Welcome to students from years 10, 11, 12; our SRC hosts Olivia and Emilija, parents and friends, student performers, teachers, year advisors (Ms Breccia, Mr King, Mr Azar), head teachers, deputy principals. Special thanks to the organising committee led by Mr Carosi who do a great job to make sure we acknowledge our ROSE recipients in the best possible way.

It is very encouraging to once again see great support from parents, families and friends - thank you for joining us this morning and congratulations on the achievements of your child.

The reason we are here is to celebrate the 44 students who will receive ROSE awards today.

My congratulations to all these students. They show us how to be a successful learner and they show us how important it is to work cooperatively with teachers. To our year 12 students I ask you to keep working hard, focus on preparing for the HSC, work with your teachers and use all the resources (your teachers, after school tutorials, learning centre, and much more) that are there for you.

Our ROSE award winners are obviously good at dealing with new things and thinking about new ways of doing things. They are also willing to just give something a go. As human beings we sometimes feel very comfortable if things continue just the way we are used to – the opposite of course is that sometimes we feel uncomfortable or even a little threatened by the thought of change. That is a pretty normal reaction from most of us. The reality of our 21st century lives though, is that we are in a world that is seeing more change now than at any time in human history. Think of the new technologies, new ways of doing things that are seemingly happening every other week. Have you ever wondered what your life will be like – what the world will look like in 20, 30 or 50 years time? These things are big - very big changes. But we are also changing things in our own way, here at Bass. And it is in this context that I am going to take this opportunity to talk to you this morning about some of the new things we will be trying here at Bass next year.

You would have heard about the changes we have planned for the organisation of our school next year. In 2014 we will introduce a 5-period day and extend lessons to 60 minutes with new recess and lunch times. While they might not seem like radical changes – we are only adding an extra 10 minutes to create longer lessons – we need to prepare and think about these changes.
We have discussed these new arrangements with teachers and staff, parents (at a recent P&C meeting), parents have received a letter detailing the changes, we have briefed students through the SRC and there is information on the school’s website you can access. We have received spoken and written feedback from all of these groups.

What will this change look like? Well, as I have said, we are extending lessons to 60 minutes to create a 5-period day. To do this we will start lessons from the very beginning of the day not homeroom as we do now. The things we have covered in homeroom, including roll mark will be covered in other ways – such as regular year meetings – and regular formal year meetings – which incidentally will happen for the first time at the end of this term. Teachers will mark their rolls electronically every lesson and the day will start at 9.00am sharp with period 1 – not 9.15 as we now do for period 1. Senior students may have what we call period zero lessons – or lessons starting early with a corresponding early leave. Everyone will finish school at 3.00pm and you will always have just one lesson after lunch before the end of the day.

We feel these changes will allow students and teachers more time to focus on lesson content and to be able to take more time to experience greater variety in a typical lesson. The new arrangements will also significantly reduce the number of transitions or changes from one lesson to the next during the day – that means less movement around the school (what we call transitions) and this is better for a orderly school learning environment.

It is important that you think about these changes and prepare yourself for them. Being prepared for longer lessons, the prompt start at 9.00am to the school day, the new arrangements for recess and lunch and the implications for parents, for instance, of the day finishing at 3.00pm.

Once again, congratulations to all our award recipients and to those of you who are working towards an award. For all students I ask that in the spirit of our award winners you give these changes a go. I know you will adapt and take advantage of these changes and always look for ways to improve and extend your understanding and your learning. I know you will see these changes as an opportunity to do even better.

Thank you.