**2022 DUX SPEECH AT THE TOP ACHIEVERS’ ASSEMBLY BY JACK DRUMMOND**

Good morning Mr Morison, students, staff and special guests

It‘s an incredible honour to be standing up here today with the privilege to talk to you all.

Sitting down to write this speech was a real challenge. I kept thinking to myself, what do I even say? I was a student here only a few short months ago, so what meaningful message could I possibly deliver? Then I began thinking back to how my past-self felt watching the last five Duxes speak. These past students giving speeches had always seemed a world away from me, and I never really considered whether I could achieve this, even during Year 12, even after I had done my exams. So, then I started thinking about how every Dux is really just another student. So, I decided that the best use of this opportunity would just be to give you all my best pieces of advice that I hope any person in this room can apply and use themselves.

The most repeated and cliche piece of advice is also the one that I have come to realise is the most important; to try your very best. It can be so easy to do less than this and we are all guilty of having moments when we do not give it our all, myself absolutely included many times, even throughout last year. But that's okay! No one is superhuman, and there will be times that you lose motivation. The only important thing is that you keep persevering after these times and never give up on achieving your potential.

Of course, achieving your best academically may not be everyone's aim. And that is totally okay. Put your all into what you are passionate about, whether that is sport, music, acting, art, or any other of the countless pathways that lie ahead of you, waiting for you to pursue them. Only you can decide what that thing you are passionate about is. How can you be expected to give something your all if you don't even truly care about it?

However, in trying your best, there is a dangerous trap that you can fall into; putting everything you can into school or sport or whatever you are pursuing, without balancing this out with other activities will never have good results. So please, do your leisure activities. Enjoy your hobbies, play your sports, go to parties, hang out with friends. Keeping my life balanced by doing these things throughout the year was one of the best decisions I have made, and I cannot stress enough how important such a balance is to succeed in whatever you choose to do.

There is so much on offer for you at this school and outside of it. By getting involved in as much as you can and following where all of your interests lead, you will not only become a more balanced person, but you may well find a new passion, like I did when I started playing guitar at the school, which has become one of my favourite things in the world. By trying everything, you’ll find so many ways to learn and enjoy yourselves in ways you may never have been able to otherwise. It doesn't matter if you are a Year 7, new to the school with a six-year journey ahead of you, or if your time here is almost done and you will be entering the world in a couple of years, it is never too late to try something new.

While keeping a balanced life will absolutely make you study more effectively, as you will be more focused and happier, study will still seem very tiring and very tedious. My best piece of advice to help get through to achieve your best, this is to find things that you enjoy within the subject. For example, when a messy equation in Maths was completed, I would get a little boost in the midst of boring study. Or when a concept in Chemistry was linked particularly nicely to a real-world example, it would make things more interesting and allow me to continue to study for a subject that I found really hard, longer than I would have been able to otherwise. It’s up to you to find these little moments that make you enjoy your subjects just a little bit more. It is definitely tough, but you can find times of enjoyment everywhere if you only seek them out.

Some of your greatest assets in achieving success will be your friends and fellow students. I was extremely lucky to have numerous friends in all of my classes — that both made the subjects more enjoyable, and allowed us all to help each other through the difficult topics. Even just having friends that are motivated in their own separate pathways was incredibly beneficial, as such friends can spark you to be the best version of you just through positive, supportive and fun interaction.

To the year 12s this year, a few practical tips.

* do your practice exams. They may seem tedious, but they are the best way for you to prepare yourselves for the exams at the end of the year
* ask your teachers for help when you need it, they are fantastic sources and all want to help you as much as they can
* try not to fall behind on all of the chapter work you get throughout the year. You will thank yourself when you have three SACs coming up and don’t have to worry about doing six Maths chapters you were given weeks ago
* Year 12 moves insanely fast, so make sure you enjoy it. Go to parties, keep playing sports, do what you love. This can be a truly great year with the right attitude.

Thank you to my amazing family, who have supported and loved me through every step of my life.

Thank you to my fantastic friends, who have made the last few years the best of all, and thank you to my many teachers, who have inspired me and helped me learn more than I ever thought I could, and thank you to MLMC for giving me so much over the last six years.

It is an amazing and a surreal way to end my time here at Mount Lilydale, giving advice to hundreds of students that I have shared this school with. Never once throughout my six years here did I think that I would be giving this speech today. But when you apply yourself, and give your best, anything is possible. Every person in this room has the ability to achieve amazing things. All you have to do is find your passion, chase it, and enjoy life along the way.

Thank you so much for this opportunity, and I wish you all the very best for everything in school and in life.