

A WORD FROM THE CEO/PRINCIPAL

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our spring edition of Mater Dei Matters. Much has happened since our last edition as we have hosted a very successful Race Day, we have enjoyed another wonderful Foundation Dinner and our students have been involved in a host of very exciting activities throughout the course of Term Three. Highlights in our school program have included a great day of fun and activity at our annual athletics carnival, a visit from Bishop Peter Ingham to confer the sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion to a number of our students and a fantastic song and dance routine by the students at our dinner. This has been a wonderful term and one that has again shown the strength of our community and the 'can do' attitude of our students.

There is a beautiful little saying that has been quoted from a number of sources that recently caught my attention and really embodies the spirit of Mater Dei. The quote is as follows; "I had the blues because I had no shoes until upon the street I met a man who had no feet".

The sentiments reflected in this saying are very much in keeping with the way the Mater Dei community approaches disability. Our students don't look at people being better or worse off, being rich or poor,

or being disabled or otherwise. The students and indeed the community of Mater Dei accept people as they are. They do so without pity or sympathy and there is certainly no sense of discomfort or embarrassment at what people can or can't do. There is simply acceptance and appreciation of the work that people do and the contribution they make.

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Our students see life as an opportunity to celebrate achievement rather than as a series of competitions in which we are continually trying to prove ourselves. When we value achievement we are all winners and the efforts of all are celebrated. In such a world the only disability in life is a bad attitude and the students of Mater Dei have a wonderful attitude to learning and to life.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Bishop of Wollongong have taken a further step in the development of a new Catholic High School on the Mater Dei campus. We believe such an initiative will provide many

benefits and opportunities for the students of Mater Dei. One of our greatest challenges is the provision of inclusion opportunities for our students. This simply means giving our students the chance to work and socialise with people their own age who don't have disabilities. By providing these opportunities we give our kids the confidence and the skills to be part of their own communities.

Nelson Mandela tells us that 'education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world'. At Mater Dei we believe a very important part of our mission is to build a more inclusive community. The opportunities that this new project provides will allow us to work with the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and Bishop Ingham to build a culture of acceptance and compassion. In this way we build a more inclusive world.

I look forward to keeping you updated on this exciting project in future editions of Matters as we begin this very exciting journey. I thank you for your continued support and interest in the work of Mater Dei and I pray that you and your families continue to enjoy the many blessings of our loving God.

Frank Pitt
CEO/Principal