

SPEECH DAY 2018

School Captain's address – Marcus Ray

Who are we? We are they; we are the boys of BGS.

Special Guest Mr Simon Fenwick, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Mr Howard Stack, members of the Board of Trustees, Headmaster Mr Micallef, deputy headmasters, staff, Old Boys, parents, and my peers of Brisbane Grammar School: I would like to extend to you my welcome to this special day of celebration and reflection.

In 150 years, much has changed at Brisbane Grammar. Buildings have come and gone. Students have come and gone. Headmasters have come and gone. Yet one aspect remains unchanged, impervious to the influences of time – our great sense of community. Through many trials and many tribulations our Grammar predecessors forged a collective spirit that continues to serve as our School's very foundation, that binds our diverging paths together, and that defines who we are and what we are today.

That is our identity; that is who we are. That is what the boys of BGS embody: community, kinship, family. And that is why we gather here today. We gather here not only to celebrate the achievements of our students but also to celebrate the achievements of our community. And as the Year 12s now convene for their final whole-school gathering, I would like to look through the lens of the 2018 school vision and pay tribute to the year that now rapidly draws to a close.

Forty-five weeks ago, at this very lectern, I shared with you our vision for our community. It was a vision predicated on sincere gratitude for all those Grammar men that have preceded us. It was these people – the overwhelming majority of whom will remain unknown to us – who walked the Grammar path and laid down its firm foundations. It is their footprints and unsung stories that help guide us on our own paths and that provide inspiration for our own journeys.

But 'Walk the Path' was just as much a vision of the future as it was a vision of the past; we too can forge a footprint, however great or small, and make our mark on the *light dark blue*. We also can leave behind something we are proud of and a path for future students to tread.

And this year, we have done exactly that. On the field, in the arena, in the music hall, in the classroom, we have represented our School with pride and with passion. Three GPS trophies we continued to fiercely defend (in swimming, gymnastics, and debating) – three trophies no more significant than our other sporting victories, our remarkable theatrical productions, and our spectacular concert performances.

But it is not our successes that define us as a School; it is our effort, our enthusiasm, our endeavour, and our spirit that cultivates the culture of academic excellence and the pursuit of all-roundedness that BGS has become synonymous with today. Spirit: a cornerstone of our community and a defining feature of this year. Regardless of the occasion and regardless of the result, we have built upon this School's collective spirit and ensured our peers receive the support they deserve.

We filled the Forum with light dark blue for the King of the Hill debate, and watched as our Senior A debaters crushed their outmatched opposition. We charged to Chandler to chant deafening war cries, to cheer continuously, and to lead our swimmers to a phenomenal victory. We raced to rugby to throng in those 343 seats and rally our First XV. Week in, week out, we were there for each other, and we walked our paths together – as a sea of light and dark blue; your overwhelming school spirit has made our paths less challenging and less lonely.

It was the Year 12s that spearheaded this great celebration and greater recognition of the unity that fastens our community together. A term ago on Oval Number 2, we stood linked in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, path to path, passionate, proud that we had completed two days of gruelling QCS not for ourselves, not for this School, but for each other. That thundering war cry and that painful, thundering charge is the greatest symbol of the kinship that binds us, us Year 12s, together. Together we shared our visions, our values, and our dreams; together we pursued them.

Together we led this community and assisted our younger travellers as they navigated their own winding paths and contended with their own challenging obstacles. Challenging it was, I am certain, for the Form Seniors to foster friendships with the Middle School and to bridge the divide that isolates these two communities; but succeed they did, and a culture of connectedness now chains Brisbane Grammar School together.

We may be divided by our backgrounds, by our interests, by our friendship groups, and by our year levels, but what we all possess is an ardent drive to forge a defining legacy – to leave a lasting footprint on the Grammar path, on our community, and on our families. And it is clear that the footprint we have collectively formed in this sesquicentenary anniversary is one of prodigious proportions; it permeates throughout this School not because of our triumphs and our successes but because of our spirit and our unity.

