

## Opening Service – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018

The Honourable Mr Jarrod Bleije member for Kawana, Councillor Mr Rick Baberowski, College Council members, staff, students, parents and friends of the College, our hope this year is that each of us *Flourish through a Culture of Thinking*. But what does it mean to flourish?

Fredrickson and Losada define flourishing as living within an optimal range of human functioning, one that connotes goodness, generativity, growth, and resilience. To flourish involves us doing good, living beyond ourselves, being generative, creating and enriching our context, growing and learning and having the resilience to persist through a range of circumstance.

The culture we experience is the story we shape together. Each of us, whether staff, student or parent, shapes the culture or story that we live each day. Each conversation, each act, large or small, shapes our individual and collective story. We have tremendous opportunity and mutual responsibility to shape a generative story of collective good. More than this, the nature of the people who come together as the Pacific community have tremendous capability and capacity to shape a story of great good, not just for the people of Pacific but for the broader community as a whole. Whether you are new or continuing, every single person has the giftedness to make that difference through using their gifts for the good of others. Small things such as doing your best in each class or greeting people with a smile can make a profound difference and ripple out.

Through immersing and engaging in a culture of thinking there is an intentional commitment to thoughtfulness. Thoughtfulness involves three different dimensions. Being thoughtful involves being kind and thinking how we can help people. In our school motto of *People the Focus, Learning The Purpose, Christ the Way*, we start with people and relationships as our focus. Doing good for people and the planet is our purpose. Every single one of us has a purpose within this community. To be kind to others and to strive to make the best use of our gifts and talents every day for the good of other people, both during your time at school and into the future.

Being thoughtful also involves learning how to carefully consider things. This involves being able look at things from different perspectives, to slow down and hold onto uncertainty, conflicting ideas or even things where there appears no way forward. We need to be able to carefully

observe, turn an idea or problem around, 'chew things over' and understand other people's viewpoints.

Being thoughtful means deeply engaging in thinking and being adept at using different types of thinking. It involves being analytical, critical, creative or being able to synthesise, hypothesise, predict, evaluate, solve, innovate, be entrepreneurial, and the list goes on. This capacity to have the flexibility of quality thinking enables us to thrive in a rapidly changing world in our relationships and in our vocation. As such, you will be intentionally involved in growing the skills and capacities identified by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority as essential to thrive in our rapidly changing world. These skills and capacities underpin the new senior syllabuses that Year 11 students across the state will encounter for the first time next year. Our Year 10 students have already begun to engage directly with the ways of thinking and learning associated with the new senior syllabuses.

A flourishing life involves us always learning and growing, even into old age. In a rich and flourishing life we will regularly encounter new things where our level of confidence and competence will see us being confronted by what James Nottingham describes as a 'learning pit'. Rather than have our negative emotions take control, where we do not step in at all and sit stuck at the side or quickly give up finding ourselves stuck on the bottom, we engage thoughtfully, reminding ourselves we haven't learnt it **yet** and that we need to step forward into uncertainty if we are going to grow. We develop the capability to carefully observe, reflect, consider and then discern what knowledge, tools and strategies could be used to help us begin the climb. Rather than requiring adults to lift us out, through our learning we expand our toolkit, including our emotional capabilities of resilience and persistence, by thinking what is familiar and building from what is known. We learn through the successful steps we take and the mistakes we make. Even as we climb and fall there is potential to see a new foothold we hadn't seen from the bottom.

At Pacific you will be intentionally engaged in growing your thinking and your toolkit as you engage with generative topics, questions and thinking routines that flow from the use of the Harvard Teaching for Understanding and Visible Thinking Frameworks and learn through the integration of Lutheran theology and research associated with the Positive Schools movement. In pastoral care, class, worship, co-curricular and community activities there is the intentional nurturing of ways of thinking and capabilities that aim to support you to flourish thoughtfully

across all dimensions of your life in an integrated and connected way as you take on the challenge of continual learning and growth.

So here we sit at the start of this year with tremendous opportunity and capacity to write great stories just as our graduating cohort of 2017 has done. We congratulate and celebrate with each one of them on their achievements, including Olivia McCluskey, Alli Whitmore and Paige Layfield who each attained an OP 1. As a cohort they performed very well, with 62 of the 80 students or 77.5% being OP eligible compared to approximately 50% across the state. Of the Pacific cohort, 99% completed QCE, VET or SAT qualification. The performance across OP 1-5 was particularly strong with 29% of OP eligible students achieving this result compared to a state average of 22% in this range.

Students have been successful in moving into diverse pathways. These include Olivia McCluskey gaining entry into the highly competitive course in medicine offered for the first time on the Sunshine Coast. Olivia is one of five Sunshine Coast students to be accepted into the group of 20. Other students were accepted into physiotherapy, veterinary science, fine arts, highly competitive theatre performance courses, business and economics, psychology, creative arts, law, health and apprenticeships in electrotechnology and construction. Whether in Year 6 or Year 12, by doing your best each day you can write a story that opens doors into a future that makes a difference.

We take the opportunity to thank one of our staff members who has helped shape many great stories through his leadership of Outdoor Education. Dr Peter McMahon's tremendous passion and generosity of spirit has enabled him to develop a unique Outdoor Education program that has enriched the lives of both adults and students since he joined the College in 2004. We celebrate with him what he has achieved and thank him for his service to the people of this community as Head of Outdoor Education. We all look forward to the benefits he will continue to bring to many in his continuing role as Head of Bula House.

So as we prepare to write our stories of worth together for 2018, there is one great gift we have to share. That energising and purpose giving gift of hope. Contemporary use of the word has diminished the modern meaning of 'hope' to be little different to that of wishing. There is also an older definition, which draws from the Christian tradition where to hope is to have strong and confident expectations that involve trust and faith. When we use the word hope at Pacific, it has this deeper meaning that grows from the certainty and faith that a loving and gracious God

walks with each one of us. It changes us deeply from within in terms of how we see ourselves. Rather than being focused inwardly we look outwards and see ourselves in relationship with others and in personal relationship with God, a loved part of God's creation and an integral part of nature. It changes what we value; we look beyond the material to what is good and of great worth. It changes how we live our lives and use our gifts and possessions, we are grateful for all we have and grow our gifts to the best of our ability so that we are able to serve others.

So where we hope that all members of the Pacific community *Flourish through a Culture of Thinking* we do more than wish. We are embarking on an intentional learning journey that will grow each of us deeply from within. This is a journey that has the long view of who we are as capable, curious, creative people of character, confidence, courage and compassion. We are challenged to be hope givers who always build others up.

May the God of hope equip each of us to write joint and individual stories of great good. God has blessed each one of us richly. Each person is and has all that is needed to be people of hope who do great good together. God bless you all through the coming year.

*Dr Bronwyn Dolling, Principal*