Good evening and, on behalf of De La Salle College, a big welcome to our Centenary Dinner.

It is my pleasure to welcome to De La Salle College for the first time, the Honourable the Premier, Mr Ted Bailleau and Mrs Bailleau. We appreciate your taking time to celebrate with us this evening. Mrs Bailleau has a direct connection with De La Salle – her brother, Thomas, was a graduate of the Class of 89, having commenced in Grade 4, 1981. Mrs Bailleau herself is a former student of Kildara.

We welcome Mr Micheal OBrien, the member for Malvern in the State Legislative Assembly and the Minister for Gaming, Energy & Resources, & Consumer Affairs. Michael is a Marist Old boy from Marcellin, but we are an inclusive community so you are still among friends. Thank you for joining us.

Ms Kelly Dwyer is an apology this evening because of ill health.

I acknowledge the presence this evening of the Brother Visitor, Brother Ambrose Payne AO, Provincial of the District of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. Also attending this evening is Brother Mark McEwen (T.6) who is the Brother Visitor elect and will assume responsibilities as Provincial in January, 2013. Thank you both for joining us.

Brother Christopher Gorringe, Chairman of the College Board, apologises for his absence this evening but he is recovering from an operation.

Distinguished Guests, College Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very big welcome to you all.
I want to begin by reading from the letter I received last Tuesday from Government House, Canberra. (I quote) “Dear Bro Paul, I write to wish you and your College community a joyous celebration at the Gala Dinner to mark one hundred years of contribution to education in the proud tradition of the Lasallian ethos. I admire and respect your tireless efforts to provide opportunities for learning and teaching with professional skill and fine values and principles of service, dedication and compassion. With kind regards. Quentin Bryce” (unquote) So even the Governor General has noted that De La Salle is celebrating this evening!!!

Our dinner has significance because it has brought together almost 1,000 people who have some connection with De La Salle College during its 100 years. We are glad that you are here. Special acknowledgement must be given to the two newest Lasallians in the room – the parents whose Primary 4 son only started in De La last Monday. I should add – they asked if there were tickets AFTER their son was accepted.
The first three Irish Brothers, pictured on screen, to arrive in Malvern were Brothers Jerome Foley (seated at left), Leopold Loughran and Brother Dunstan Drumm. Brother Jerome was to have a long and illustrious career in Australia as Principal of De La Salle, 1929 – 1946 and Provincial, 1946 - 56. This evening we have present with us two great grand nieces of Brother Jerome – Anna & Emma Kennedy (Table 4). We are delighted that you could join us.
De La Salle commenced with 57 students who enrolled on day 1, 5th February, 1912. There were four Morgan boys in those initial enrolments (pictured here in a family photograph in 1912) – one became a De la Salle Brother – Brother Damien, and their sister joined the Poor Clares in 1913 and spent most of her life in France. Today we have the fourth generation of Morgan family in De La Salle.

A current parent is 3rd generation Old Collegian, John Morgan (T. 11). John has been the driver for the Premier for the past seven years. Now you see the connection! Mr Premier, your presence is a great honour to John Morgan whose family were pioneer students in De La Salle College.

I also acknowledge the descendants of Joe Horrigan (1912) and Joseph Magree (1917) present this evening. Joe and Joseph’s great grandsons are now 4th generation students in De La. Many of you present here this evening are part of a 3 generational connection. This photo depicts the boys currently studying in De La Salle College who are either 4th or 3rd generation Lasallians.
Our early students never forgot their roots. Among them is Jack French (class of 1940, T 16), at 88 yrs still going strong! Jack may possibly be one of our oldest guests this evening. Our pleasure to have you with us, Jack.

I acknowledge the presence of John Hogan (Class of 1950, T. 25) our most recent Benefactor of the Brothers Institute. Our congratulations to you, John, and thank you for journeying down from Canberra to be with us.

At this point I also pay tribute to the memory of Albert Higgins (Class of 1925, pictured above) who passed away at 99 years in Feb, 2010. He bequeathed to the Principal of the College a sum of $500,000.00 to be used for Scholarships for needy students. It is the most significant bequest the College has ever received. The initial Scholarships, in Bert’s name, will commence in 2013.
The College has always remembered our Old Collegians who fought for our country. The most recent soldier to die in Afghanistan is Sgt Blaine Diddams, SAS, was a member of the class of Yr 10,1987. His name will soon be added to our memorial located near the Tower building.

The College has produced people of every trade, profession and achievement possible. Among them we recognise Rhodes Scholars, politicians, Judges, significant medical and legal professionals, Olympians, leaders of business and industry, teachers, an Archbishop and 2 Bishops, and many priests and De La Salle Brothers.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of 19 De La Salle Brothers with us this evening, including three former Principals: Brothers Calixtus Cusack (1970), Peter Smythe (1989-1994), and Tim Peter (1997 – 2004). Brothers, you all stand in the tradition of our first Brothers who came to Melbourne in 1912. It is their legacy we inherited and our College is built on the traditions they established for us and which we still enjoy in De La Salle College today. I welcome all Brothers here this evening.

