

**Welcome and introduction of**  
**New South Wales Minister for Education, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP,**  
**by the Warden of St Paul's College, Dr Don Markwell,**  
**at Dinner at St Paul's College within the University of Sydney,**  
**Monday 18 March 2019**

It is a great honour to welcome to College tonight, along with our College Council, the State Minister for Education, the Honourable Rob Stokes MP. We are immensely grateful to the Minister for joining us – giving us an opportunity to express to him our profound thanks for his invaluable help to the College in facilitating the passage last year of what is now the St Paul's College Act 2018 – modernising the governance of the College, the first legislative change to how the College is governed since 1857.

Minister Stokes could not have been more helpful to the College last year in supporting and guiding through Parliament the legislation to reform the governance of the College – reforming the College Council which sets the strategy and policy framework for the College, and (amongst other things) enabling a lay person to be Warden of the College.

One important element of the Minister's help was his bipartisan work on our Bill with the Shadow Minister for Education, Mr Jihad Dib MP, and encouraging us to work with Mr Dib. This contributed to the St Paul's College Bill passing both houses of Parliament without opposition or amendment. Mr Dib regrets that he cannot be with us tonight, and we look forward to his joining us here at College at a later date.

Amongst other things, the new St Paul's College Act reduces the size of the College Council, and facilitates greater diversity in its membership. Two long-serving, much-loved and much-valued members of the old Council, the Hon Lloyd Waddy AM RFD QC, and Bishop Richard Hurford OAM, are retiring from the Council at the end of this month – Bishop Hurford after 18 years on the Council, and Mr Waddy after 48 years on Council. Would you join me in thanking Mr Waddy and Bishop Hurford for their outstanding service to the College?

Our guest of honour tonight is Rob Stokes MP. Minister Stokes was educated at Shore and then at Macquarie University, where he earned several degrees – a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Laws, a Masters of Law, and a doctorate of philosophy in planning law. He has also earned a Diploma of Biblical Studies, and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice; and an MSc in Geography from Oxford. Before entering State Parliament in 2007 as the Liberal Member for Pittwater, Minister Stokes served as a lawyer, as a law lecturer, and as a policy adviser to the State Opposition Leader. Since the election of the Coalition Government in 2011, he has held several front-bench positions largely reflecting interests he had pursued for many years – for renewable energy, the environment, the Central Coast, heritage, and planning. Under Premier Berejiklian, Dr Rob Stokes has very fittingly been the Minister for Education since January 2017.

We are delighted that Minister Stokes is with us tonight, and it is my pleasure to call on him to address us.