SACE Student Responder Speech
Merit Ceremony 2017

# Ethan Murphy (Sacred Heart College)

I wish to thank His Excellency, the Honourable Hieu Van Le (pronounced: *Hugh Van Lay*), and Mrs Le [pronounced: *Mrs Lay*] the Honourable Jay Weatherill MP, Premier of South Australia; the Honourable Susan Close MP, Minister for Education and Child Development; distinguished guests, school representatives and the families of merit recipients for being here today to recognize our collective, outstanding academic achievements.

We are gathered here to congratulate the outstanding students of the Class of 2016, with the merit awards just a physical representation of the tremendous endeavour we students have committed during our 13 years of schooling.

However, the achievements recognised today would not have been possible without the support provided from our families, schools, teachers, and the SACE Board.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank each for their contribution.

Firstly, I thank our social support network, whether it be parents, friends, mentors, carers, relatives, siblings or a particular cultural community.

We owe you all a great debt for being there to act as sounding boards for ideas, provided a safe environment to share concerns, or even just helping in the last minute run around to find a pair of socks before school.

I want to thank you for the difference that you make in our lives, enabling us to exceed academically due to knowing that are truly cared for. Often, this sense of connection is what keeps us striving to do our best or to continue our efforts when the easy option is to slack off.

On a personal note, thanks to my parents for being there, for always having extra snacks on hand at the weekend when assignments were due, and my aunt, who was always happy to help my assignments, despite her busy life with four cats.

To our schools, I applaud them for their complete commitment to providing the highest quality of education possible…..

From providing a career counsellor to guide our subject selection, to ensuring a library with a range of high quality texts, to support our learning.

My school, Sacred Heart College, always strived to ensure they had the students’ best interests in mind. I wish to thank the Principal, Mr Byrne, for his fatherly like relationship with the students, as he always treated us like people instead of numbers.

Further, we cannot ignore the tremendous support that each of our teachers happily provided, I thank them for pushing us to perform our best and striving to ensure their lessons were engaging and enjoyable.

During our high school years, I know that many of us realised that our teachers were actually real people, and didn't just sleep on their desk overnight and fire up again, ready to inspire their students each day.

However, despite the challenges of life, our teachers go well beyond their job description to provide care and support to all of their students.

I wish to personally thank my teachers, who like many others, provided an ear during our stresses, answered our concerns, and guided us towards achieving our best.

Finally, I thank the SACE board for the high quality of education they have provided, with various subjects, from furniture construction to specialist maths, each tailored to each one of us to ensure every success in our future.

We have been blessed with a strong educational foundation, helping us grow intellectually as well balanced individuals.

I am confident that we will all strive to perform our very best during the future challenges and walk along paths that we don't even know exist yet.

Standing here, I see the next generation of doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers and a range of other occupations vital to our society. I wish you all every success in the future, and hope that you face life with audacity and hope.

Thank you.