[ATSIM]
goodnews
FOR ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

VOL 44 No 3 I WINTER 2025

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Faith on the Red Dirt

The Long Road Home

Jacob's heart pounded as the dust of the desert clung to his robe. Each step toward the land of Seir felt heavier than the last. Years had passed since he fled from Esau's anger. Years of guilt, struggle, and transformation. He had wrestled with God, but now he had to face the brother he had wronged. He remembered the shame of the bowl of stew and the stolen blessing. Jacob, always grasping, had taken what wasn't his, and Esau, furious and betrayed, had vowed revenge.

But like everything, TIME, had changed the paths of their lives and neither of them had expected the outcome. Jacob had gained wealth and family, but for years he hadn't felt peace because of the guilt he carried from the wrongs of his past. Now, with fear in his heart from the wrongs of his past, he was ready to make right by sending gifts to his brother whom he had wronged many years before.

When he finally saw Esau in the distance, surrounded by four hundred men, his fear grew. He bowed seven times as if to say ***forgive me***.

To Jacob's surprise, Esau ran not with a sword in his hand but with tears in his eyes. He hugged Jacob, weeping with joy in his heart that his brother had returned. The past was still there, neither of them can change, but in that moment, it was blotted out by something greater, grace. "Who are all these with you?" Esau asked, pointing toward Jacob's family. "These are the children God has graciously given your brother ," Jacob replied, still bowed low. Esau shook his head and smiled. "I have enough, my brother. Keep what is yours."

But Jacob insisted, pressing the gifts into Esau's hands. "Please accept them. Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have excepted my apology." They walked together for a while, no longer enemies but brothers, older now, scarred by time, but softened by it too. The land hadn't changed much, but they had. Reconciliation didn't changed the past, but it done something far greater, it won back the respect and trust of two brothers who were separated by greed. That day, two men didn't change history—but they changed a moment. And sometimes, that is where reconciliation begins. Jacob, the deceiver, became Israel, the one who wrestles with God and won His heart.

Esau, once burning with rage became the brother who forgave.

Sometimes, the hardest journey isn't across deserts or mountains, but across the distance between two hearts. Jacob and Esau walked that road—and found peace with each other.

We as First Nations people know and understand what it's like to have something special stolen from us, whether your skin is dark, brown or light brown, we all understand having something special taken away from us. Like Esau who was tricked to sell his birth right by his brother Jacob there was nothing he could have done to change the past, but we can do something to change the future, and that is by thriving towards reconciliation and forgiveness with whoever have hurt us in the past

Their story reminds us that broken relationships can be mended, not by force, but by humility, courage, and grace

Pr John Beck I AUC Outback Minister



Pr John Beck is the AUC Outback Minister. He and his wife, Yen, and daughter, Ashima, travel to remote areas of Australia, spreading the Gospel and giving resources to those hungry for the World of God.

Four Seasons

by Kevin Merritt Sr

Summer brings long hot days
The nights are almost the same

The hot winds blow almost every day

Thunder storms break the heat
With its cooling winds and much needed rains

Before we know it autumn gently blows in

The whole scene changes from green to beautiful shades of gold and orange

The trees lose their leaves and
stand ghostlike in the shadows of the waning moon

The cold wind ushers in the cold winter

We now know that rain is on the way

Heavy clouds filled with water sweep over the land

The parched soil quickly drinks in that life giving water

Green grass starts shooting
Crops are sown

Soon they too will cover ploughed paddocks

Beautiful wildflowers perfume the announcement of spring

Birds begin to sing and breed

Everywhere there is an
atmosphere of life at its fullest

Spring brings in new life and a feeling of satisfaction

Nature is a gift to mankind from the Great Creator



About Uncle Kevin

Kevin Merritt has lived a life shaped by service, community, and deep faith. Now 82 and living in Geraldton with his beloved wife Barbara. Kevin's career began in Mullewa, where his first job was delivering mail on a bike for the local Post Office. He later moved to Perth to work with Australia Post, before returning home to join the railways — and it was during this time that he met Barbara, the love of his life, whom he married and together they had 7 children. Kevin eventually returned to Perth, serving nine years with the Aboriginal Medical Service and later working for Centrelink in Mirrabooka. Feeling a strong calling to ministry, he volunteered with the Western Australian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, spending his time visiting families, studying the Bible with them, and preaching when needed. His desire to deepen his ministry training led him to study at ATSIM Bible College, now known as Mamarapha College. He graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Indigenous Pastoral Ministry. His heart for young people then took him to Karalundi, where he served as chaplain and dorm parent, offering guidance, care, and support to students far from home. Across every chapter of his life, Kevin has made a significant contribution to his community. Today, he enjoys a well-earned retirement with Barbara by his side.

