HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE COOKTOWN NEWSLETTER

TERM 4 , WEEK 4

Principal's Message



Over the past few weeks, I have been fortunate to spend time across many parts of our Holy Spirit College community. From attending a Yarn Up gathering in Hopevale and catching up with the Cooktown crew, to spending time with young people and staff at our Edmonton campus; I have constantly been reminded of the power of relationships and the importance of communities working together to support our young people.

The **Hopevale Yarn Up** brought together representatives from schools, community organisations and government agencies to discuss how we can better collaborate to meet the needs of young people and their families. It was a wonderful opportunity to listen, learn and share ideas.

The forum acknowledged that positive outcomes for young people occur when families, schools and communities work together with a shared commitment to their wellbeing and future.

I have also greatly enjoyed spending time at our **Edmonton** campus over recent weeks. Every campus within Holy Spirit College has its own unique character, and it has been a privilege to connect more deeply with the young people and staff at Edmonton, to observe learning in action and to witness the **strong sense of belonging** that exists within the community.

Last week, I was both humbled and surprised when Durm O'Riordan, Executive Director of Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns, visited our Manoora campus to present me with an acknowledgement recognising twenty years of service within Catholic Education. While I am grateful for the recognition, milestones such as this inevitably invite reflection. Looking back over two decades in Catholic education, one enduring truth stands out: **young people flourish when they are surrounded by adults who genuinely care about them, stop and listen to their needs, and above all, treat them with respect and dignity.** In fact, I think we all require these conditions to flourish, as they reflect a respect for our basic human dignity.

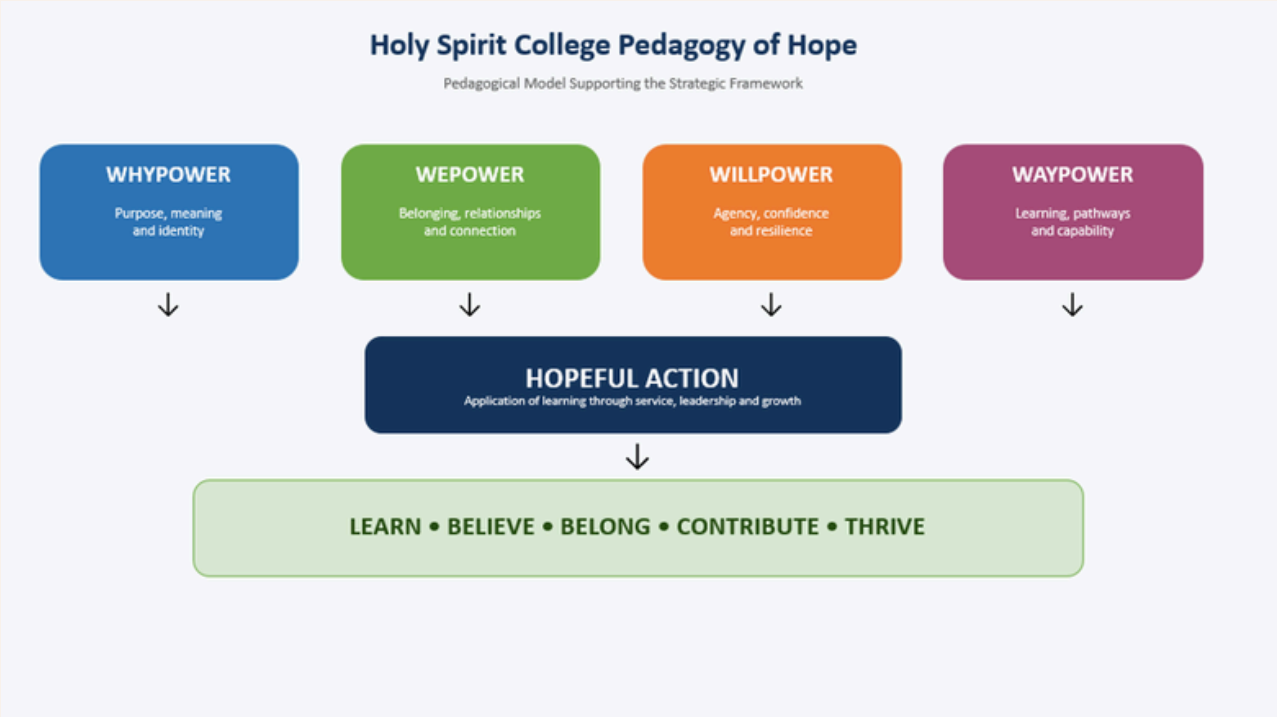
Many of these experiences have caused me to reflect further on the theme of **hope** that I introduced in our previous newsletter, acknowledging that the research tells us (Edwards et al., 2007) that hope emerges through a combination of **WillPower** and **WayPower.**

Hope is one of the great gifts of the Holy Spirit and sits at the very heart of our Christian faith. Hope is not simply wishful thinking or optimism that things might somehow work out.