Tomorrow, the Year 12s will walk through The Great Hall's majestic oak doors, dejected to depart one chapter of life yet eager to enter another. We are contented with all that we have achieved. Now it falls to the future of Grammar – to the Year 11s and below – to bear this mantle of responsibility and to forge their footprint too. Footprints are feeble and fragile – they can be destroyed faster than they can be created. They are something that we must preserve; they are something that we must not let wash away. Be strong, be vigilant, yet I leave assured that this auditorium contains countless Grammar Men prepared to uphold the School's mission and to continue walking the path.

Always walking there alongside you will be your teachers. As we have grown from young boys into young men, they have nurtured us, educated us, always assisted us, and always encouraged us. It is they who have fashioned a great school out of a good school and a great year out of a good year. So, I now take this opportunity to thank our ensemble of professional, experienced, empathetic masters of their trade; we are immensely grateful for your dedication and your support.

To this School's Senior Leadership Team, to Mr Micallef, Mr Carroll, Mr Brusasco, Mr Uscinski, Mr Roper, Ms Zervos, and others: it is through your direction and your guidance that Grammar is imbued with such a unified, excelling community; it is through your commitment and your loyalty that we enter adult life resilient and respectful, embodying the virtues of the great Grammar Man – and for this we sincerely thank you.

Our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude is reserved for Grammar's least dynamic duo: our Head of Year, Mr Timms, and our Assistant Head of Year, Mr Scholes. To Mr Timms, to his yoga moves, to his list of non-negotiables, and to his questionable fashion sense: we thank you for your unabating enthusiasm and unrelenting compassion. We thank you, Sir, for being an influential figure to many and an unwavering friend to more, for your faithfulness to this School's cause – to the creation of thoughtful, confident men of character; and to Mr Scholes, his great partner in crime, to his logistical wizardry, to his profound wisdom and wit, and to his quips that bring sniggers to our faces almost as quickly as his hairline recedes: we thank you too. When we have needed help most, when we have

been lost and exhausted and battered and bruised, Mr Scholes has always stood by us, assisting us and reassuring us.

Standing right next to him are our parents. To the many parents who sit in this auditorium here today and to the many more who do not: thank you for your love and your leniency, for your care and your concern, and for your selflessness and your support. It is you who truly embody this School's motto – *Nil Sine Labore* – and it is you who so generously encourage us to walk this path, so that when we walk out of those great oak doors we are content with the gift that we have been conferred: this gift of a Grammar education.

And to all my fellow students: thank you for walking alongside me on this great Grammar journey. It is not this School's name that has contributed to its long-held reputation; it is not its values, its visions, this emblem, this light dark blue. It is you – the student body – that imbue the School with such vitality, community, and distinction. I have said it a thousand times, and I will say it once more: it is a privilege to attend Brisbane Grammar not because of this School itself, but because of those with whom I attend it. It has been an honour to serve as your School Captain.

This School means a lot to me; it means a lot to many people, and I will miss a lot about it. Tuckshop prices: no. Mr Clancy's jokes: no. Writing these 2,000-word speeches: definitely not. But I will miss the morning tea banter, the 6 am workouts, the 12am pleas for last-minute academic assistance, the Moogerah excursions, the war cries, and the Halo sessions; even track and field training, I will sorely miss. Most importantly, I will miss you – this community, this family. We have lived together, learnt together, laughed together, and cried together, and it is with these cherished memories that I depart Brisbane Grammar grateful for my incomparable experiences.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: to my Mum and to my Dad who have stood by me through thick and thin, who have provided me with this unsurpassable gift; and to Tomas, a brilliant brother and an even better friend. I thank you all.

This School, Brisbane Grammar School, has defined who I am. It has defined who we are – this community, this unity, our values, and our vision – for 150 years and for 150 more. Who are we? We are they; we are the boys of BGS. Thank you and farewell.