



PRINCIPAL'S ASSEMBLY Term 3 – 5 August 2022

Good Morning Students and Staff

Unusual and prolonged cyclonic weather hit Perth earlier this week, causing much damage to property and disruption to flights. I was flying back with Dr McCrory, Mrs McClue and Mr Martino from Brisbane and our flight was delayed and then re-routed via Adelaide. Unforeseen weather events are becoming more prevalent, not just in Australia but across the world. Heatwaves, fires, storms and floods are becoming a more frequent occurrence, regardless of season.

The conversation about climate is now a daily occurrence. Why is the weather changing? Who is responsible? What can we do?

Climate Change indicators, at a National level:

- 2019/20 Fires burnt an estimated 10+ million hectares, destroyed over 3,000 buildings and killed at least 34 people.
- 2022 Eastern Australia Floods were one of the nation's worst recorded flood disasters with a series of floods that occurred in South East Queensland and parts of coastal NSW.

At the Marist Conference I spoke at length with Jessie Smith, Principal of Trinity Catholic College, Lismore – one of our Marist schools. He said the floods have been catastrophic for the people of Lismore. In a town of 44,000 people, only 10% of business have reopened. Our Marist school, Trinity Catholic College Lismore, may never re-open. Currently the school is located at another school called Woodlawn and with Southern Cross University.

Can you imagine floods destroying this school and you being asked to study in two separate locations? Mr Smith assures me that despite the hardship the students are resilient, they are brave and they are committed to their learning. What's more, he said that they are asking the bigger question – why are these floods occurring more frequently and with such severity?

Today it is incumbent upon all of us to consider the responsibility that we share for the stewardship of resources that make up our world. We all need to think about this global imperative, not just in word but also in action. During the recent Federal election, there was a groundswell of support for Climate, as reflected in the distribution of those who won seats. This was evident in our local seat – the Seat of Curtin – which is now held by independent, Kate Chaney, who campaigned on Climate.

This week, the Australian Government has introduced the Climate Change Bill 2022. The Bill legislates the nation's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero by 2050.

The result has been that this Bill will become law which gives us hope about what is possible.

What does it mean for us? Can we make a difference in our own lives and the life of community in which we live?

In a local context, this year, College Captains, Isabella O'Rourke and Josh Downes are leading change at a student level, as per the College's Annual School Improvement Plan 2022:

Sustainability of the Environment: *Develop sustainable practices to support an ongoing commitment to the protection of the environment and ongoing sustainability of College resources.*

Their targets for this project have been to:

1. Establish a sustainability group across PK-12
2. Develop a sustainability plan for the College including milestones for 2022
3. Motivate student and staff buy-in, accountability
4. Pilot a recycling project

Today we have heard from our College Captains about an opportunity for all of us to lead. It is not just our politicians who can make a difference, it is us, in the reality and groundedness of this school.

”The best leaders are also the best followers. They follow a purpose, cause, or belief bigger than themselves”. Simon Sinek

Sustaining and nurturing the environment is bigger than all of us. Who hasn't witnessed a sunrise or a sunset, a running river, a roaring ocean or a desert plain and not felt its beauty? God's creation is something beyond our own imagination. We have the privilege of being here now and it will only be our leadership that will ensure it is sustained.

Pope Francis – *Caring for the Earth is embracing the interconnectedness of everything.*

We are all interconnected, therefore have that responsibility. Let us, over the course of this term, start with the little things like putting our rubbish in the right bin, in coming together to make that difference. Our future is in our hands, let us start today.

Congratulations for the wonderful way you have started this term. The Athletics Carnival yesterday was a great example of our community spirit. Our thanks must go to all those who organised this event – in particular Mr Connell and Mr Williams.

This term we pray for Year 12 in their final few weeks. The next time we meet as an assembly will be at the graduation assembly.