

**Welcome and introduction of**

**Mr Jihad Dib MP,**

**by the Warden of St Paul's College, Dr Don Markwell,**

**at Dinner at St Paul's College, the University of Sydney,**

**Monday 19 August 2019**

It is a great privilege to welcome to the College Mr Jihad Dib MP. As members of the College know, Mr Dib – then Shadow Minister for Education in the State Parliament - worked very closely with the College last year on the governance reforms that led to the passage of the *St Paul's College Bill* through State Parliament without opposition or amendment in either House of Parliament – the first new legislation on the governance of this College since the *St Paul's College Act* of 1857!

We are enormously grateful to Mr Dib, including for the non-partisan way in which he and then Education Minister Rob Stokes MP worked together on this legislation, and the spirit of understanding and goodwill that Mr Dib brought, not only to our governance reform, but to the vital cultural renewal on which the College has embarked, especially coming out of the Broderick Report and our Action Plan for Cultural Renewal. In supporting our governance changes, Mr Dib made clear that he and the Opposition, like the Government, would continue to watch what we are doing in cultural renewal, and to hold us to our word and to the high values and standards to which we are committed. At the heart of this is respect and dignity for all, regardless of gender, race, religion, or other irrelevant factor.

Mr Dib is himself a celebrated educational reformer who has deep experience of cultural renewal. A school teacher and school principal before he entered State Parliament as the Labor Member for Lakemba in 2015, Mr Dib had come to national prominence as the principal of Punchbowl Boys High School from 2007 to 2014 – transforming what had been described as a “battle zone” into an award-winning school with reduced absenteeism, increased morale, enrolments double what they had been, and greatly improved academic results. The culture of the school was transformed. One element of Mr Dib’s approach is something we strongly encourage here at St Paul’s – students actively engaging with the wider community.

After such outstanding achievement in school leadership, and with such passion for education, not long after entering State Parliament Mr Dib was made the Shadow Minister for Education, serving with enthusiasm and distinction in that role from March 2016 until July this year, when he took on the multiple related roles of Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, for Youth, and for Juvenile Justice, and Shadow Minister Assisting on Multiculturalism. Mr Dib’s background and experience equip him superbly for these roles also.

Mr Dib was born in Lebanon in 1973. His family migrated to Australia when he was two years old. After graduating from the University of Wollongong in the same year as Erin, the Japanese teacher who became his wife and with whom he has had three children, he taught at Ulladulla High School before becoming Principal of Punchbowl Boys High at the age of 33. His contributions to the wider community included serving on the Australia Day Council of New South Wales, the NSW Police Commissioner’s Advisory Panel, and the SBS Community Advisory Committee. In 2015, he became the first Muslim MP in the NSW Legislative Assembly.

It was a great pleasure to work with Mr Dib last year on our legislation, including showing him around the College then, and it is a great pleasure to welcome him back to the College tonight and to call on him to address us.