

## OLMC Parramatta hosts Inaugural Women in Leadership Forum

Audience challenged by presentations from four inspirational forum speakers.

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OLMC Students with Samantha Armytage

Four inspirational forum speakers challenged women to embrace all opportunities and to back themselves at the inaugural OLMC Women in Leadership Forum on Wednesday August 23, 2017 in the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta.

Linda Burney MP, Shadow Minister for Human Services and Labor Member for Barton, and Samantha Armytage, Media Personality and co-host of Channel Seven's Sunrise, were joined by Author Felicity Castagna and Dr Yijiao Jiang, Senior Lecturer at MQ Energy and Environmental Contaminants Research Centre, on a panel that explored the challenges and opportunities faced by women today.

Mercy Girls and their families, representatives from the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, students and staff from seven other Sydney schools and staff and friends of OLMC listened to the speakers' addresses before joining in the conversation through a Q&A session and a live Twitter and SMS Feed.

Principal Stephen Walsh says that, in many ways, this event goes to the heart of what OLMC Parramatta is about: *"For almost 130 years, OLMC has been equipping women to push the boundaries and at the forum, we heard personal experiences and insights from four outstanding women who do this well in their respective fields. We are passionate about giving our girls access to strong female role models and this is one of the reasons we initiated the annual OLMC Women in Leadership Forum. Every day at the College, through events like this, but also through smaller conversations, it is made abundantly clear that the OLMC story is about strong women of Mercy making an impact."*

The Forum speakers shared heartfelt advice, both from a practical and big picture perspective. Linda Burney MP told the audience that we all have something remarkable to share as women and it is important to remind yourself of what makes you who you are. She shared her seven 'Ls' of advice to Listen, Learn, Lose well, have Limits, demonstrate Loyalty, Live well and to think of life as a journey, a Long game. Samantha Armytage encouraged girls to identify and hold onto their values and to get to know themselves and treat themselves kindly. She challenged girls to be open to opportunities, brave, resilient, to work hard and seek out mentors.

A key theme that came through from each speaker, according to OLMC Deputy Principal Marie Wood, was the importance of being true to yourself – of being authentic: *"Their wonderful stories were funny and inspiring and reminded us all to never give up believing in yourself and to live your life with courage and confidence."*

We will continue educating ourselves and others to further awareness of the challenges and needs of our time.  
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