Good evening, staff, students, parents and distinguished guests, it is once again that special occasion where we come to reflect on the year that has passed before us. A time to look back on all the good memories we have shared with our friends, our families and for the boys in the Boarding house, our brothers. A quote from Susan Merrell explains that, “Our brothers are there with us from the dawn of our personal stories to the inevitable dusk.”

Now what better place to start then the Boarding Community, where together, dawn, dusk, and the life in between are experienced for us brothers, over the time shared at Mazenod? I’m now going to take you on a journey through time, back to February 2008, when a young group of individuals, appeared at the homely doorstep of the Mazenod Boarding House. This was a very scary sight, as we were in the unknown and unfamiliar, I’m sure all the boys can agree, and was further developed after having travelled far and wide, from as south as Albany to as north as Tom Price, to reach the destination which would be our home for the next 5 years. Of course the first day brings many tears from the eyes of both the boys and the parents, however, looking back on it now, I’m sure some of the tears shed by the parents were ones of joy and excitement now that they have peace and quiet back in the household, and I have a feeling this is quite true in my case especially.

As the first few days passed, homesickness began to arise amongst the boys and as we were all feeling the same way, we would usually comfort each other by sitting in a group and arguing about who had the biggest tractor or the most amount of sheep on their farm. This was our main cure until we arrived at the long weekends and holidays where we could once again reunite with our family.

The time in boarding goes so quick, before you know it, the year has passed and you’re back at home with the family enjoying the summer holidays. But then something strange happens...you feel like something’s missing... like you want to go back to school for some reason, and yes I know how strange this sounds, like who’d want to give up their holidays for school? But over the years I’ve come to realise why we feel this need to come back. It’s our mates in boarding, our brothers, all 100 and something of them. While we are back on our farms or, in our country towns we feel content and relieved and a sense of peace fills our heart. However as the days pass we have a desire inside us for this Boarding family, this bond and relationship in which grows, this brotherhood between the boarders that shines through, such as on the sports carnivals and the tug of war where it can be seen radiating off each and every boarder. Its indescribable, the power such a bond can have on a growing young man. We start to find our family, within the Boarding House and where the house mums, Sister Frances, the supervisors, and especially the boys themselves, become our support and pillars that carry us towards this ultimate dusk. The dusk in which us Year 12 boarders are approaching in the next few days when we spend our last day together and depart into the world. This will close the last chapter of our Mazenod life and especially our Boarding life in which the time will come to leave as brothers from the community, soon gone but never forgotten and journey into the future that awaits us.