

DOMREMY COLLEGE ASSEMBLY – August 2025

Introduction by College Principal, Mrs Antoinette McGahan

Good morning staff and students.

As we all settle back into our routines, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible energy and effort that fills our College.

Our Year 12s have completed their HSC Trials and are now on the final stretch of their journey with us. We welcome you back and wish you well as you focus on **refinement, consolidation, and the final push for improvement**. Year 11s, your Preliminary exams are just around the corner, and we wish you all the best whilst you also prepare for various senior leadership applications. The remaining year groups are equally busy with their own goals and commitments.

It's hard to believe we're already halfway through the term, and it's a perfect time to pause and reflect.

Today, I want to tell you a story about a young woman who, not so long ago, was just like you. She sat in a classroom, she had big dreams, and she started with a disadvantage that many people might have seen as a barrier. Her name is **Marita Cheng**.

Marita grew up in government housing in Cairns. Her mum was a hotel cleaner. But from a young age, Marita saw a future that she wanted to help build. She loved math and science, and she saw the potential of technology to help people. She went to university, and as she looked around her engineering classes, she noticed something: there weren't many other girls.

This wasn't just a fact she noticed; it was a problem she decided to solve. At just 19 years old, she gathered her friends and started something called **Robogals**. Their mission was simple: go into schools and teach girls robotics to get them excited about engineering. What started as a small idea grew into an international movement that has

since taught robotics to over 100,000 girls in 11 countries. For this incredible vision and leadership, she was named the **2012 Young Australian of the Year**.

After this, Marita's passion for using technology to help people truly blossomed. She went on to co-found a company called **Aipoly**, which created an app that uses artificial intelligence to help blind and visually impaired people "see" the world around them by describing objects to them in real-time. Currently she is the CEO of her company, **Aubot**, which makes telepresence robots that allow kids with cancer to attend school from their hospital beds, or people with disabilities to go to work.

For her work, Marita has received a number of remarkable honours. In 2019, she was inducted as a **Member of the Order of Australia** and in 2018 was named by **Forbes as one of the World's Top 50 Women in Tech**.

Why do I share this with you? Because Marita's story is the perfect example of the message I am constantly giving you: **hard work, persistence, and passion are the keys to success**.

There is a profound metaphor that describes making a difference very well. I'm sure you have all seen it: a fragile flower, perhaps a daisy, growing through a crack in the concrete. How is that possible? What a miracle! It seems impossible, yet it happens.

This little flower is a powerful reminder for all of us. It grows with strength, with resilience, and with an unwavering determination to blossom **despite** all obstacles. The concrete, the challenges, the expectations of others - they don't stop it. They just make its success that much more meaningful.

Marita saw the "concrete" in her own life - a lack of opportunity, few other girls in her field, and complex problems that seemed impossible to solve. But she chose to be the flower.

She worked hard, she was persistent, and she followed her passion, and the result was truly miraculous.

So, as you go about your day, I want you to look for the "cracks in the concrete" in your own lives. Those little challenges that seem insurmountable.

This is one of Marita's many quotes - *"If you're going to succeed in anything you have to start, and to do that you have to get past your fear of failure."*

I want you to remember Marita's story and know that each of you has the strength, the resilience, and the passion to grow, to learn, and to make the impossible happen.

We can't wait to see all the ways you will blossom.