out of them. And that is at the heart of a St Catherine's education, a focus on both academic strength and character strength – the richness, as you say, of the whole person. The facilities in this building will help support that education and, with the fabulous teaching that takes place here, we hope generations of St Catherine's girls will be able to develop their values, and their inner strength, as they grow into ethical, capable, dependable, outward looking young women who love their neighbours as themselves – and have a healthy dose of optimism.

We thank you, your excellency and Mrs Hurley - for being part of this significant moment in our history. I now invite your Excellency on stage to unveil the commemorative plaque. I also invite our Archbishop and Chair of Council Ms Danusia Cameron to join us.

Dr Julie Townsend
01 March 2022