An Acknowledgement of Country is an important way we show respect for Aboriginal people, both past and present, it shows we recognise Aboriginal people as Australia’s first peoples and it shows we respect and value Aboriginal culture and traditions.

The signs you see on both sides of the hall will remind us and future generations of Bass High students’ the importance of this respect for the original inhabitants of the land that we meet on today.

Our enthusiastic singing of the National Anthem also gives me the opportunity to thank the Bass High School classes of 1959, 1960 and 1961 for the National Anthem signs you see on either side of the hall. These were generously donated as a gift to the school following a reunion of students who were here at Bass over 50 years ago.

Welcome students, teachers, year advisors, deputy principals Mr Breccia and Mr Watkins, head teachers, our SRC Presidents, Madeleine Glynatsis and Lewis Nhan, outgoing President Emily Winter, parents and friends, student performers. Once again it is impressive and encouraging to see so many parents and family here to join with us in celebrating student success. A warm welcome to Mrs Alison Bassett (representing the P&C) and a good friend of this school. Ms Tania Mihailuk (the State Member for Bankstown) will join us later in the assembly. We appreciate her support of our school, most particularly for the front of school garden improvements. We have just this week learnt of another successful application to improve student seating around the school. We have received funding to commence renovations for the improvement of our school hall. My thanks to Mrs Winter for her role in securing funding for these school improvements.

We have seen some outstanding award ceremonies throughout the year; thank you to Mr Carosi and his organising team (Ms Chapman, Ms Caon, Ms Forde, Mr Le, Mr Sharp, Mr deJong) for the wonderful job they do in making sure that student achievement is recognised and celebrated in the best possible way.
Thank you to Mr deJong for the video we will see today – these really capture the energy and spirit of Bass and are a great record of what we do.

Today, by my reckoning, 127 students will receive awards ranging from Dux of their Year group, special awards, P&C awards, silver and gold awards. These awards recognise hard work and persistence, excellent attendance, positive attitude, the ability to set goals and to work effectively with others. These are the students we celebrate today and they show us all what it means to be a safe, respectful learner. I also know that many students are working towards these goals and we will soon see them recognised at events like this.

We can sometimes forget how much of significance goes on in this place. From class to excursions, a multitude of sports with many grade and state champions sitting in this assembly today, Zone and CHS Blues award winners, student leadership and SRC, student welfare programs, technology, performance, art, dance, drama, Hospitality, Vocational Education and Training opportunities, careers education and work experience opportunities, camps, homework centres, study skills groups, learning centres, dance festivals, debating, mock trial, a range of numeracy and literacy programs, special education, charity fundraising and volunteering, competitions, assemblies, year meetings, programs with other schools, tutoring and much, much more.

None of this would happen without the teachers who guide, inspire and encourage students to participate in these many opportunities. My thanks to Mr Breccia and Mr Watkins and the executive team for their commitment and leadership across so many aspects of school life and organisation. We acknowledge the work of our dedicated support staff, office staff, teachers aides, general assistant, farm assistant, canteen and cleaning staff. These people work to support our students and our school and I know that our students appreciate them and take opportunities to thank them. The reward for all these people is when they see students achieve and do well.

I would like to recognise the P&C led by Mrs Winter for their outstanding work and support during the year. We have had informative and well-attended P&C meetings,
community computer classes have been conducted, parents have made valuable input into school planning and played a very important role in the selection of a number of new staff to Bass High School.

We sadly also acknowledge staff who are leaving Bass at the end of this year. To Ms Asfour, Mrs Gharbieh (from the Support Unit), Mr Rahim and Ms Halliday (who has been appointed to our new neighbours - George Bass School), Ms Munoz and Mr Allouche. Ms Chan, Ms Caon and Mr Zaronias (our General Assistant) are taking extended leave next year. Congratulations and best wishes to Mr Carosi for his appointment to a country school. Would you please join me in acknowledging the contribution these people have made to Bass High.

All of these things happened this year but I will finish by reminding you of the important timetable changes beginning next year. We move to extended lessons and a five-period day in 2014. Every day will start at 9am sharp, not with homeroom but with period 1; rolls will be marked electronically at the start of every period, we will have different recess and lunch breaks and the school day will end at 3pm, Tuesday’s at 2.40pm. Remember these important changes and factor them into your planning and organisation for the new year. You can find more detailed information on the school’s website.

In the meantime though, I wish you a restful, peaceful and safe holiday season. Let’s now take this opportunity to acknowledge, celebrate, and enjoy some great student achievement.

Thank you.