

Tyson Bradley – Prefect (Sport)

Keynote Speech 2026

I want to start by reflecting on one of my first days at BGS. I started in Year 10, moving from a public school which I loved, so naturally it was a bit tough. However, I vividly remember sitting in the Annandale Library looking out onto the Mitchell Oval. It sounds weird to say it now, something that is a part of our everyday lives, something so normal, but with the sun shining down, the crest on the uniform glowing, and of course, not a blade of the synthetic grass out of place, I was in awe.

I think I may have sat there just watching the PE class run around on the Mitchell the whole lesson. At this moment, I wasn't worried about my old school, I wasn't worried about my new friends at this school, I was just so grateful to be where I was at that moment. I was grateful to be at the school that is BGS.

Good morning, Mr Featherston, Mr Angus, Dr Swann, Ms Clark, staff, boys, my parents and my brother. Now let me take a second to rephrase that. I am grateful for you Mr Featherston, for you Mr Angus, for you Dr Swann, for you Ms Clark, for you teachers, for you boys and for my family.

Before I start, boys I want you to take a second to pause and think about how you got to school today. Who influenced you?

Maybe you were driven by a family member. Maybe you rode on your birthday present bike from your parents. Maybe you walked and crossed the road with the lollipop person. My point is, almost none of you got here alone. Even if you did, someone washed your shirt, even smiled at you as you walked into school. These things seem like nothing, they seem normal, they seem a given, but they are some of the most special things we get the privilege to experience each day. It is easy for us to expect these things daily, to assume they are the basics everyone gets, but I don't think we give them the time to truly appreciate them.

It only takes a few seconds.

Let me explain how impactful gratefulness can truly be.

Sam Docherty is a hero, a warrior of the AFL landscape who many of you may know. However, not all of you may know his story. I have had the privilege to listen to him speak on his illustrious but difficult career.

Within his footy career alone, Sam Docherty is a man who has faced three torn ACLs with surgery each time, over 16 total surgeries, being rushed in and out of hospital, and has also faced cancer twice.

If you put his footy to the side, as a person, he has had a LOT to deal with, on its own a tough battle. Now add the fact he wanted to get back to becoming a supreme athlete who performs at the highest

level in front of 100,000 people. The thoughts racing through his mind at his darkest moments are almost unimaginable. Listening to him, he struggled to deal with all these troubles. Especially when he was younger, like many in this room.

His road to recovery and becoming one of the best players in the AFL, just years after his battle with cancer, wasn't easy, but he kept coming back to his sense of gratitude for the people, the places and the things around him.

Yes he worked hard, yes it took time, but he said his appreciation for his life that he did have allowed him to stay positive, to stay optimistic and to become the man he aspired to be.

As a teenage boy like many of you, I was shocked and inspired by this story, but I was thinking what you guys may be thinking, how can I do this? Especially with busy days, aspirations, worries, and emotions. I sat there listening, wondering how I could be grateful for my life without getting caught up in all the traffic.

An answer Sam Docherty gave me, which is simple, but has proved effective for him.

Habit stacking.

He made being grateful a habit of his, to take a moment to stop, be present, and think of something he is grateful for.

It may be that first sip of coffee in the morning, which allows you to take that moment to think of someone you are grateful to have in your life. It may be as you walk out the front door, to take a few seconds to be grateful for something you're looking forward to that day. These things that you're grateful for can be big, like the support of the BGS community around your academics, or they can be small, like the green trees on your walk to school.

Often, these are the things that we experience every day. So be grateful for the Mitchell Oval. In these moments, it allows you to be free from your stresses, your worries, it allows you to be filled with appreciation, with love, with positivity. It doesn't seem like much, but if you repeat these habits daily, weekly, or monthly, it has an impact. A greater impact than you'd think. Such an impact that it can turn your life around, just like Sam Docherty has done.

I believe a life can only be as good as you choose it to be. So enjoy the sun, enjoy your mates, enjoy the struggles, enjoy the challenges.

Enjoy the little things. Be grateful for them.

And if you enjoy enough of the little things, they become a big thing.

Thanks.