Rather, hope is the belief that tomorrow can be better than today and that, with the support of others, we can take meaningful steps towards that future.

Throughout this year, our Leadership Team has been engaged in a process of discerning the future direction of Holy Spirit College. Through prayer and as we reflected on the needs, strengths and aspirations of our young people, hope consistently emerged as the foundation upon which meaningful growth and transformation occur. Teasing this apart, and consulting the research, we came to understand that hope grows when young people have a strong sense of purpose **(WhyPower)**, supportive relationships **(WePower)**, confidence in their own abilities **(WillPower)** and clear pathways towards their goals **(WayPower**).

This understanding now sits at the heart of what we describe as our Pedagogy of Hope. Put simply, our work as educators at Holy Spirit College is to create the conditions where hope can flourish. We do this by building relationships, developing skills, nurturing aspirations and walking alongside young people as they navigate life's challenges and opportunities.



Whether I am sharing ideas with community partners in Hopevale, connecting with students at Edmonton, or reflecting on twenty years of service in Catholic education, I am continually reminded that hope is not built in isolation. Hope grows through relationships, belonging and a shared belief in the potential of our college, its staff, our families and most importantly every young person in our care.

May we continue to work together to create communities where hope flourishes and every young person is empowered to become all that God is calling them to be.

Take care and stay strong!

Dr Lucas Felstead
Principal



HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Deputy Principal – Head of Campus Cooktown



News from the Head of Campus

It has been a busy and rewarding term at Holy Spirit College, with our young people engaging in a range of creative, cultural, sporting and wellbeing activities.

Creative Projects

We are excited to be working with Jesse from Cape Productions and Xanthe, Youth Engagement Coordinator from South Cape York Catchments, on a special audio-visual project. Throughout the term, young people have been developing stories, creative content and digital media skills to produce a presentation that showcases their talents, experiences and voices. We look forward to sharing this important work with families and the wider community at our End of Year Celebrations on 26 November. More information will be provided to families in the coming weeks.

Pick of the Crop

Young People have continued participating in the Pick of the Crop program, a Queensland healthy eating initiative that encourages young people to learn about, grow and consume more fruit and vegetables through practical "paddock to plate" experiences. The program promotes healthy eating habits, school gardens and connections with local food producers.

This term our young people have enjoyed:

- Gardening activities
- Seasonal food tours
- Learning about locally grown produce
- Making healthy Halloween treats to share with the community

These experiences continue to build understanding of nutrition, healthy lifestyles and sustainable food practices.

All Souls Day

As a Catholic school, we will gather at the Cooktown Botanic Gardens on 3 November to commemorate All Souls Day, a time when Catholics remember and pray for family members, friends and loved ones. It is an opportunity to reflect with gratitude on the lives and contributions of those who have gone before us and to celebrate the hope of eternal life.

Dental Van Visit

The Dental Van will be visiting the College during Week 5 (commencing 2 November). Families are reminded to ensure dental consent forms have been completed and returned if they would like their young person to access this valuable service.

HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Swimming and Sport

With the warmer weather arriving, young people have been making the most of regular visits to the Cooktown Swimming Pool, building confidence, fitness and enjoying time in the water.

We have also been fortunate to take part in a number of NRL sessions with Tyson at John Street Oval, where young people have been developing teamwork, resilience and sporting skills while having plenty of fun.

Finishing the Year Strong

With only four weeks remaining in the 2026 school year, we encourage all young people and families to prioritise attendance right through to the final day of term. Every day counts, and these final weeks provide important opportunities to consolidate learning, celebrate achievements and participate in the many exciting activities planned for the end of the year.

We thank our families and community partners for their ongoing support and look forward to celebrating another successful year together.

Fiona Connell
Head of Campus







HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Head of Boarding Cooktown



Supporting Growth Through Connection and Consistency

We are pleased to welcome **Susan Bonaccorsi** and **Robyn Morris** to the Boarding Team. Susan and Robyn have been working tirelessly to support young people across all aspects of boarding life. Our Youth Workers Lesley and Bec provide valuable support during the mornings and afternoons, and our Boarding Supervisors continue this work throughout the evenings, helping create a safe, supportive, and engaging environment for all boarders.

Together, the team provides opportunities for young people to participate in fun and meaningful experiences that foster a sense of belonging while supporting individual interests, strengths, and abilities.

At the heart of effective boarding practice are genuine one-on-one conversations. Building strong relationships through regular, positive interactions helps us better understand each young person's needs and support the best possible outcomes for their wellbeing, learning, and personal growth.

This term, we encourage all staff to continue engaging with the OBP resources and to explore the extensive learning materials available through the REBOOT program. These valuable professional learning opportunities provide practical skills and strategies to support young people, particularly during times of distress, heightened emotions, or challenging behaviours. By strengthening our understanding of trauma-informed practice and behaviour support, we can continue to respond consistently and effectively through approaches such as co-regulation, connection, and maintaining calm. Investing in these resources helps build staff confidence while ensuring positive outcomes for the young people in our care.

