Speech

Address By

Her Excellency the Honourable Quentin Bryce AC CVO
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

On the occasion of

Official opening of the new Senior School Building at Radford College

Radford College, Canberra
26 September 2013

Mr Ian Morison
Chairman of the Board of Radford College

Mr Phillip Heath
Principal

Dr Andrew Leigh
Of our Federal Parliament

Distinguished guests
Staff and Students

Good morning.

Thank you for your warm welcome, expressed by energetic boys and girls lining the driveway.

I am delighted to join you for the official opening of this magnificent building.

I know that Radford College, now in its 30th year, has earned a fine reputation as a result of the academic achievements of your students and the strong emphasis you place on community service.

This is consistent with your motto of “Truth, Compassion, Wisdom,” bringing together the opportunity to learn with the responsibility to contribute to our society.

The celebration of an anniversary is always a chance to take stock of where we have come from and where we are going.
This year, we have seen some significant milestones:

The centenary of Canberra, a city that all Australians can be proud of, whose fabric and ethos inspire us to reflect on the vision of the people who forged our nationhood.

The bicentenary of Australia’s oldest charity, the Benevolent Society, an historic event that prompts consideration on what life would be like without the dedicated work of voluntary and community service organisations in our country.

The 20th anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act, an occasion to recognise the positive effect of that legislation for many families, and to think about what still has to be done to give true equal opportunities to all.

Next year will mark a more sombre anniversary, 100 years since the start of the First World War.

During 2014 we will remember with respect and appreciation, those who made enormous sacrifices for the cause of the freedoms we enjoy in our democracy.

We will reflect on continuing efforts toward peace in the world, and the protection of the worth and dignity of every human being.

My friends

70 years ago Canberra was celebrating its 30th anniversary in the midst of the Second World War.

Plans were already in place for the post-war development of the city, so that work could go ahead as soon as peace returned.

The president of the then Canberra Chamber of Commerce was quoted as saying that “although 30 years was a long time in a man’s lifetime, it was little in the life of a city”.

Since Canberra was founded 100 years ago, succeeding generations have brought (and still bring) their own contributions to the vision of Australia’s capital.

Each generation has made, and left, its mark.

These days our ‘mark’ is always high on the agenda when we are planning something.

Sustainability is a key watchword.

Our carbon, environmental and ecological footprints receive serious attention.

This is not to stop us making our mark but to ensure that what we leave behind is sensitive to the surroundings and context, and done in good stewardship for those who will follow us.

The decision to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Radford College by constructing a new Senior School building lives out this practice and conforms to your own College ‘value in action’ of ‘respect’.
I congratulate Rodney Moss and the team from Cox, Humphries, Moss, for their design which has given Radford a building that is flexible to the needs of today’s students and educators, and sensitive to the surrounding environment.

These distinguished architects had a tough brief, and they have created delightful spaces conducive to learning, enjoyment, of a sense of wellbeing, elegant opportunities, light ……

I love its outlook, towards hills and bushland – natural beauty that encourages reflection; time for quietness, for going inside of oneself, for remembering that the most important journey in life is to the centre of oneself.

So important for young ones growing up in a world of clatter, frenetic activity, superficiality.

What an inspiring view for all those who will work here!

A ‘mark’ has been made on this campus with this building, adding to the original vision of the founders.

Students of Radford: your school years are a marvellous opportunity to “have a go” and to begin to make your mark.

They are a time in which you can explore science, literature, music, history, languages, so many subjects, as well as spirituality, creativity and human behaviour.

I encourage you to make connections between all aspects of your studies and see them not as separate disciplines, but instead as inter-related and inter-dependent, giving the broad picture of our world.

Robert Foster’s remarkable sculpture, ‘Blue Mantle’ is made up of 180 separate parts.

They are components which mean nothing individually, but which make sense when they come together as the whole.

I urge you all to put into action the values of your college: “Imagine, Listen, Respect” and to make your mark.

They remind me of some favourite words of mine of that giant of English language, Joseph Conrad:

“Oh Youth; The Strength of it; the Faith of it; The imagination of it”

I wish the very best for all the students who will study here, that they may go on to make positive contributions to our community.

To the teaching staff, I hope that you will enjoy these new premises.

In your example and work you are able to inspire the young men and women of Radford College for their life’s journey.
My friends,

I am honoured to open the Radford College Senior School building.