ADVENTIST CHURCH *in Australia*

about goodnews

goodnews is produced quarterly for Indigenous Australians by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries [ATSIM] Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia.

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Darren Garlett

acknowledgement

This magazine comes to you from the beautiful land of the Wurundjeri people in Naarm. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

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For those who wish to contribute to goodnews, letters, articles, stories and photos are welcome. The editor does not guarantee publication as space is limited. Articles may be edited.

disclaimers

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that that goodnews may contain images, and names of people who have passed away.

Articles express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the goodnews or the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia.

subscriptions

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Growing Together

In May, the Shepparton Seventh-day Adventist Church invited both Pr Darren Garlett, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries (ATSIM) from the Australian Union Conference and Pr Wendy Saluni (ATSIM Victoria) to spend time with them.

Pr Darren shared the children's story which then led into him sharing a beautiful message of hope and reminder with the church family.

After the church service, the members put on a beautiful lunch and more fellowship time was created. The ambience and warmth experienced shared allowed for conversations to continue to take place.

In the afternoon, an ATSIM workshop and training session was held. Many members stayed for the session, eager to learn more about how they could support Indigenous ministry in their local area. The workshop included practical information, encouragement, and a variety of resources that helped share the message of Jesus in a way that respects and connects with Aboriginal culture.

As discussions began, time was taken to create a safe and respectful space. This allowed people to feel comfortable asking honest and sometimes difficult questions. With the establishment of creating a safe space, open conversations flowed naturally. People were able to share freely, ask questions, and talk through different ideas. It was a supportive and thoughtful environment where learning and growth were allowed to happen.







Many of the attendeers appreciated the workshop and the ATSIM resources that were provided. They were grateful to have materials they could use in real-life settings—with friends, family, workmates, and in their communities helping people feel more confident in sharing the message of hope, peace, and love with ATSI people in their community. It meant people felt empowered, not just to learn, but to go out and share what they had received. Some mentioned how helpful it was to have something practical to give or use in conversations with Indigenous people in their own circles.

The workshop was more than just a training—it was a time of connection, encouragement, and inspiration. It brought the church community together and helped build a shared vision for what God can do through ATSIM ministry in Shepparton.

The work is growing, and there is a beautiful sense of God's ongoing leading. With supportive leaders, committed members, access to ATSIM resources, with ATSIM support both state and nationally, Shepparton is becoming a place where Indigenous ministry is not just talked about—but actively lived out, one relationship at a time. The Shepparton church and ATSIM are excited about what God is doing and together, with the intentional leading of the Holy Spirit, through ongoing prayer, empowerment and engagement, will continue to see the Good News of Jesus, the Gospel - shared with our ATSI people, who can then share it with their families and their communities as the message of Matthew 28 of making disciples of all nations, becomes a resonating message for generations to come.

Pr Wendy Saluni I ATSIM Director Victorian Conference



Handprints of Belonging

Northpine Christian College

A vibrant new mural now brightens the Northpine Christian College grounds, in South Queensland, telling a story of Country, connection, and belonging. Painted in September by Sunshine Coast local and respected artist, Dr Jandamarra Cadd, a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung man, the artwork has already become a centrepiece of pride and identity for students and staff alike.

The mural project began as an idea from the Year 12 students, who presented to the College Administration Team earlier this year with their vision for integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language, and ways of life more deeply into college life. The mural was one of several ideas put forward and with the help of Dr Cadd, it has now come to life.

The artwork captures the region's landscape, showing the Pine River alongside the ocean, representing the balance between land and sea. It also includes marine life, ocean animals and animals found in the region, with scenes shifting from day into night, and the animals that move across these changing times. The artwork includes native plants such as wattle, cabbage palm and Lilly Pilly.

Beneath the water, spiralling dots tell another story. The white centre dot represents the individual self, surrounded by coloured rings symbolising layers of connection to Country (yellow), kinship (orange), animals (red), the elements (burnt sienna), and spirituality (dark brown). The pattern radiates outward, representing strength and harmony when these connections are upheld.

Stretching across the mural are handprints of students, from Prep to Year 12, as well as leaders and community members. These handprints represent belonging and identity, and a shared commitment to living sustainably and passing culture forward to future generations.

