

2018 DUX SPEECH

Mr Brennan, Fr Greg, parents, staff and students,

To have achieved Dux of Salesian for 2018 is most certainly both an honour and a privilege, and one that I do not take for granted. Achievements in VCE are often perceived to be accolades based on individual merit and effort. Although this is true, it is the performance of the cohort as a whole that matters just as much, and is what makes an occasion like today truly special. On that note, I would like to extend special congratulations to all members of the Class of 2018 and, in particular, those here today. There is no denying that everyone here today is their own definition of hard-work and dedication.

Whilst today we share feelings of finality and triumph in reflection on 2018, it is also a day on which we recognise those who played an indispensable role in this chapter of our lives. I feel very fortunate to have had such incredible teachers throughout my time here at Salesian. The teachers at this school, in my eyes, are second to none, and the success I've enjoyed must also be attributed to their commitment. To use the words of Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest athlete of all time, "I built my talents on the shoulders of someone else's talent."

I highlight some individual teachers throughout my personal experience, but each one of you would be able to list others who supported you. Thus, I'd like to thank all the teachers who were a part of my schooling life for the six years that I spent here. However, a special thankyou must go to all my Year 12 teachers. Mrs Garofalo, you always baked cupcakes to celebrate everyone's birthdays in our Oratory class. Your amiability and compassion throughout the year was inspiring and, on behalf of 12D, I thank you. Mr Sellwood, I would like to thank you for your positivity and your willingness to go out of your way to mark our work and explain things to us. You bought us all a book to write in on the first day of Year 12, and I think this signifies your dedication as a teacher. Mr Bermingham, I appreciate all the fun and humour you brought to class. Most of all, thank you for always helping me. Whether it was going through my practice SACs, answering questions,

or hosting extra classes in the lead up to the exam, I appreciate everything. I would also like to thank Mr McDonald for always being willing to lend a helping hand in class. Despite my mathematical ineptitude, you always believed that things would still pan out alright for me in this subject. I was always grateful for your encouragement and, despite being on the lower end of the scale, I still achieved a score that I was, honestly, pretty happy with. Ms Capomolla, to say that you helped me a lot in English would be an understatement. My endeavours in this subject were, irrefutably, matched by your relentless commitment to reading my essays and helping me to improve. I was only just passing English in Year 10 before things ultimately started to ascend, as a result of your guidance and passion for teaching. Whilst I am incredibly grateful for that, what I really appreciated most was your belief that I could do well in this subject from the outset of Year 12. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Mr McAuliffe. I put in the effort in his class in Year 11, in the hope of achieving something special and, in hindsight, the result of my effort could only have really transpired due to your dedication. Whether it be marking my practice SACs throughout the year or helping me to prepare for the exam, I succeeded due to your inclination to help. I must also acknowledge Ms Bennett. As a teacher you were always truly dedicated and supportive. To have had you as our coordinator for our last three years here was certainly a blessing. On behalf of the 2018 cohort, for all the work you put in behind the scenes, and for the care you conveyed to all of us, I thank you.

We each know our parents have been a great support and so by thanking my parents, I recognise all parents who played a role in supporting us. So, with that said, I would like to extend a special thank you to my parents, who were the backbone of my success. You are both the reason I was able to come here every day and the reason I am able to stand here today. Words cannot describe your unconditional love and support over the past 18 years, for which I am truly grateful. And, to my godmother, thank you for also being an encouraging and supportive figure to me throughout the years.

To the Year 12s of 2019, I'm sure that this year will present an array of new challenges to you. However, at the end of the day, it all really comes down to the amount of work you put in, and how organised you are throughout the year. To put in my two cents, I think that always trying to get ahead, and using your teachers as much as you can, will go a long way to helping you stay afloat. Always try to commence your preparations for any upcoming SACs as early as you can, and chip away at your revision gradually. I know it's a cliché, but remember that your ATAR will not define you or your future. As with every story, there is always a beginning, a middle and an end. If at the end of the year you fall short of your hopes and expectations, bear in mind that VCE is only just the beginning. There is always going to be another way. To sum up Year 12 in the words of Winston Churchill, "Now, this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

As for the rest of the student body, if you're aspiring to reach new heights in Year 12, I think that it's important that you get into a rhythm beforehand. Get accustomed to putting in more effort than you would normally be comfortable or satisfied with. By no means am I saying that you should throw the kitchen sink at your studies. Spare that for Year 12. But if you try to adopt the tips I mentioned earlier, I'm sure that you'll find yourselves better accustomed to the pressures of Year 12 when the time comes. Ultimately, the most important thing is that you all cherish your time at this school, because in the blink of an eye you'll find yourselves at the Valedictory Dinner, wrapping up the six years you spent at Salesian.

Having now graduated, what is sacred to me is the collection of memories that I garnered throughout my time here at Salesian. Looking back, all the invaluable experiences are opportunities which I feel privileged to have been a part of. Year 9 Camp, for instance, is one experience that springs to mind, and I would like to acknowledge both Mr Loonstra and Mr Kearney who, in my opinion, made Year 9 the most enjoyable and unique year I had at this school. The vitality of these



moments came to fruition only because of the people I was fortunate enough to have been surrounded by. So, to the Class of 2018, thank you for all the laughs, the words of encouragement and the friendships. I know that I was always the quiet kid, but over the past six years I've got to know many of you, some of whom I've known since primary school. To all my close friends and acquaintances, although there were moments when I felt you stood between me and achieving a high ATAR, your presence is what kept me going, and the reason I wanted to be here every day. I appreciate all of you and wish you all the best in your future endeavours. I know that you'll all succeed in whichever path you choose to pursue.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Mr Brennan and all the Salesian staff for providing us with such a special environment to grow up in and evolve into the people we are today. All the new and refurbished buildings that have emerged over the past few years are only one indicator of your endeavours to make Salesian the best school it can be. And, honestly, I could not have asked for any better personnel to have accompanied us throughout our six year journey at Salesian.

As I conclude, I'd like to leave everyone with a quote to take into 2019. "Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts."

Anthony Sirait
Class of 2018 Dux