And I welcome our lay colleagues who stand alongside the Brothers in our special work of delivering a Christian and human education to young people, especially the poor. The Brothers have worked in collaboration with our lay partners in De La Salle since John Maher came to teach with the Brothers in De La Salle in 1920. There was a long period when we had no lay teachers.
Lay partners returned post war. Among those pioneers – interestingly were three women: Mrs Campbell (joined us in 1950 and shared Gr 3 & 4 with Brother Gerard Rummery), Mrs Mitchell (1952) and Miss Mercovitch (1953) who taught speech to the secondary classes. I acknowledge the first lay person to act as Principal, Peter Riordan, also present. Lay staff - you are an inherent part of our Lasallian tradition. I acknowledge your significance presence this evening and contribution to the life of the College.

To all of you, Brothers and our lay partners in De La Salle, thank you for all you have done, and continue to do in the name of De La Salle College. Our next 100 years look very promising indeed.
The College began because of the persistent tenacity of the Malvern parish priest of the time, a member of the Vincentian Order, Fr Simon Hegarty CM (pictured above), who had feverishly chased the Brothers to come to Melbourne. When the Brothers arrived in Melbourne on 3rd Feb, 1912, they were given one day before 3 classes began in the former parish church - and each class separated by hession cloth.

Within three months Fr Hegarty had completed a new building (pictured) in Stanhope St (West) which was to become our home for the next 17 years.
The desire to extend to secondary classes meant that we would need bigger premises so the parish purchased the property, Manresa, and built us an iconic building on the corner of Stanhope and Dalny Streets – The Tower building.

At the same time the parish gave the College the loan of a house at the corner of Stanhope and Irving streets, Tiverton, which was to house our boarders from 1930 – 1937. In that year they were moved to St Bede’s as the first students in that new College.

The Brothers purchased the property and Tower building from the parish in 1939 and we were now the proud owners, for the first time, of De La Salle College, Malvern.
The association with the Vincentians was to resume in 1971 with the appointment of Father Les Troy CM to the position of chaplain.

Fr Les Troy CM remained with us until his retirement in 1996 and passed away in April, 2011. He is fondly remembered in the College.

Tonight we welcome the parish priest of Malvern – a Vincentian priest and old boy of De La Salle Ashfield (Sydney) – Fr Laurie McNamara. We will always be immensely grateful to Fr Hegarty and all those parish priests who followed him. Thank you for being with us this evening, Fr Laurie McNamara.
In 1953, a clever move by a group of Old Boys, led by Frank Toohey, (who is now an Affiliated member of the Brothers), acquired Fairlight and then Kinnoull and so the school had an opportunity to grow even further. Over time (1941 – 2005) the College acquired 9 houses and a block of 6 flats to complete the Tiverton campus. The first house on High Street, purchased in 1941, cost $2,100.00. We cannot afford to buy any more – if we could purchase at 1940’s prices we might consider it. As we move into our 101st year, we are preparing for substantial renovations and improvements on our original site.

De La Salle has grown and changed over the years.

We have moved from grey suits and small caps to our current and distinctive post-war blazer.

We have grown from 3 classrooms for 27 boys, separated by hession, to a large two-campus college of 1200 boys separated by High Street.

We have grown from a college staff of 3 Brothers only to a College that now has 150 staff with only 2 Brothers.

We have grown from a poor school where many could not pay fees to a College with a social justice program that stretches from the Philippines to India.

We have grown from a school too small to have football teams to a College that also has a very successful Old Collegians Football Club in A Division Amateurs. And we wish them the best in the final series almost upon us.
Finally, in 2012 we have been celebrating our 100 birthday! 100 years since the day the College opened its doors.

We had special tram to launch the year; a spectacular race day at Caulfield in the Black Caviar Pavilion; and a Golf day on the illustrious Huntingdale course and a great story-telling dinner.
The Old Collegians Mass was the occasion for the launch of our pictorial history by Brother Kevin Moloney fsc (Past Provincial and Old Collegian), put together by Old Collegians Nick Quinn (1963), a photographer, and Steve Stefanopoulos (class of 1992). The book is a fine tribute to their dedication to De La Salle and their passion to produce a work of outstanding quality. I also express our thanks to Brother Gerard Rummery (Class of 1947) who wrote a magnificent historical summary for the introduction. Please make sure you take one home with you.

We only have one more event to conclude our year and that will be the blessing of our Centenary Chapel at Kinnoull by Archbishop Hart on a date yet to be announced.
Behind our year has been a very special group of people – the Centenary Committee and I ask you to stand as I name you.

Mrs Patsy Blight, Mrs Genie Scott, Mrs Robyn Brasher, Mrs Kerry Martin, Mr Tim Ford, Mr Bernie Dunn, Mr Barry Lyons, and Mrs Virginia Fairchild.

To each of you, thank you sincerely for all your good work in making the year what it has been, and tonight, the success that I know it will be. You have been an extraordinary group, a fantastic team, an inspiration. On behalf of all of us – thank you.

To the staff of De La Salle who have assisted to bring so many of our plans this year to fruition, I thank you. Big or small, every effort has counted. It is all part of our extraordinary effort, so thank you.
I also wish to thank the College Leaders, evident in their distinctive De La blazers this evening, who are here to assist with the finer details of this evening. Thank you for your presence and for the exemplary leadership you have brought to the College in our centenary year.

Ladies and gentleman, a big welcome to our once in 100 years ..........our De La Salle Centenary Dinner.

God bless you and have a wonderful evening.