



Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ex-students join panel for OLMC Parramatta Women in Leadership Forum

On Wednesday 26 May, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta held its fourth annual **Women in Leadership Forum** in the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre.

Students, staff and families were joined by alumnae and visitors from other schools at this inspirational evening. The event was a chance to hear from a panel of women which included OLMC ex-students Melanie Silva (VP, Managing Director for Google Australia and New Zealand, from the OLMC Class of 1994) and Dr Natalie Galea (Academic, Activist and Olympian, from the OLMC Class of 1991), along with Professor Deborah Richards (Department of Computing at Macquarie University) and Michelle Lee (Adventurer and Athlete).

The speakers imparted their perspectives on women and leadership, sharing their stories of successes, opportunities and challenges, with honesty and humility. OLMC Parramatta ex-students Melanie and Natalie reflected on their positive experiences at the College, both concluding that OLMC imbued in them a strong conviction that it was possible for them to achieve anything. "I walked out of OLMC thinking that I can do whatever I want to do," said Melanie. She went on to implore those present to "stay curious, follow your passions and take some risks because you will always learn from them." Natalie continued in a similar theme, highlighting that, whilst at OLMC, she felt a strong feeling of fierceness, that anything was possible, and that social justice could be achieved.

Professor Deborah Richards focussed on the qualities of leadership, describing good leaders as consultative: "They listen and respect other people's goals, beliefs and values – understanding that each person is their own person with unique experiences. She shared her belief that being a leader means being someone who is worthy of being followed. Adventurer and Athlete Michelle Lee focused on the importance of being true to yourself and connecting emotionally with your goal: "by following my heart and being true to my compass, I found my purpose."

Principal Lucie Farrugia said she was inspired by their messages of courage and service and how they resonated with our Mercy community: "This was an extraordinary night where all our speakers have inspired and ignited in us a sense of limitless possibilities."

Established in 1889, OLMC Parramatta is a leading independent Catholic girls' school which provides contemporary and innovative learning in the rich Mercy tradition. As one of the oldest Catholic Girls' schools in NSW, our rich history of excellence inspires our young Mercy women to expand beyond what they know they can be and to lead with courage and act justly, making a difference in an ever-changing world.

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