Principal Jeanette Martin shared her appreciation for the project, saying, "It was a blessing to have Jandamarra come and create this mural for us."

A special addition is still to come: Dr Cadd is preparing a short narrative about the artwork, which will be available through a QR code beside the mural. By scanning it, viewers will be able to watch him share the story in his own words.

This mural is more than a piece of art, it's a reflection of the College's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and cultural learning. It stands as a reminder that when we listen, learn, and walk together, we build stronger connections between cultures, communities, and generations. Through projects like this, the College continues to honour the stories of the land and its people, ensuring they remain alive for those who come next.







Reaching the Community

Geraldton



In August 2025, our Geraldton group was blessed with a visit from Pastor Darren Garlett and his family, who spent Sabbath with us at the Spalding Community Centre on Mitchell Street. We were also delighted to welcome several visitors who have continued to attend each week.

That afternoon, we enjoyed a peaceful walk in the nearby hills, followed by a campfire tea back at the farm shed where we closed the Sabbath together — a special time enjoyed by everyone, including Benny the dog!

Our local pastor, Pr Tony Moala, has been faithfully leading Bible studies, and we're excited to be planning for a couple of baptisms in the near future.

Our elderly members especially treasure their Sabbath gatherings. Many have moved to Geraldton for dialysis or aged care, so it's been wonderful to build a close-knit community where everyone feels connected and supported.

Recently, we've been blessed with a new musical family from Fiji whose live music brings a joyful spirit to our worship. If you're visiting Geraldton or live nearby, we'd love to have you join us. We share lunch together every Sabbath, often joined by friendly neighbours from the park next door, and we always look forward to visits from Karalundi students — and new faces too!









Val Royce

Youth Leading Bible Studies

Malak

Allaine & Devina Parry, 17 year old twins living in Darwin, run their own Bible studies and worship group with their family from the Tiwi Islands. These young Indigenous ladies created the Under the Tree Ministry to share God's love with family and friends and prove that all you need is a heart for God and a willingness to tell others about Him!

These photos were taken from a Bible study in Malak.









ATSIM Regional
Cairns

This is the second year running that Cairns ATSIM Regional took place on NAIDOC Week. This year's theme was "The next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy. The regional kicked off on Friday night at the Cairns SDA Church with Pr Eddie Hastie leading in worship sharing lessons from Abraham who was promised that he would be a father to many generations to come and we are a fulfilment of that promises and that God's promises still apply today, still work today as much as they did even in the life of Abraham. This was followed by tea and refreshments and a little singalong.

On Saturday it was spirit filled busy day of worship, praise and Fellowship. Pr Eddie Hastie facilitated the sabbath school, leading the church in an engaging lesson study. Chelleiah Brim from Mamarapha College had an opportunity to present and promote the transforming ministry that is taking place at Mamarapha College and invited the church to be a part of this journey in supporting its unique ministry to first nations people.

Pr Soani, NAC ATSIM Director was the speaker for the service and reminded the congregation that it is the role of the church to equip the next generation. Pr Soani highlighted Joshua, a leader who was called to a great responsibility to lead the people of Israel on the conquest into the Promise Land. Highlighting that just as strength from this generation comes from stories of endurance that our elders lived. God reminds Joshua that he would be with him just as he was with Moses, it was stories of God's deliverance in the past through Moses that gave Joshua the strength to embark courageously on the journey into Canaan. He reminded the church that we all need to have a shared and united vision for the next generation and that we are only part of a legacy that was to Abraham a long time ago and we are only doing our part in our present time. He concluded with Joshua 24:15 with challenge that no matter where we find ourselves, the circumstances may the generations to come always see that we have chosen to serve God.

This was followed by fellowship lunch and an afternoon yarning session where discussion and brainstorming took place in how our local members can be equipped to be disciples in our community and engage more intentionally with our mob in our cities and communities.

It was a great weekend of connecting with family and mob through worship and fellowship. The entire service was organised and lead by our very own first nation members and leaders from Kuranda, Cairns, Mareeba and surrounding churches. We would like to thank our leaders from the Cairns region Daniel Gela, Pr Eddie Hastie, Joanne Bowie, Denise Hansell, Sylvia Wright , Steve and Leah English for organising and leading such a memorable weekend together.

Pr Soani Vosalevu I ATSIM Director Northern Australian Conference

Finke Regional

Finke Community held its first regional from July 17-19, with guest speaker, Pr Alban Matohiti, president of the Greater Sydney Conference, giving messages of hope and encouragement. Bible Workers, Pr Leo and Colleen Wright welcomed over 20 people from Finke, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Oodnadatta as they attended the programs.

