

## **SENIOR SCHOOLING THANKSGIVING NIGHT**

### **CHAIR OF THE COLLEGE BOARD ADDRESS – DR HOWARD HARRIS**

**DECEMBER 2008**

I welcome you to this Thanksgiving service.

A year to remember. However we look at it – as individuals, as a College, as a nation or across the world – there are events that we will remember from 2008. In the US ,the election of its first black president, in Australia, the apology by the Parliament to those taken from their homes by governments , at Pedare, the successful completion of our first large construction project for over ten years. The Junior School building was a statement of confidence in the future of Pedare. Evidence that our plans were real. Our strategic plan was adopted in 2005. It remains our guide, based in our constitution, setting the vision for Pedare as a vibrant, globally oriented learning community, and showing how the College reflects its principles and values.

As we look ahead, 2009 looks very different to 2005, and to Adelaide in the mid-1980s when Pedare was founded. How will our values be a help as we respond to the challenges? Challenges of a tighter job market for both school-leavers and parents, mortgage stress, intense competition amongst schools. Let me make three points about the Pedare response. Students come first, Pedare’s Christian values will be maintained, and we will be bold.

Tonight we recognise the achievements of our students. Pedare needs to continually upgrade its facilities to support our educational initiatives and student achievement. The reduction in our debt levels over recent years, success in securing government grants, and support from parents through the building fund, the infrastructure level and community fundraising mean that upgrading and building should remain a realistic option for us. Government grants help – and I thank Dr Groughan and all others involved in securing for us around \$1million worth of grants, large and small. Government grants are never for the full cost of the work, and often for 50% or less. An important condition, for both the College and the government, is that we are able to finance the remaining costs in a prudent manner. We have a fine line to tread, to avoid over-exuberance, or damaging fee increases, or the excessive caution that would allow buildings, staff, student numbers and morale to decay.

The values to which we on the Board are committed, the ethos of the Churches and the founding parishes who between them nominate eight members to the Board; these values permeate the College – I can’t say that they guarantee certainty or success, but commitment to excellence, compassion, faith, responsibility, self discipline, service and tolerance are, I believe, anchors that underpin good governance, and fine education. It won’t be easy for parents, students, staff, board members, the Principal, or the Finance

manager as we work through 2009. But the essence of Pedare will remain. Students come first. Let your light shine.

That brings me to the second point, that Pedare's Christian values will be maintained. Most schools have a statement of values. All schools that receive money from the Commonwealth government must display posters listing a set of Australian values. Having a statement of values is not the same as knowing how to apply those values in life, in learning, in growing up, and in managing a school. For 2000 years Christians have been living out their faith, learning – hesitantly and not always successfully – how to apply it. Love, commitment to service, self-discipline, and tolerance, are not passing fads, to be replaced by a new set of values next month. Pedare's values are deeply set.

We will be bold. Our aim is for our light to shine, and not to be hidden under a bushel. Neither tolerance nor compassion mean that we should shy away from difficulty. Pedare, with its Junior, Middle and Senior school structure is applying the best practice to the education of young people in their changing needs. Our performance is subject national and international scrutiny. Our debt is manageable and fees competitive. The shared facilities mean Pedare students have the widest range of options at Years 11 and 12. 2008 has been a year to remember. We will go into 2009 boldly, neither overly exuberant nor depressingly subdued.

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I thank all members of the Pedare community for their dedication and efforts in 2008 – students, staff, parents, friends and supporters from government and the community, the churches, and my colleagues on the board. On behalf of every member of the board I wish you a happy and holy Christmas and pray that you will find joy, and something joyous to remember, in 2009.