

**REVISED VERSION**

**ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE – 130<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

***His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR***

***Governor of South Australia***

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2010**

- **Mr Des Caulfield, Chairman of the St Aloysius College Board**
- **Sister Judith Redden, Principal of St Aloysius College**
- **Board members, staff and former staff; students and old scholars; parents and friends of St Aloysius College**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

This Garden Party is the first of the major celebrations marking the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in South Australia and the foundation of St Aloysius College.

Liz and I are delighted to welcome many of today's Sisters of Mercy to Government House for this memorable occasion.

It is also a pleasure to welcome past and present students and staff of St Aloysius College. I can see that many old scholars have travelled from interstate to attend the Garden Party today - a sure sign of their attachment to their alma mater.

From the time of their arrival in South Australia, the Sisters of Mercy have made significant contributions to the well being of the people of this State.

Twenty-four Sisters of Mercy arrived in Adelaide from Buenos Aires in Argentina in 1880 in response to a request from Archbishop Reynolds, Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide. What adventurous women they must have been.

Twelve of the 24 Sisters of Mercy remained in Adelaide, initially establishing St Aloysius College, and in due course opening schools in a number of city and country parishes including Goodwood, Parkside, Henley Beach, Albert Park, Elizabeth, Victor Harbor and Riverton.

In 1954 Mercedes College was opened by the Sisters of Mercy, and the boarders from St Aloysius College were transferred to the new College.

The other twelve Sisters of Mercy travelled to Mt Gambier and began their ministry to the people of the South East. The Sisters established schools in Mt Gambier, Naracoorte and Millicent.

At the time of their arrival in South Australia the most pressing need was the provision of education. The Sisters dedicated themselves to this endeavour, and soon established successful education institutions which were inclusive of students from all walks of life.

Following the Vatican Council in the 1960s, the Sisters of Mercy re-established their ministries and, in response to pressing social needs, established a range of ministries beyond schools.

These included prison, hospital, refugee and parish ministries. Sisters of Mercy became involved in indigenous communities in the far north of South Australia, in Alice Springs and in the Kimberly region of Western Australia. The Sisters also continued to work in education in Papua New Guinea and Pakistan. Sister Patricia Pak Poy dedicated her time to working for the campaign to ban land mines in both the national and international arenas.

Further examples of the extension of Mercy ministries can be seen in the local area surrounding St Aloysius College.

It became in effect a 'Mercy precinct' as the Sisters commenced new works of Mercy, including the opening of the Moore Street Centre for Homeless Persons, the establishment of Carrington Cottages for homeless men, and the opening of Catherine House as a refuge for women and children needing a safe haven.

St Aloysius College students and staff have an active engagement with these significant works of Mercy which surround the College.

In addition, as part of the outreach to those beyond their immediate boundaries, St Aloysius College has formed a strong relationship with the Sisters of Mercy in Argentina.

Every two years, a group of students and staff travel to Buenos Aires to support the Sisters of Mercy in their ministries to the poor. This keeps alive the link between St Aloysius College and the Adelaide Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, and the Argentinian Sisters of Mercy who carried on the work of the six Sisters who returned to Argentina from South Australia in 1890.

There are many eminent old scholars of St Aloysius College. Today I mention only two: The Honourable Dame Roma Mitchell, former Governor of South Australia, and Sister Deirdre Jordan, Chancellor Emeritus of Flinders University, the first person in Australia to be granted this title, and the first South Australian woman to be awarded the Companion of the Order of Australia.

They have set great examples of high achievement, coupled with a curiosity about the world and a determined commitment to enhancing the wellbeing of others.

St Aloysius College has indeed a story to celebrate!

One could say that 130 years after the first Sisters' arrived, much has changed. But the value of education, and the values behind education, are enduring.

In a rapidly evolving world, education is the key to the survival of our way of life. And I mean education in its broadest sense - education beyond the 3 R's. Education that encompasses a moral framework. Education that helps us establish our sense of identity, and develops our sense of community – not just the local community but also the global community of which we are inevitably a part.

This sense of responsibility encourages us to reach out to the less fortunate in our society, whether close to home or far beyond, to ensure that they too have the blessing of a high quality and broadly-based education – it is this reaching out that St Aloysius does very well.

I wish to congratulate the Sisters of Mercy for their extraordinary achievements in many fields, but particularly today we celebrate the achievements of St Aloysius College, 130 years after it was opened by its fearless founders.

Liz and I were thoroughly impressed when we visited the school last year.

We saw a school that was clearly focussed on academic achievement but also a school with a very strong emphasis on community and social equity. We met a Principal with enormous passion and compassion which appears undiminished despite more than 27 years in the role. Her leadership has been characterised by forward thinking in an environment of change, and by a clear devotion to advancing the interests of the community. In this way, she has provided a role model to other schools in reaching out to the less fortunate.

We wish Sister Judith Redden and her team the very best for the future, as we do to all past, present and future supporters of St Aloysius College.

Please enjoy the celebrations.