There was a special visit from AUC Outback Minister, Pr John Beck and his wife, Yen, who shared 'health bites' throughout the weekend and Student Services Coordinator from Mamarapha College, Marina Carr, also attended the regional where she shared about Mamarapha College and the courses offered.

The group spent time in fellowship, around campfires, singing songs in local languages and having a yarn over food. It was a great experience, and we look forward to the next regional in July 2026.

















1 SWAN VALLEY, WA Bella Sutton and Aaron Jetta wedding **2 AVONDALE MEMORIAL CHURCH, NSW** ATSIM Focus - Darren Garlett, Danuta and Keith Stockwell, Jimmy Dunn and Richard Reid **3 KURANDA, QLD** Wilma Donahue, Sherelene Snider, Rhonda Brim, Debra Gough, Brent and Jacqui Hammond **4 BARMERA, SA** Big Camp SA - Georgie Kemp with daughters, Tamellia and Cherese with Aunty Audrey Stewart and Aunty Colleen Roberts **5 MIDLAND, WA** Karla Bidjar Church - Wayne Thomas, Phil McDonald, Darren Garlett, Ray Ugle and Nathanael Garlett **6 KARALUNDI, WA** Norseman Members at Karalundi Camp **7 KARALUNDI, WA** Jigalong Members at Karalundi Camp





















8 KARALUNDI, WA Bernice Fred, Natrisha Wongawol with Pr Don Felhberg **9 ALICE SPRINGS, NT** Anthony McMasters and Jonah Doolan at Alice Springs Regional **10 ALICE SPRINGS, NT** Tennant Creek Boys at Alice Springs Regional **11 BRISBANE, QLD** Sharon, Leanne, Jarod and Darren at South Queensland Conference Big Camp **12 WILUNA, WA** Church at the Crossing **13 FINKE, NT** Justine Churchill and grandson, Khalil **14 MUTUTJULU, NT** Daryl Buzzacott visiting his nieces **15 COOBER PEDY, SA** Daryl, Malcolm and Darren with Police Officer Dean Walker **16 MUTUTJULU, NT** John Beck visiting elders in Community Care **17 FINKE, NT** Young people of Finke Church

Faith on the Red Dirt





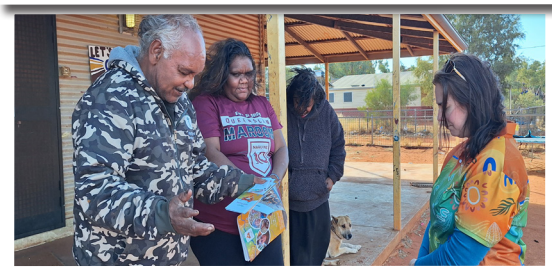
The tyres crunched over red dust as we left the bitumen behind. My travel companion, Lorraine, and I exchanged a look that said, here we go. The vast outback stretched before us — rocky roads, endless skies, and a journey that would test our faith, stir our spirits, and connect us with hearts across the desert.

When I agreed to join ATSIM and Outback Ministries on this tour, I was both excited and nervous. As a non-Indigenous person, I wondered if I'd be welcomed into communities or find the right words to share about God and Mamarapha College. But I stepped out in faith and God met us on every road, in every handshake, around every fire.



Our first stop, Finke, brought joy and reunion with past Mamarapha College students Susan and Jennifer Doolan and Julie Wing. We worshipped together under the stars, the fire crackling on the red dirt — simple, sacred, unforgettable.

At Uluru and Kata Tjuta, the beauty of creation reminded us of the Creator's power. In Mutitjulu, we met Elder Reggie Uluru and prayed together, a moving moment of unity between cultures and faiths.



The rugged tracks to Pipalyatjara, Kalka, and Wingellina tested our endurance but also revealed God's guidance. We met past and future Mamarapha College students, prayed with community members, and left Bibles and resources for new study groups. Seeds were planted for God's Kingdom.

At the remote Three States Camp, where the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia borders meet, we camped beneath a sky so clear it felt close enough to touch. Around the fire, we roasted sweet potatoes and reflected on God's goodness.



From Amata and Ernabella to Kaltjiti and Mimili, faith and culture came together beautifully. At Mimili, two prayers — one in language, one in English — rose together to heaven. It was a powerful reminder that God speaks to every heart.

