

# Wise words from teachers and students

ESCAPING to mountains guarded by great dragons or stopping by woods on a snowy evening, words have always held a magical quality.

This very idea has been the great fascination of authors from the likes of Tolkien to Frost.

It has also been at the heart of St Andrew's College, Redlynch.

Two Year 9 students Caity Dwyer and Sarah Almond have shown themselves to be award-winning poets.

Caity and Sarah placed first and second in last year's Cairns Returned and Services League Centenary of Armistice Poetry Competition.

Caity won first prize for her poem A Magpie Song.

The poem draws from wartime poetry, painting a picture of the life of the soldiers from their home soil to the soil of the poppies.

For placing first, Caity was awarded four return flights to attend the 2019 Anzac Day Ceremony in Canberra.

Sarah, who placed second for her poem Forever in My Thoughts, won \$250 towards the cost of her school fees.

Her poem focused on the thoughts of those who weren't there, the fretting and the loss.

The poems formed part of Cairns' remembrance of Armistice last year.

But the poems weren't the college's only wise words.

More wise words came early this year, in an open letter by college principal Dr Sean Mangan to the 2019 college captains.

Dr Mangan said it was a great pleasure to congratulate the new captains.

"Leadership brings many challenges, some high and lows, along with many rewards," he said.

"Our society needs great leaders, people we can trust and believe that they will act in the best interests of those that they have been elected to serve."

Dr Mangan said there were many "great leaders" to model themselves after, none greater than Jesus Christ.

"Jesus led his followers with a gentle, welcoming and inclusive manner," he said.

"He used the power of parables to help his followers understand the Good News and at all



**Budding poets:** Poets Caity Dwyer and Sarah Almond with head of English Ashleigh McQuillan.

times he led by example.

"Jesus was not afraid to challenge others or to take risks.

"He went on many journeys and risked everything by continuing to preach his teachings and he died for us."

Dr Mangan said an effective leader understood themselves.

"They are able to identify their character strengths which then leads them to clearly recognise what values are important to them," he said.

His final message to the incoming captains was not to despair over failures.

"Often setbacks or disappointments are growth points in developing our character," he said.

"Consider having a growth mindset where you use experiences in your life to develop as a stronger person while having a wiser outlook on life.

"We all look forward to supporting you on your leadership journey, appreciating your many gifts and talents, while seeing you grow and develop as fine citizens of our community."

**'I discovered that a lot of information is hidden in paper work that our people would not know how to access'**

## Finding voice in art

By Joe Higgins

COLOUR, culture and creativity have taken over Mount St Bernard College, Herberton, and it has culminated in a poster speaking its artist's truth.

Year 11 student Tanisha Vincent has mustered a "transcendent" message in her entry for the National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee poster design competition 2019.

Her artwork Calling Forward, Looking Back was focused on the NAIDOC theme for the competition – voice, treaty and truth.

In a statement Tanisha said her artwork was a mixed-media self-portrait.

"I am an Indigenous woman from Tara Community in the Northern Territory," Tanisha said.

Describing her self-portrait, she said she was calling out to everyone, "Hear my voice".

"This cry and the vibrations of my ancestors echo around my body – the ripples of the past, present and future," Tanisha said.

"They symbolise the Indigenous languages I speak, the earthy desert colours (my home), the tracks (my ancestors) and the red, white and blue of colonisation."

The artwork speaks to the early settlement and first encounters between the

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

"The goals for me as an artist are to show how my culture is at risk of slowly fading but is becoming stronger in voice and knowledge," Tanisha said.

"I would like to leave behind the traces of the Kaytetye (my language and tribe) and how our culture was passed down from generation to generation.

"I wanted to demonstrate how the Indigenous people of Australia had met with the first arrivals.

"Then in later years when Indigenous people were given the opportunity to vote in 1967, to voice their thoughts."

While piecing together her artwork, Tanisha undertook extensive research into the referendum on the vote, and Indigenous rights.

But she found something troubling.

"I discovered that a lot of information is hidden in paper work that our people would not know how to access," she said.

"Even though I speak more than four different languages, English included, it is hard for us to go back and locate information in archives about our history, first contact and the prospect of a treaty."

Art teacher Traylea Sexton said Tanisha decided on self-portraiture because she wanted to express her own voice.

Ms Sexton said she was proud of her student's achievement.

Another Mount St Bernard student's recent success in the arts ended with a surprise request.

Shawana Nelson, now in Year 8, won

the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation creative arts competition last year and, over the summer holidays, received a unique request.

QATSIF wanted to use Shawana's work on coffee mugs, and Shawana and her family agreed.

Shawana's work was a traditional Aboriginal dot painting of a waterhole, called Unpa Ngaba in the Warlpiri language.

The story of the waterhole was from Shawana's home community in Ali-Curung in central Northern Territory.

She said it had been passed down to her from her grandmother.

"She was so proud," Ms Sexton said. "She had a big smile on her face, just lovely.

"It's pretty amazing when you can see your work on a cup."



**Painting proud:** Year 11 Mount St Bernard College student Tanisha Vincent with her self-portrait Calling Forward, Looking Back.