



Newsletter

Wisdom begins with Wonder



Week 9 Term 2 2026

Monday 15th June

Official Opening

On Monday, the 8th of June, we held the official opening ceremony of our new office and administration space. The space was formally opened by Catherine Wedd, MP, after being blessed by Reverend Zhane Tiopira Tāhau accompanied by Te Aute College students. A kōharu mauri [stone] in the garden near the entrance was blessed to provide a connection and a sense of grounding with the whenua. It was fantastic to welcome families and community members to celebrate the occasion.

One of the most challenging aspects of organising the day was keeping the name secret! It has been formally christened as **Kōtuku, J Gilbertson Office Block, 2026**, in recognition of our lovely, long-serving Director of First Impressions, Jacqui. It's a fitting tribute to someone special who has given so much, nurturing the many children (and teachers) that have come through the doors at Pukehou School. I'd also like to thank Rachael, Mrs Strong, for organising a wonderful opening celebration.



NYLD 2026

On the 3rd of June, seven of our school leaders attended the National Young Leaders Day in Palmerston North. It was a high-energy conference with inspiring speakers and powerful messages of their life lessons.

William Pike spoke about 'leaning in' to fear and that leadership doesn't mean you're fearless. It means facing fear and taking action. He also said that it's the little things that matter and that confidence is built through little moments of connection. His last piece of advice was **DO HARD STUFF!** You'll get stronger when faced with small risks, mistakes, and challenges.

Award-winning author **Gracie Kim** spoke about her 'Hero's Journey' and the many failures she had. Her advice was to **FAIL FORWARD** towards success, and that not giving up is a choice. She encouraged us to make mistakes, not regrets, and posed the question, "Why live boring? Enjoy the hard stuff and craft a life worth living." Gracie also challenged us to reframe **IMPOSSIBLE** to **I'M POSSIBLE!**

Student and climate activist **Lola Fisher** emphasised that young people have important voices, and that you get to decide what story gets told about you. She also challenged us, "Don't wait for someone else to act...that someone is you!" As part of her leadership lessons, Lola talked about the circle of three: surrounding yourself with great people, a peer, a mentor, and a mentee, to be the person who opens doors for others.

Emmy Award-winning film composer and musical editor **Stephen Gallagher** suggested that maybe fear is not a STOP sign. Fear is the signal. Journeys start with fear, and that fear usually means that this matters! He challenged us to find something that you care about, and then care about it! He also shared some powerful anecdotes, one when he worked with Ed Sheeran on the song *I See Fire*. His lesson here was that too often we can worry about waiting for the right moment rather than taking action in the room we're in. His last piece of advice was to keep knocking on the right doors.

Reiy 'the Shakman' Elliot, a Marine Biologist, known for his expertise on sharks, shared his challenges to get his PHD. His passion for sharks is driven by a fear of them as a surfer. Again he emphasised that we should lean in to fear, but more importantly, we should learn about it first.



