

The Commissioning of Mrs Penny Curran-Peters Principal's Address

Mr Charles Badenach, Fahan Board Chair, Board members, distinguished guests, fellow principals, staff, parents, alumni and Fahan girls.

I am humbled and privileged to be Fahan School's 11th principal, and I am very conscious of the honour and responsibility conferred on me in being commissioned to lead this remarkable School. I know that I am following in the inspirational steps of those ten principals who have gone before me, and wish to acknowledge the unique and outstanding contribution of each of them. I especially wish to pay tribute to the inimitable Miss Isobel Travers and Miss Audrey Morphett, the founders of Fahan School, whose unapologetically brave and bold vision for girls' education is evident in the education of our Fahan girls today. Miss Travers wrote in 1939 that an education worth having should include:

"First, training in right thinking; that is, training in ability to use their judgement independently. Secondly, flexibility of mind, which is able to grasp the possibilities of the future and to make something of them. Thirdly, trained ability – the ability to do things, and to do them well; in a world where all must play their part it is those who have trained themselves to use their powers who will find the most enjoyment. Finally, a foundation of right principle which will stand them in good stead in times of stress."

How enlightened, how inspiring and how very true this still is today! Miss Travers and Miss Morphett created a unique culture that we uphold, a way of teaching and learning together that continues to offer girls an extraordinary and beautiful home in which they flourish. From the School's inception, Fahan girls have been cared for and educated in an inclusive and dynamic school environment which values individuality, excellence and creativity. This rich and impressive history of advancing and empowering girls who contribute willingly and with great authenticity, has been made visible to me already in my first weeks at Fahan.

Fahan School educates the young women who will drive our nation and our planet deep into the 21st Century with all its complexity, vibrancy and promise. The world our girls inhabit is at once exciting and exacting; a place where the line between myth and reality is often blurred, and where only a combination of grit, action and compassion will make an impact. Education of the whole girl lies at the heart of what we do and I will pursue this quest for excellence in girls' education as unapologetically and courageously as our Founders. My daily practice will be by my moral purpose: to shape the development of rich, engaging and productive learning environments that promote flourish for all members of the School community.

As an educational leader, my mission at Fahan School is to maintain the focus on transformational learning experiences for every girl. I want every girl to learn every day with purpose and with dignity, bringing all of their individual gifts and talents to bear so that they leave school both accomplished and curious with a passion for learning that will last their lifetime. I will promote learning environments that have every teacher and girl's wellbeing at their heart, and encourage students to think for themselves and inquire on a deeper level than ever before. This will be done in collaboration with our outstanding teachers who engage deeply with their students' passion to learn and who seek to enhance the talents of every child.

As I unravel and begin to understand the DNA of Fahan School, I have learnt that the values of this place decided long ago by two extraordinary women, are what drives our present and will drive our shared future. These values are my guiding principles in all that I do at Fahan School, and I am excited by the prospect of the journey ahead for our community. Thank you all for sharing this very special ceremony today. Rod and I have been made to feel so welcome and so at home so quickly and for that we are very grateful to many – grateful to Charles Badenach and Board members for their support of me in this role, and in our transition to a new city, new state and new School. I thank all staff for their generosity, kindness and patience with me as I learn the Fahan way. I thank parents and alumni for your words of support and encouragement in my first weeks at Fahan, and girls – to me you are nothing less than inspiring! Whether you have known it or not, already you have all given me so much. Every day I have gone home with new names and wonderful stories that have sustained me as I make this transition and understand what it means to be a Fahan girl. Thank you, girls, for your smiles and words of welcome, the beautiful cards, messages, and even a wonderfully big, deep coffee mug – which has certainly been used! Many times! Thank you for the visits to my office all the way over in Nateby, the wonderful questions from Year 2 and Year 1 – no one hugs like you do! Please know that your hugs are very special to me.

And so, with the giving of these wonderfully meaningful symbols to a new Principal, a new chapter in the story of Fahan School commences. I am thrilled to be part of this story, I am honoured to be called to School by the sound of this precious gong, and in so doing I commit fully to upholding the position of Principal of Fahan School with care, kindness, dignity and consideration of all who love and serve Fahan School.

Thank you.

Mrs Penny Curran-Peters