

Sandro Macnab – Prefect (Hancock House Captain)

Keynote Speech 2026

‘Nothing that has meaning is easy.’

Actor Michael Caine’s words capture a truth that most of us eventually learn: the things we value most are rarely handed to us. They demand effort, patience, courage and, often, failure.

Think about any achievement that has genuinely mattered to you. It might be improving at a sport, earning a place in a team, passing a difficult subject, repairing a friendship or becoming more confident. None of these things happen instantly. They require us to continue when progress feels slow, when motivation disappears and when giving up seems far easier.

Good morning, Mr Featherston, my family, staff and boys.

The easy option is usually choosing comfort. It asks very little of us, but because it asks very little, it often gives very little back.

Meaning is created through struggle.

A victory matters because of the training behind it. A good result matters because of the hours of study, the mistakes and the discipline. A friendship matters because people choose to support one another even when circumstances are difficult.

This does not mean that suffering is always valuable, or that we should make life harder than it needs to be. It means that worthwhile goals involve responsibility. They force us to grow. When we face challenges, we discover qualities that comfort cannot reveal.

There will always be moments when we doubt ourselves. We may fail an assessment, lose an important game or feel that our efforts are leading nowhere. In those moments, it is easy to believe that difficulty is proof that we are not capable.

But difficulty is not always a warning to stop. Sometimes, it is evidence that we are attempting something important.

We should remember why we began. We should take the next step, even if it is small.

Now this year, we are part of something that has never happened before: the first APS Football Grand Final.

It is a chance to create history and achieve something that people will always remember.



From the outside, people might look at our record of 10 wins and no losses and assume that this season has been easy.

But being 10–0 does not mean we have avoided hardship. It means we have repeatedly overcome it.

Every victory has demanded early mornings, exhausting training sessions, pain and sacrifice.

In many ways, remaining undefeated has demanded even more from us. Every week, we have become the team others want to defeat. We have carried expectations, pressure and the knowledge that one poor performance could undo months of hard work.

Our record has not been built on talent alone. It has been built through trust, discipline and a willingness to sacrifice for one another.

Now, we have one final challenge. One final stretch to give our all.

This Saturday on the Crowther at 2.00pm, we do not play only for the 22 footballers playing, but for everyone who carried us here.

Potential means nothing without action. No one respects what you might become; they respect what you prove.

Now is our chance to honour the sacrifice and provide the proof.

I'm going to end with a Bible quote. Now, I know Father Waterhouse usually does this, but this verse has really stuck with me, even though I'm not religious.

I first heard it when I watched the war movie, *Fury*.

It goes like this: *'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'* And I said, *'Here am I. Send me.'*

Those words are powerful because when you are dealing with the hard moments, do not always look around waiting for someone else to step forward.

Be prepared to send yourself.

When the challenge comes, when the pressure comes, when things become difficult, be the person willing to say: *'Here am I. Send me.'*

So I encourage you this week, whenever you are going through it, repeat those words: *'Here am I. Send me.'*

Because overcoming hardship does not just lead to achievement. It is what gives that achievement meaning.

Thank you.