



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Annual Celebration Dinner, 2014 - Taikurri Koma Butto (In Company Together)

ATSI Celebration Dinner a Great Success

In Term 3, over 600 people gathered at The Donato Reception Centre in Kilkenny for the 2014 Taikurri Koma Butto (In Company Together, in Kaurna) Annual Celebration Dinner. This is a significant annual Catholic Education SA event, providing an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attend Catholic schools, and their families, to come together as a community, to celebrate the achievements of the year. Masters of Ceremony for the evening were Kirra from Thomas More College, Salisbury Downs and Isaya from Xavier College, Gawler.

Special Guests

Special guests included: Uncle Dr Lewis O'Brien respected Kaurna Elder and Fellow of the University of South Australia, Dr Paul Sharkey Director of Catholic Education SA, Aboriginal Elder Dr Alitja Rigney the first female Aboriginal school Principal in Australia, Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney Dean of Indigenous Education – The University of Adelaide, Mrs Helen O'Brien Deputy Director of Catholic Education SA and Mr John Lochowiak Chair of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry who also officially represented Archbishop Wilson for the evening.

Welcome Ceremony

To commence the celebration a 'Welcome to Country' was given by Kaurna Elder, Uncle Dr Lewis O'Brien. This was followed by an address from Dr Paul Sharkey.

Presentation of students to Uncle Lewis O'Brien, Dr Paul Sharkey & Mrs Helen O'Brien

A highlight of the evening's formalities was the presentation of approximately 200 Reception to Year 12 students to Uncle Dr Lewis O'Brien, Dr Paul Sharkey and Mrs Helen O'Brien. All students received a gift and the Year 12s were honoured with a standing ovation.

Guest Speakers

Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney based his talk on achieving your dreams and goals. He included in his address his story from his boyhood days of living at Point Pearce Mission, to successfully completing a doctorate in education, becoming a professor at The University of Adelaide and at times attending meetings with Prime Ministers of Australia and other world leaders. He emphasised that what he achieved was through hard work and making the most of his education. His message was 'What I have done, you can also achieve'.



Mr Mark Corrigan Principal of St Joseph's School Murray Bridge also spoke about the importance of education in realising one's hopes, dreams and aspirations. He spoke of his story and how through education and the support of his family he was able to achieve his goals.

Farewell Presentation

A farewell presentation by Mrs Helen O'Brien was made to Mr Brian Turner, Principal of Blackfriars Priory School for his outstanding contribution to ATSI Education in South Australia. Mr Turner a proud Aboriginal man is returning to his country in Shepparton, Victoria where he has accepted a principal's position.

Entertainment

Following the presentation of students, Teancum from Sacred Heart Middle School, Mitchell Park signalled the opening of our thanksgiving reflection by lighting our candles. Students from the Yellakka Yellarkarri (YY) 2014 Leadership program then led the gathering in prayers of thanksgiving followed by cultural, spiritual, song and dance performances. The YY student performers were: Shanna and Patrick from St Francis de Sales College, Mount Barker, Tiwa, Amelia and Tiahna from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Enfield.

Another cultural dance during the evening facilitated by Jonathan Lindsay-Tjapaltjarri Hermawan included Rostrevor College students: Troy, Ty, Syd, Jamiro, Adam, Maitland, Anthony and Cameron.

The premiere of the movie produced from this year's Yellakka Yellarkarri Leadership program followed.

During the evening entertainment was provided by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CASM) from the University of Adelaide. Their performances were truly outstanding and some great dancing by students was seen.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education 2014

The celebration was a great success. It gave families an opportunity to meet one another and to affirm their decision in providing their children with a Catholic education. Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney's address was spoken from the 'heart' carrying a message of hope and in bringing life's dreams to reality.

Congratulations to Kirra and Isaya for leading this absolutely successful event. The organising committee look forward to families coming together again next year for another memorable celebration.