



## Morning Comment

Carter Rhodes

### End of Term Winter Sports Assembly, Friday 27 September 2024



#### Whai Wahi – Vibrant Flowers

You have heard from Meg, Hugo, and Holly about the first three parts of the thistle that help form our sporting framework here at St Andrew's College. These were whanaungatanga – the deep roots, rangatiratanga – the strong stem, and kia maia – the mighty thorns. I'm going to be introducing the last part of the thistle, whai wahi – the vibrant flowers.

Whai wahi means to participate. But it's more than just showing up. It's about being fully engaged, committing yourself to a group, and most importantly, enjoying it. Having fun is at the heart of what makes sport meaningful – not just for the top athletes, but for everyone.

I know firsthand through my experience with basketball, just how important the idea of participation is. There have definitely been times when I doubted my ability, especially after a couple bad games or when balancing schoolwork and training became challenging. I know that many of you would have had similar experiences within your sport. However, by staying committed, showing up to trainings, and keeping engaged; we are embracing whai wahi, pushing us to keep going. For me, it's not always about winning or being the top scorer – although those things are nice. It's about being part of something bigger than myself. Contributing to create a good culture, seeing myself and teammates grow, and fostering a competitive but inclusive environment is what makes it truly special. This is what inspires us to participate.

Participation is also about inclusivity. This means ensuring that everyone, regardless of their skill level or background, has the chance to participate. It's easy to focus on the top players or those who regularly achieve success, but whai wahi embodies that every person who steps onto the field or court has a role to play. Sport at St Andrew's should be a space where everyone feels welcome, where we encourage each other to try new things and where no one



feels left out. By fostering this inclusive environment, we create a culture where participation becomes more than just playing a game. It becomes an opportunity to grow, connect, and support each other. If you ever try out a new sport and feel like it's not for you because you aren't good at it straight away, don't give up. I challenge you to stick at it, embrace the process of working hard and staying committed, and you will see changes.

Sport at St Andrew's is about more than just the results. It's about involvement. Whether you're on the top team or the social team, whether you're competing at nationals or just playing for fun, whai wahi reminds us that every level of participation matters. I encourage everyone to get involved and stay involved because sport is one of the best ways to build lifelong friendships, stay healthy, and develop strong resilience.

When we think about participation, it's easy to assume that it only means the physical act of playing. But it's also about your mindset – being mentally present, encouraging your teammates, and celebrating each other's successes. As a basketball player, I've had experiences where just staying mentally engaged in a close game made all the difference. It's that spirit of whai wahi that keeps us connected and makes every practice, every game, worth it.

So, as we get closer to the end of the year and sporting seasons are starting to finish, I challenge each of you to find your way of embracing whai wahi. This could be trying out a new sport, showing up to morning training or supporting mates from the sideline. These are the things that strengthen our school sporting spirit. Let's all focus on being engaged, staying committed, and having fun. If there's one thing you remember from this speech, let it be this quote from my mum. "Give it a go, you never know what might come from it".