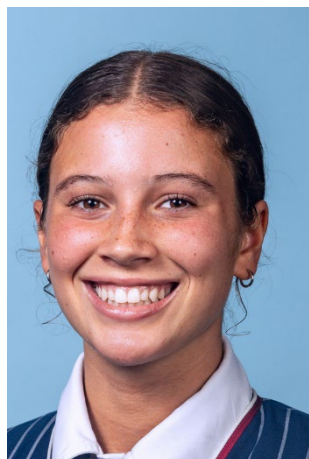




Leavers' Assembly – Year 13 Reflection

Wednesday 29 October 2025

Ricky Kotepong and Sophia Voice



Ricky:

It feels surreal to think that our journey at St Andrew's College began back in 2021, when we first walked through those gates with no idea what lay ahead. And now, nearly five years later, we find ourselves here – about to walk through them for the very last time as St Andrew's leavers. It's a bittersweet moment, realising just how much this place has shaped who we've become.

Sophia:

From Year 9 to 13, some of us have changed a lot, while others are exactly the same. Hansen still walks through school with a computer permanently attached to his hand, Minhkhohi is still proudly holding strong at five feet tall, and Mr Faulks still manages to rig every house event so Rutherford wins. Even though some things have stayed the same, we now find ourselves in Year 13, facing a year full of 'lasts' – our last Highland Games, our last Athletics Day, our last visit to the Cafeteria and, of course, our last day of school. When these events finally arrived, it hit us just how quickly time has passed. People always say that time flies, but it's only when you're sitting in your final assembly that you realise just how true that really is.

Ricky:

Let's take a quick trip down memory lane – back to where it all began on 29 January, 2021: our very first day at St Andrew's College as Year 9 students. Blazers buttoned up, ties far too tight, and faces fresh out of intermediate, we wandered the school grounds with absolutely no idea where we were going. Half of us couldn't read our timetables, and the other half just pretended we could. We were still figuring out which teachers to be scared of, and which classes we might come to dread. The boys were constantly being told off for having their socks down or shirts untucked, while the girls quickly learned they'd never stop hearing about the one-earring rule – and to be honest, I still don't think that message has fully sunk in.

Sophia:

Year 10 was when things finally started to feel a bit more normal – but it was also the year when productivity hit an all-time low thanks to the ongoing Tetris and Homescapes addiction that had taken hold of the year group. This was also the year we had the honour



of experiencing Te Waka sunrise – not at the beach, but watching it on a screen, in our very own Gym 2 classrooms, while wearing masks– all thanks to COVID-19.

Ricky:

We soon found ourselves in Year 11, when things started to get a bit more serious. NCEA finally arrived, and we quickly learned the difference between “Achieved,” “Merit,” and “Excellence” – mostly through Mr Bevin’s very long, very passionate lectures, which we were blessed with every so often. This was also the year most of us turned 16 and finally started driving – which, unsurprisingly, led to a few crashes over the years. Honourable mentions go to J Lang, Jake... and, of course, to Cooper, who unfortunately found himself being bumped off by a car, while crossing the road. Now, over two years later, most of us have finally gotten the hang of it – except for Donk, who still hasn’t quite managed to get his Restricted.

Sophia:

Then came Years 12 and 13 – two formals later, a mountain of internals handed in late thanks to technical issues, and the stage where ChatGPT went from our best tool to our worst enemy. This period also saw some big relationships start to blossom – Mia and Bronson emerged as the new cutest couple, starting St Andrew’s very own “siblings or dating” show. Meanwhile, your Head Prefects’ romance was so short-lived you might’ve missed it entirely. Whereas Caitlin and Theo and Guy and Trinity have managed to make it through as high school sweethearts.

Ricky:

Over the years, we’ve learned how to bounce back when things didn’t go to plan, and how to show up for each other when it mattered most – from navigating the uncertainty of COVID-19, to supporting one another through tough times, including moments of loss that reminded us just how important this community really is – and of the strength and resilience within our year group.

While we’re all a bit nervous about what comes next – whether that’s university, work, or a gap year – we can be confident that the values, relationships, and lessons we’ve gained here at St Andrew’s will guide us wherever we go.

Sophia:

Now, there are a few people we need to thank, because this journey wouldn’t have been the same without them. To teachers, staff, and coaches – you have truly made our secondary school experience one to remember. The care and hard work you put into developing us as young adults is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Ricky:

To Mrs Simmons – Thank you for all the support you’ve constantly provided. You’ve been an anchor in Senior College for every student, and honestly, I don’t think any of us can imagine the place functioning without you. Your warmth and reliability have kept everything – and everyone – together.



To Mr Ruge – Your passion for the school never goes unnoticed. We've always known you've had our backs – guiding us through Senior College, steering us in the right direction, and always doing what's best for us. We really appreciate how much you care.

To Mr van Florenstein – Thank you for always showing up to support everything. Your awareness of what's happening across the school, knowing what students are doing and how they're developing, is incredible. The energy and positivity you bring to our community have meant so much to us.

Sophia:

To Mr Wilson – it's only your first year as Rector, but you've already made such a huge impact. The energy, enthusiasm, and support you've brought have made you such an important part of our College already. It's been an honour to be the Year 13 cohort in your first year. We'll all remember spotting you at every sports match, waving your St Andrew's scarf and cheering louder than anyone else.

To Mrs Stirling – thank you for always having a smile on your face and being there for us as a year group no matter what. You have truly been an amazing Dean. Since Year 9, you've told us you believed we were the best year group, and honestly, that belief has pushed us to grow and thrive.

Ricky:

To our parents – thank you for everything you've given up for us to be here. For the sacrifices you've made, the countless hours spent driving us to games, trainings, and everything in between – we couldn't have done any of this without you. Thank you for your constant support, love, and belief in us over the past 18 years.

Sophia:

And finally – to each other, the Year 13 Leavers of 2025. Every single one of us has helped shape a secondary school experience full of lifelong memories, leaving our own mark along the way, in both the big moments and the small ones. We can all be proud leaving this school today, knowing how far we have come and the connections we have made. While today may seem like a goodbye, it's anything but, because what we've built here will stay with us forever. St Andrew's has given us so much, and no matter where life takes us, this College will always be a part of who we are. We'll always be able to call this place home.

Thank you.