



International Assembly – Rector's Address

Christine Leighton

Friday 15 September 2023



This week we have been celebrating Māori language Week. In the spirit of manaakitanga I warmly welcome you all. In today's assembly where we celebrate our diversity as a school, and our important whole school value of Inclusivity, we also recognise the important place of te reo Māori (language) and te ao Māori (values) in our lives as the people of Aotearoa. We have come a long way as a country and society since 1975 when the first Te Wiki o te Reo Māori was officially celebrated.

I am proud of the efforts we are making as a school to provide opportunity for you to learn and appreciate the significance of Te Tiriti and the obligations we have as New Zealanders to uphold its principles. Here at St Andrew's College this means each of us engaging with learning more te reo Māori, becoming familiar with our own history of Aotearoa and the impact this has had on today's society, have understanding of and becoming confident with tikanga customs and practices, and celebrating the unique perspective and influence of our Māori people on future society.

And so I commend those of you who have prioritised the learning of te reo Māori as part of your formal education – currently 85 rangatahi in the Secondary School have chosen Te Reo Māori as an option subject. I thank those of you with knowledge of tikanga for sharing your knowledge with us and helping us to grow and learn.

Thank you also to our Māori and Pasifika rangatahi and whānau for the leadership you show in making your culture, values and visible to us all.

Our focus on te ao Māori makes us and our kura stronger and connects us to our whenua and tangata of Aotearoa.

In doing this we also recognise all the people who make up this diverse community of St Andrew's. Here at St Andrew's College, our staff and students identify with 22 different ethnicities and cultures. Some of our differences are visible, our belief systems are different, our experiences varied and our customs unique. Let's celebrate those differences but also celebrate we are all one people, the people of St Andrew's College and Aotearoa.

Drawing wisdom from the Māori world I share this whakatauki:

Kei tēnā, kei tēnā, kei tēnā ano.

Tōriā ake ahua. Tēnā ake mauri. Tōnā ake mana.

(Each and everyone has their own uniqueness, life essence and presence.)