

Rector's Boarders' Assembly Address

Christine Leighton

Friday 16 August 2024



Nau mai haere mai, tena koutou katoa.

Today is one of our very special assemblies where we celebrate our boarding community. Welcome to parents and supporters who have joined us this morning and to Board Member, Stephanie Bain (OC 1992). Right from its first day in 1917, boarding has been a part of St Andrew's College, and over the years has contributed significantly to the culture of our school.

This morning you will see and hear from our boarders, where they come from, their diverse backgrounds, interests, challenges and what Mr Parr likes to term "the boarding advantage". Thank you to the senior team lead by Gretal and Alex, who put today's assembly together – I know it will be fun.

But a couple of things to share with you before I hand over.

I can't let an assembly go by without celebrating the success of our incredible New Zealand athletes at the Paris Olympics. Our five St Andrew's College Old Collegians who made it to Paris as part of the Olympic community have been well celebrated in our community.

1. Robbie Manson (OC 2007) – Rowing.
2. Sam Lane (OC 2015) – Hockey.
3. Taiko Torepe-Ormsby (OC 2021) – Swimming.
4. Olivia Brett (OC 2019) – Kayaking.
5. Ben Taylor (OC 2017) – Rowing – travelling reserve.

But of course, it was Olivia Brett as part of the gold winning K4 500 event, who has shot to New Zealand and St Andrew's fame. Olivia, who would have been sitting in this assembly just five years ago, now joins a small elite group of Old Collegians who have won gold – the other two being Peter Mander (OC 1946) – Yachting Sharpie class at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and Athol Earl (OC 1970) – Rowing Eight at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

I have sent Olivia a congratulatory message from us all and hope that when she returns to Christchurch in coming weeks, she will make a visit to StAC and we can find an opportunity for her to speak to you all.

I also want to make a comment on the incredible achievement of Dame Lisa Carrington. Not only has she had unprecedented success as an athlete, she has also given incredible



encouragement and leadership to the younger kayak athletes, like Olivia. I am sure this is a significant part of the success of this sport. A great example to us all.

The second acknowledgement, although not an Olympic sport, (or at least not yet!) belongs to one of our boarders. Many of our boarders make a massive contribution to our College teams and activities but this student to my knowledge has achieved something new.

I am speaking of Year 13, Fred McRae. Fred has been selected by the New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association to represent New Zealand against Australia in the High School Trans-Tasman Challenge in Bull-Riding.

This is a wonderful opportunity for Fred who I believe has developed a real passion for this challenging, and I must say potentially dangerous, sport.

Congratulations Fred, it seems fitting that at Boarders' Assembly we can acknowledge your achievement with a special certificate and wish you well for the upcoming competition in Australia.

And finally from me this morning, is to say thank you and congratulate the boarders for once again using this opportunity to support Gumboot Friday – promoting mental health and well-being for youth with free access to qualified counselling. Thank you to all supporting this incredibly important cause.