

Domremy College - Celebration of Excellence 2025

Keynote address by Dr Rosemary Habib – Class of 2003

Good evening Principal, staff, students, families, and the Domremy community. Thank you for welcoming me back to Domremy, a place that still feels familiar even after all these years.

I first walked through the gates of Domremy as a 12 year old who had just arrived back in Australia, after spending most of my formative years in Lebanon - I was unsure of where I fit, holding both hope and uncertainty. Domremy was like home, a place where I felt steady, supported, and capable of growing into my future.

Tonight we celebrate excellence, not only in academic achievement, but in the service, leadership, creativity and compassion that continue to define this community. And it's important to remember that excellence is almost never a straight or predictable path. It is shaped by the quiet effort that no one witnesses, the choices you make when they seem small and the values you hold onto when it would be easier to let them go.

During my time at Domremy, I didn't realise how well this place was preparing me. But looking back now, it's unmistakable. My teachers didn't just teach subjects; they taught discipline, curiosity and the courage to try. They gave me room to stumble safely and encouragement to rise again. They helped me feel that I belonged and it was that sense of belonging that became powerful fuel for my ambition.

From here, I went on to study pharmacy and then medicine. I became a medical oncologist, walking alongside people and families during the most vulnerable moments of their lives. I completed a PhD to honour my belief that knowledge saves lives. I now work across health, research, teaching, ethics and advocacy - fields I never expected to enter when I was a student sitting where you are now. And yet each step, each achievement and moment of purpose, was built on the foundation formed right here, in this community that once welcomed a shy girl from Lebanon and told her she could shine.

But the journey was never a straight line. Along every path I took, there were highs and lows. There were moments of certainty and moments when I had no idea where the path would lead. I took roads that were unfamiliar, but following then led me to opportunities and accomplishments beyond anything I could have imagined for myself. I worked hard, I made mistakes and I learned from each one. It was those lessons, far more than the successes, that shaped who I am today.

What sustained me was not brilliance or luck. It was perseverance: the decision to keep going when things felt difficult, the commitment to show up again the next day and the belief that steady effort would eventually create something meaningful. And it always did.

This is what I want you to take with you tonight: you do not need to have your whole future mapped out to begin building it. Some of the most defining moments of your life will come from stepping forward before you feel ready. Dedication, consistency and a willingness to learn will take you further than you can imagine.

Each one of you has the capacity to make a real difference. Whether your passion lies in science, the arts, leadership, community work, or something you've yet to discover, it is your commitment to showing up, working hard and holding fast to your values that will shape the mark that you leave on the world.

As students of Domremy, you stand in a tradition that calls you *to let your light shine true*. Not someone else's light. Not the version of yourself that you think you "should" be. Your own light - shaped by your story, your resilience and your hope.

And so, to the students here tonight: treasure your experiences, honour your values and trust in your ability to make a difference. Even when the path feels unclear, even when the challenge feels bigger than you - just keep going. You never know where that courage may lead.

And to the staff and community who continue to guide and nurture these young women: thank you for shaping our futures and inspiring greatness. Your belief in your students has echoed far beyond the classroom.

Congratulations to all the award recipients. Your dedication has been extraordinary. And to every student here tonight: your growth, your potential and the promise you carry are just as worthy of celebration. You are all building foundations that will shape your future, whether you can see it yet or not.

Thank you.