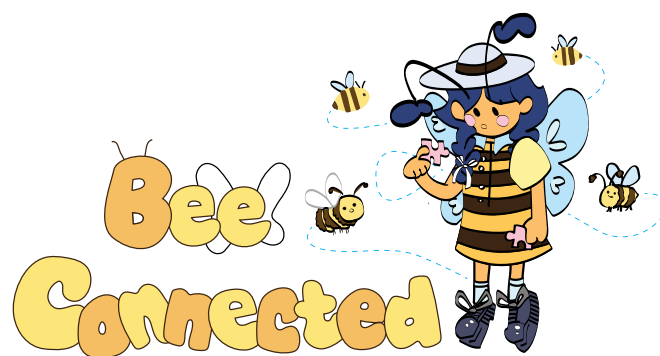


The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.



‘Bee Connected’ through faith and hope at Easter

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

What a term we have had at Abbotsleigh with so many events and celebrations connecting every member of our community and uniting us as we celebrate 140 years of incredible teaching, learning, positive relationships and fantastic activities and events.

It is now time to rest, and what a wonderful way to rest having Easter in the middle of the school holidays. This week in Junior and Senior School chapels, our Senior Chaplain, Rev Sarah Hobba delivered a wonderful message of the Hope of Easter to our girls, staff and Junior School parents.

In this week’s *Shuttle*, Rev Hobba also has written an excellent article on Hope, based on the compelling research of Dr Leisa Aitken. I commend Rev Hobba’s article to you; her final paragraph that directly quotes theologian Jürgen Moltmann is both thought provoking and hopeful.

I wish every Abbotsleigh family a safe and wonderful holiday, and a very special Easter break. I look forward to seeing the girls, our staff, parents and Old Girls again at the beginning of Term 2, when we will continue to follow our tradition of superb teaching and learning and the fostering of positive relationships. Term 2 also will see another term of the whole Abbotsleigh community celebrating our magnificent 140 years of rich and vibrant history.



Hope

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

During the Easter season, we're greeted by fluffy bunnies, pastel colours and pretty flowers. We eagerly anticipate the Easter Bunny's visit, hoping for a delightful chocolate treat (or two or 10) on Easter morning.

While the Easter story is rich in hope, what are the elements of hope that are fundamental to our human experience?

Recently, the Chaplaincy and Christian Studies team had the pleasure of attending a lecture by Dr Leisa Aitken, a clinical psychologist who has extensively researched 'hope'. Her interest in this topic stemmed from observing that two clients with similar difficulties had vastly different outcomes – one maintaining a positive perspective, the other feeling more defeated. The key difference, she found, was hope.

Both in 2018 and in 2020, she asked everyday Australians, 'What is your best realistic hope for humanity?' Interestingly, their answers saw her witnessing an overwhelming difference between the generations. The over 45s had plenty of hope saying that humanity will flourish into many future generations. The under 25s said that the best hope was that current situations didn't get worse, including things like climate change, plastics in our water, mental health and wars.

Dr Aitken says we often use the word 'hope', but not in the sense that it truly embodies:

- *I hope to be a Jedi warrior* – That is a fantasy; hope is realistic.
- *I hope to go to Pilates* – That is a goal; hope involves more uncertainty.
- *I hope for dessert* – That is a want or desire; hope focuses on significant things. For example, noble causes like ending wars or healing illnesses.
- *I hope the weather is nice* – That is optimism and is passive; hope involves action and agency.

In developing her thesis, Dr Aitken defines hope in four different categories:

- 1. Relational agency** – *I have others I trust who can help.* In this area, you can borrow the hope of others. Economist Carol Graham's research on hope in USA and Peru found that the most hopeful communities were often financially weak but had strong relational bonds. This sense of community and belonging created great hope, showing that we can often be sustained through difficulties with the

strength of others. For Christians, the relational aspect also extends to our relationship with and hope in God, as it is written in Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

- 2. Personal agency** – *I can cope while I wait and be poised, ready to act.* We have often lost the art of waiting in this instantaneous age and we rush to resolve issues. The hope literature emphasises is the importance of learning to sit in the uncertainty. When facing difficulties, such as health concerns, strategies such as eating well, exercising and learning from others' experiences are examples of hoping. For a Christian, prayer and meditating on the scriptures also are fundamental ways of coping and hoping. The Psalms are full of finding hope in waiting on God. Just some are:

- Psalm 31:24, 'Be strong, and He will strengthen your heart, all you who wait for the Lord.'
- Psalm 33:20, 'Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.'
- Psalm 39:7, 'Now Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.'

