

FOR PROSPECTIVE PARENTS AT RIVERVIEW 2017

BY BAS BRAHAM, YEAR 10



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Yesterday I was pulled out of Classical Greek and asked to go to Dr Hine's office, where I was asked if I wanted to give this speech. I was a bit worried. Not so much about coming to see Dr Hine, but more about leaving Mr. Rodgers' Classical Greek class. There are only five of us in that class, so he's prone to noticing when one leaves. And he takes that class very seriously – he's been teaching it for a while. We think maybe he learned his Classical Greek from Socrates, but that could just be a rumor.

Actually it has been a really busy few weeks for me. Last night we had round three of the Mock Trial competition, where I was one of the barristers. We were competing against Marsden High School from West Ryde, and came away with a very narrow victory, so we are into round four. On the weekend, I studied on Sunday, played sport on Saturday, and then stayed and watched the Firsts Rugby beat Waverly. Working backwards, on Friday night I was out at Kincoppel School debating against and beating Aloys to proceed to the ISDA semifinals. I have been debating in this school since year 5 and I have been involved in about four different competitions during that time - from SDN, to CDSA, to ISDA and GPS. Riverview introduced me to debating in year 5, and it has been my Friday nights ever since - my parents have had a tour of just about every school foyer in Sydney.

I've also just finished my exams – always pretty full on. My two electives are Greek and Latin, but I have mates studying agriculture, music, drama, Chinese, French, commerce, engineering, woodwork, elective history, aboriginal studies, and I have probably left a few out. And we all study English, math, science, history, PE and religion.

Actually, when I think about it, every week here is pretty busy. A few weeks ago, we had Tanya Plibersek here for the Hot Potato Shop, talking to the boys about the Union Movement. There is a speaker for the Hot Potato shop here in the Theatre every few weeks and it's always well attended. And for those of you who don't see chess as a spectator sport, you would be wrong. The Inter-House Chess Competition this year had a massive spectator turnout. It was held on third yard, which is the basketball courts, and half the school was there. There were war cries, and a G-up video which is still on YouTube, if you check. The whole school turned up to watch the winner play the final against Dr. Hine and, well, better luck next year Sir.

One of my favorite activities at Riverview has been public speaking, and ever since I arrived here, the school has supported me in that, and in everything else that has caught my attention along the way. You can do just about anything here. If you're Tom Tucker, captain of the Archives, or Finn Macdonald, who is amazing with the violin, or Sam Rigney who sang They Took the Children Away at the Sorry Assembly last week, or even if you're the captain of the Rugby Team, or Bas Braham the nerdy speech kid, not only will the school support you, but you get a lot of support and praise from your peers. I gave a speech the other day at assembly, and since then I have received a lot of nice comments from boys in my year and in other years. I am not sure that happens at every school - but it certainly happens here.

It's not getting any less busy for me either - in two weeks' time I am going off to do service in Central Australia. We will spend two weeks with Father Jack teaching aboriginal kids in a school there and camping in the outback. I'm really looking forward to it. A few weeks ago, my brother in year 12 came back from a KAIROS retreat and last year he went and did a service immersion in Micronesia - which he found amazing.

Whatever your sons decide to do here, they will enjoy. My only advice would be to try everything. There is a lot going on, and nobody forces you to put your hand up for plays and musicals, or debating, or athletics or whatever else is happening, but it is all there, and even if you don't enjoy all of it, you're bound to love some of it. Good luck.