

John Howard's visit at the All Saints Grammar featured in Canterbury-Bankstown Express

FEATURE

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# Howard is a politician of the old school

From Hollywood stars to Olympians and entrepreneurs, Success Stories celebrates Canterbury-Bankstown's outstanding past and present residents.

ADAM VIDLER

SUCCESS stories don't come much bigger than John Howard. The Earlwood native went from being the son of a small business owner to running Australia for nearly 12 years, the culmination of a 50-year political career within the Liberal Party.

Mr Howard left the political arena after losing the 2007 federal election to Kevin Rudd's Labor party, but exited as the country's second-longest serving prime minister after his political hero, Robert Menzies.

Mr Howard, 71, was born in Earlwood in 1939 and attended Earlwood Public School and Canterbury Boys High School.

Speaking to a group of high school students from All Saints Grammar in Belmore last



Although the waves of Greek and other European immigration were only beginning in earnest as Mr Howard completed high school in the 1950s, he said watching the successful evolution of his old neighbourhood had driven home to him as a boy the value of immigration.

"Australia has had wonderful contributions from immigrants, from the British and Irish to the Europeans, and lately the waves of immigrants from many parts of Asia," he said.

Although he had not visited the

Thursday, Mr Howard joked that he had not been born in Greece, but Earlwood was "the next best thing".

relatively-new Greek Orthodox All Saints school before, he said he was happy to be invited and return to his "old stamping ground."

Mr Howard also spoke of the qualities he believed sustained leaders in any arena.

The importance of standing by one's values and goals was emphasised. "Leadership requires a clear sense of direction; people

need to know what you stand for before they will follow you."

He confessed to the students his childhood dream job was to be a detective.

Despite the many highlights of Mr Howard's political career, his emphasis was on family when he listed what he considered to be both his greatest challenges and his greatest achievements.



Former prime minister John Howard visits All Saints Grammar at Belmore and (inset) his Earlwood Primary School class photo from 1946. Mr Howard is pictured back row, sixth from left.

Main picture: NICK BLOUKOS

### CHILDHOOD HOME

■ THEN: Former prime minister John Howard grew up in Earlwood and attended the primary school

■ NOW: During a talk at All Saints Grammar, he discussed leadership, telling students to never doubt their instincts and stand by their values

