

The Crescendo

The events of 2015 came to a crescendo in the Ramsay Hall this morning with Speech Day formalities, which facilitated the perennial distribution of prizes and acknowledgement of those boys whose performance in a variety of fields has been particularly meritorious. Julian McMahon (OR 81), who among many local and international honours was recently awarded Victorian Australian of the Year for his work in human rights law, flew up from Melbourne specifically to deliver the Occasional Address. Always compelling and insightful, Julian encouraged the boys to reflect deeply and respond with integrity to the school motto – *Quantum potes, tantum aude* (*Whatever you can do, so much dare to do*). He encouraged them to pursue truth in their personal lives and in their studies, and, to respond to the great Ignatian ideal of making the world a better place. In the case of the latter, Julian encouraged the boys to seek out and support the lonely, this disadvantaged and the marginalised. If the riveting looks of the boys was any indication, Julian's message and its impact was both immediate and profound. I extend a sincere statement of thanks to Julian for taking the time to be with the boys and give them the benefit of his wisdom and insights.

Myriad events and functions have come into effect over the final days of term:

- The Advent Liturgy in Ramsay Hall last Wednesday signified the beginning of a new liturgical season and the formal preparation for Christmas and the birth of Christ
- A special luncheon was held in the SEIP unit to commend the boys on their progress during the year and to thank the parents and staff who provide such a wonderful environment for the boys to grow and learn
- Boys from the Regis campus enjoyed a picnic day at Manly surf school. It was particularly memorable for the boys in Year 6 as they begin to make formal preparation for the transition into secondary school
- The four Year 6 classes held a farewell mass in the Dalton Chapel on Monday to give thanks for the 'Regis experience' and to pray for a successful move across to the Senior Campus over the months ahead
- Year 10 boys in the English Enrichment Project who have been undertaking elements of the Year 12 Extension English course presented a stunning array of work on Wednesday evening. The interplay between art and culture, literature and sexuality, popular music and politics, not to mention the polarity of Sisyphus and Pink Floyd, all formed part of an evening that profiled the boys' achievement in this demanding study
- A Christmas liturgy of memorable proportions was held in the Dalton Chapel for the boarders and their families on Tuesday evening. It was wonderful to see a fusion of community and liturgy that had as its focus the importance of the Christmas season
- The final meeting of the School Council for 2015 was held on Wednesday 25th November in the aftermath of a year of intense planning that has seen the release of the Strategic Directions 2015-2020 document and the Master Plan. Many thanks are extended to Mr John Wilcox (OR 75) as Chair of Council and to the Directors who provide such important governance that enables Riverview to pursue the next stage of its august and distinctive history

Among other cameos to round off the year, the College Captains – Bennett Walsh, Tom Osborne and Max Fisher, joined Julia Baird and [Senator Nova Peris](#) on the ABC show Q&A on Wednesday evening, to participate in a forum that focussed on domestic violence. It is a credit to the boys that they represented the College on national television with such distinction. The following email arrived from a parent early the following day:

It was so wonderful last night to see our student leaders engaging in the ABC's public debate on domestic

violence. What a credit it is that Riverview is addressing this with our students – and more importantly, supporting student interest and willingness to make a difference. Congratulations – we are very proud of them. JD

Those visiting the grounds will see facades of the Dalton Memorial Chapel enclosed by scaffolding and fabric. For the first time since its construction in 1909, the Chapel is being systematically cleaned and fretted stonework repointed and repaired. The slate roof will also be given a major facelift to complement the external walls and brickwork. It is a sizeable undertaking that will occupy the next four to five months but it will ultimately restore the grandeur of yesteryear to a building that resides as the spiritual soul of Riverview. I suspect that there will be much interest in this project as the accumulated dust and wear of a century is removed and given over to the restoration of heritage works that lie at the centre of the College's foundational history.

It would be remiss in the final Viewpoint of the year not to acknowledge the efforts of staff across a busy year of teaching and learning. Staff have given generously of their time and talents in the classroom, on the sporting grounds, on reflection days and retreats, on camps and immersions, and behind the scenes, embracing and animating the educational mission of the Society of Jesus. My sincere thanks are extended to all. I particularly wish to thank those who are leaving us – either to retire such as Erica Reading, or some of our long serving staff who are pursuing new professional horizons such as Kurt Bartelme, Belinda Clarke, Lloyd Walker, Mirella Di Giorgio, and Lina El Khoury, as well as others whose time has been less but whose efforts are highly valued. Among them all, Erica Reading needs a special thanks – 45 years ago she walked into her first Jesuit classroom and on Wednesday she closed the door for the last time. Best wishes are extended to all who leave the College.

Very best wishes for a happy and restful Christmas. It is with enormous gratitude that we give thanks for the blessings of 2015 and we look forward to the return of classes and the opportunities that will be provided in 2016 with great hope and optimism.