By combining strong relationships, engaging experiences, and evidence-informed practice, we continue to create a boarding environment where every young person feels valued, connected, and supported to succeed.

Terry Parsons
Head of Boarding





HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Deputy Principal – Engagement Wellbeing & Learning



What if wellbeing isn't something that sits alongside learning, but is part of how learning happens?

At Holy Spirit College, we are challenging ourselves to think differently about what a young person needs to learn.

Feeling safe matters. Connection matters. Being understood matters. So do consistency, clear expectations and learning how to manage emotions, relationships and challenges.

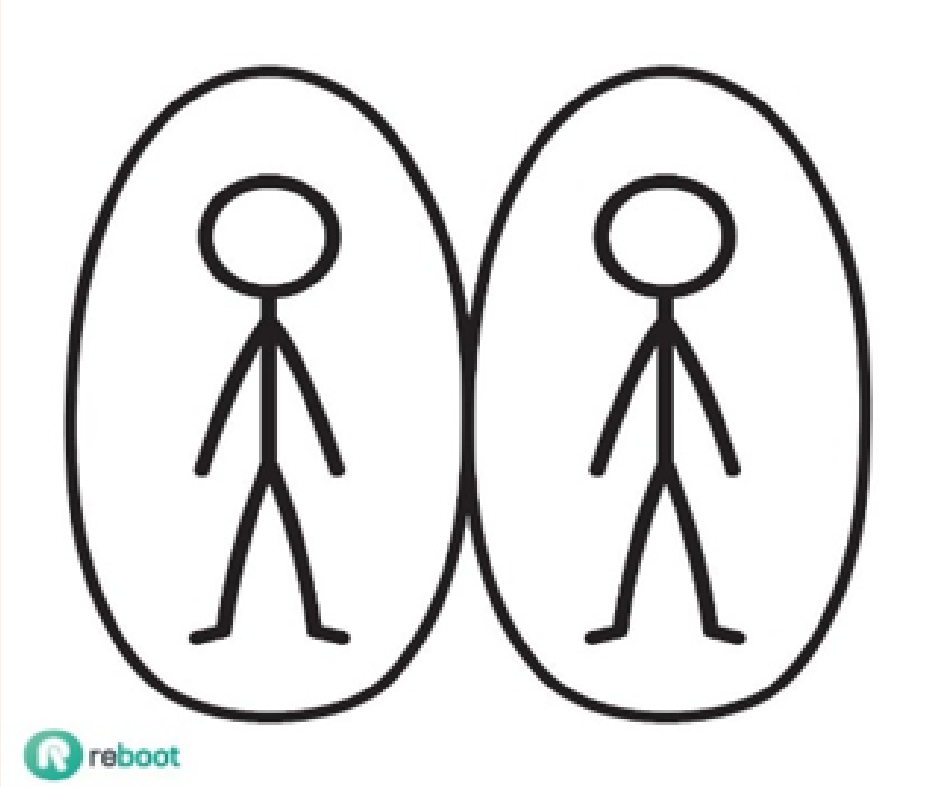
Our Wellbeing curriculum deliberately develops these skills through learning about identity, emotions, relationships, communication, safety and strategies that support wellbeing. These aren't things we attend to before the 'real learning' begins. They are part of the learning. The connection works both ways: wellbeing supports learning, and experiencing success in learning can build confidence, belonging and wellbeing.

We don't want to remove every challenge or solve every problem for a young person. We want to help them develop the skills, confidence and understanding to increasingly navigate challenges for themselves.

Perhaps the conversation doesn't need to start with *What did you learn today?* - Try asking - *What helped you learn today?*

Robyn Arri
Deputy Principal

We are here to help you, help you. Power With! (Reboot)



HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Term 4 Key Dates

TERM 4	(8 Weeks)
~~King's Birthday Public Holiday~~	~~Monday 5 October~~
~~School Starts~~	~~Tuesday 6 October~~
~~World Mental Health Day~~	~~Saturday 10 October~~
College Board Meeting (HSM)	Tuesday 27 October
World Teachers Day	Friday 30 October
All Souls School Liturgy	Monday 2 November
Remembrance Day	Wednesday 11 November
College Board Meeting Dinner	Tuesday 24 November
Edmonton Northern Outlook Day	Wednesday 25 November
All Sites Last Day - End of year celebration	Thursday 26 November
HSC office closes	Friday 4 December

HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Get In Touch

Cooktown campus

4082 1900

1 Burkitt Street

Cooktown, QLD, 4895

1800 317 545

office.holyspirit@cns.catholic.edu.au

www.holyspiritcollege.qld.edu.au

@holyspiritcooktowncampus

Holy Spirit College Cooktown Campus