- 3. Mindset** – *The future has meaningful possibilities.* The two points made here are, firstly, that anxiety and addictions reduce our ability to believe change is 'possible'. The second relates to a 'meaningful' future. Dr Aitken's research explored trust in various aspects for humanity's future. While science and technology were popular, they didn't correlate with hope. Only three did: 'God or a higher power', 'Good will conquer evil' and 'Everything happens for a reason'. While not specifying that spirituality or religion was compulsory for hope, Dr Aitken's research did find that they were helpful.

- 4. Feelings** – *I have eyes to see glimpses to give me feelings of hope.* Hope is also an emotion. Neuroscience has found that we often imagine the future two or three times more often than we think about the past. Research also shows, that imagining the future elicits a stronger emotional response than recalling the past. This glimpse of the future is disproportionately powerful, with our nervous system reacting to motivate us in the present.

Little ways in which we can train ourselves to see glimpses of hope could be:

- in time of stress, find rest with a cup of tea
- in the midst of sickness, focus on times of feeling well

- in the midst of life being ugly, picture a moment of beauty
- when feeling alone, be aware of our union with others and with a God that loves you completely

The Christian narrative has a constant future hope; that is, that God will restore the earth to its full beauty, ultimately conquering evil. Despite the pain caused by humanity over millennia, God will renew creation including humanity, as stated in Revelation 21:4, ‘God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’

We see a glimpse of this throughout Jesus’ life, as he heals the sick and brings restoration to those who are hurting. And at Easter, when we remember the resurrection of Jesus, we are assured that Christ’s victory over death will be extended to all those who hope in Him. Further, Christ’s transformed body helps us look forward to our transformation. As Christians, we share in this resurrection and transformational hope (1 Corinthians 15).

As quoted by Dr Aitken, the following words from Jürgen Moltmann in *The Source of Life*, provide a lovely summary:

‘But the ultimate reason for our hope is not to be found at all in what we want, wish for and wait for; the ultimate reason is that we are wanted and wished for

and waited for. What is it that awaits us? Does anything await us at all, or are we alone? Whenever we base our hope on trust in the divine mystery, we feel deep down in our hearts: there is someone who is waiting for you, who is hoping for you, who believes in you. We are waited for as the prodigal son in the parable is waited for by his father. We are accepted and received, as a mother takes her children into her arms and comforts them. God is our last hope because we are God’s first love.’

Resources for further reading/listening:

Aitken, L. (2024). *The shape of hope: Conversations between psychology and theology. St Mark’s Review*, (266), 6-26.

Aitken, L. (2023). *Common Hope: A New Integrated Hope Conceptualisation Informed by Interdisciplinary and Historical Perspectives with Initial Scale Validation* (Doctoral dissertation).

Graham, C. (2023). *The power of hope: How the science of well-being can save us from despair.*

Rediscovering Hope: How we lost it; How we get it back? - CPX - Centre for Public Christianity

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

A Studio Community exhibition	Wednesday 27 March to Saturday 26 April	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Term 2 commences	Tuesday 29 April	
AbbSchool Term 2 commences	Tuesday 29 April	

Hornsby Local Artist exhibition	Thursday 1 to Saturday 17 May Opening 1 May, 6-7.30 pm	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
SchoolTV program – student wellbeing resouces	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to watch

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Year 5 da Vinci training day	Friday 2 May 8 am-3 pm	
Year 5 IPSHA Debating round 1 vs Loreto Normanhurst	Friday 2 May 12.45-2.45 pm	Away
JS Production Rehearsal	Friday 2 May 3.30-5.30 pm	
IPSHA Saturday sport	Saturday 3 May 8 am-12 noon	See team sheets for times and venues
JS Production Rehearsal	Saturday 3 May 2-4.30 pm	Everett Hall

SENIOR SCHOOL

Boarder travel day	Monday 28 April	
SS athletics 400 m and 1,500 m finals	Tuesday 29 April 12.30-30 pm	SOPAC
Senior Drama Production rehearsal	Tuesday 29 April 3.30-6 pm	Drama Studio
SS Athletics Carnival	Wednesday 30 April 8.30-3.25 pm	SOPAC
Bill Turner football fixture vs Asquith	Thursday 1 May 1.30-3.30 pm	Abbotsleigh Synthetic Oval
Senior Drama Production rehearsal	Thursday 1 May 3.30-6 pm	Drama Studio
San Innovation: Healthcare Society	Thursday 1 May 6-8 pm	Sydney Adventist Hospital (The San), Wahroonga
Year 11 VA incursion	Friday 2 May 8.20 am-3.20 pm	
Years 10-12 Ethics Olympiad	Friday 2 May 9 am-3 pm	Via Zoom
Opera House rehearsal	Friday 2 May 12.45-1.15 pm	Assembly Hall
Saturday sport	Saturday 3 May 8 am-2 pm	Times and venues TBC
Boarder community weekend	Saturday 3 to Sunday 4 May	