

ADDRESS BY DUX 2013: SALLY AFSHAR

Good morning honourable Guests, Families, Staff and Students,

It is a great honour and privilege to be named the Dux of 2013. The path I took to be standing here today was a long journey. It wasn't just the effort put into Year 12. It was a combination of the effort put in throughout all my secondary school life. What you do and learn in Year 7 through to Year 11 matters. It paves the way to future success and forms the foundations of what you learn in Year 12. So I encourage you to put in your best effort right now. As Oprah Winfrey wonderfully puts it, "doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment".

Too often I've seen people discourage themselves by saying "if only I had learnt to do so-and-so at a young age". To that I say the only thing that really stops you is the limits you put on yourself. So don't underestimate your potential, but also don't make excuses for not having the will or passion to carry something through.

This experience is all about you... *your* dreams, *your* goals, *your* life. How will you shape them? How will you nurture them?

Make your own discoveries about how to best achieve success during your time at the College. You are going to make mistakes, have terrible tests and exams, find things difficult but ultimately develop your own methods to succeed. It is through overcoming adversity that the most valuable lessons are learnt.

It is important to determine how you study best. What works for the person sitting next to you may not necessarily work for you. For instance many of my classmates would go to the library to study where they weren't distracted but for me my biggest distraction was my phone, so I would simply go home and as I like to put it, I would 'surrender' my phone to my mum until I finished studying. Year 12 calls for some extremities but the earlier you discover your style of learning the better, because your ways become habit, which makes the transition into VCE a lot smoother.

Year 12 is like running a marathon. Don't burn yourself out, as it is a long haul; find a balance between your social life and study. Like a marathon, you will stumble and fall. Challenges will arise and motivation will waiver. It is vital that you push through these periods because, in truth, everyone experiences them. During Year 12, I tragically lost my

brother. I can't even begin to explain the trauma my family and I faced. At that point it seemed as though I had every reason to give up, but I knew I couldn't live with the disappointment of knowing I didn't push myself to strive my best. My determination and desire to succeed led me to find an inner strength that I may never have discovered otherwise. This combined with the unwavering support of my teachers and peers allowed me to fulfil my dream to study Dentistry.

As I part with the Sion family with a heavy heart, I urge you all to embrace the little things and privileges that come with being a Daughter of Sion. Get involved in retreats, push yourself outside your comfort zone during camps, get up and sing some karaoke on Sion Day and simply take part in all the special events, because as the Class of 2013 would say "these are the Sion ties that will bond us forever". Our Lady of Sion College has not only provided me with a great education but it has helped shape me into the person I am today. I can't thank the Sion community enough for the compassion displayed by the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, Ms Jebb's inspiring leadership and the guidance of each member of staff.

Looking back over the past year you tend to forget the definitions and theories that you learnt. But what you do remember are the times you spent laughing and having fun with your peers. Your peers are the ones that were by your side every step of the way. The ones that kept you motivated, offered welcome distractions and knew what you were going through. My peers are the ones who helped make Year 12 my fondest year of high school. To the class of 2013, I thank you for that.

I could have never have made it here without the support of those who have watched me grow, my family. They were the ones who had to put up with my tears, stress and temper day in and day out. To my parents, words can never express my gratitude to you for your unconditional love, encouragement and belief in me.

To my teachers, you are the reason I am standing here today and your dedication and passion for teaching are the reasons why you are the school's greatest asset. Without you, our accomplishments would have been very different.

Lastly, to the Year 12s of 2014, I would wish you all good luck but as Mr Riessuet told us before EVERY exam, luck has nothing to do with the outcome, it's all about hard work. I know this year will undeniably challenge you, but you will grow exponentially, so always extend yourself beyond the expectations of your teachers, parents and most

importantly, of your own. The lunchtimes, late nights, countless essays and extra practice exams will be worth it. Trust me, when I say that there is no better feeling than that morning in December when you look at your results and can honestly say, I did my very best. It is now all in your hands, so make decisions that will ensure you look back without regret.

Thank you.