After travelling nearly 5,000 kilometres, we finished our journey at Kings Canyon, surrounded by ancient rock walls and the stillness of creation.





What began as a road trip became a spiritual journey of connection and purpose. We saw God's fingerprints across the land, through the people, and in every community visited. I returned with a full heart and a deeper appreciation for how God is working through ATSIM and Mamarapha College, reaching His people across this vast and beautiful country.

God is good. Always.

Marina Carr I Student Services Coordinator
Mamarapha College



Allaine & Devina Parry Baptism Darwin

On August 30 twin sisters Allaine and Devina Parry were baptised at the Darwin SDA Church following their 18th Birthday. Their baptism took place in the presence of close family, the pathfinder club in which they are heavily involved and church family.

Allaine & Devina shared that they were baptised at a young age and over the years have grown in their faith with the support of their church and family. They shared how their ministry (Under the Tree Minsitry) of leading monthly bible study and worship group that meets in Malak with their families from Tiwi Islands have also played a big role in strengthening their relationship with Jesus and understanding their call to share Jesus with their family and since have come to a greater understanding of the Bible, Jesus and the purpose He has for their life.

It has been a blessing to see these young women grow and mature and I look forward to the impact and influence they will have for the Kingdom of God in the Darwin Region.















Called to Serve

My story at Redfern SDA Church



When I first came to Redfern Seventh-day Adventist Church, my prayer was simple: "Lord, help us build a place where people feel seen, valued, and loved."

Out of that prayer, the Tuesday Yarn Group was born. Every Tuesday morning, our doors open early for anyone who needs a hot breakfast, a warm drink, or some clean clothes. But it's never just about the food or the clothes — it's about the connection. We sit, yarn, laugh, and sometimes cry together. In that little space, surrounded by donated clothes and steaming cups of tea, people open up about their lives. That's where I get to listen, pray with them, and gently share about Jesus and His love.



It's amazing how God moves in simple moments. Some of the same people who first came just for a feed now stay to talk about faith, ask for prayer, or even join our Bible studies. It reminds me that ministry isn't about what happens from the pulpit — it's what happens around the table.

On Wednesday nights, we gather again for Bible study. We've been walking through the book of Mark, discovering who Jesus really is and what it means to follow Him. What started small has now become one of the most exciting parts of our week. People come hungry — not for food this time, but for truth.



Not long ago, I felt that the work of Jesus was being overshadowed in some areas of church life. So, with prayer and faith, we started something that had never been done before at this church, a Sabbath School lesson class every Sabbath. I wasn't sure how it would go, but now it's one of our most engaging gatherings. People show up eager to learn, to share, and to grow together in God's Word.



God's been blessing our little church in big ways. We've already had a few baptisms, and three more people have put their hand up to be baptized in December. On top of that, three of our members are heading to Bible college at Mamarapha in Western Australia — a huge step of faith and commitment to ministry. Watching people grow in their walk with Christ and take these steps has been one of the greatest joys of my calling.

But honestly, the biggest blessing in all this isn't the programs, it's the people beside me. My leadership team is my greatest strength. They're incredible men and women of faith who serve with heart, humility, and unity. I wouldn't trade them for the world.

Together, we're not just running a church — we're building a spiritual family. A family that reflects the love and mission of Jesus right here in the heart of Redfern.



"Where two or three are gathered in My name,
there am I in the midst of them."
– Matthew 18:20

Pr Henry Dunn I Pastor Redfern SDA Church



God's Word in Every Community

The ATSIM Bible Opens New Doors for Ministry

Exciting new partnerships are opening doors for ministry across Australia as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries (ATSIM) continues to share God's Word through the ATSIM Bible.

In October, Mission Australia CEO Sharon Callister, Deputy CEO Ben Carblis, and Regional Leader for North Queensland Dr Phil Flint were each presented with an ATSIM Bible. All three leaders are Christians, with Ben currently studying theology part-time. The presentation marks a growing connection between Mission Australia and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, strengthened through the work of Daniel Gela, former Mamarapha College student and current Mission Australia Community Chaplain in Cairns Southside, and Uncle Noel Wason, whose earlier ministry in Yarrabah helped establish meaningful community relationships.

An initial 60 ATSIM Bibles were received by Rev Leslie Baird, a former Anglican minister, who runs Bible studies with young people in Yarrabah on Thursday nights. Aware that the Bibles were produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Rev Baird was still eager to place them in the hands and homes of local youth. The response was overwhelmingly positive with young people and families expressing deep gratitude and even requested to purchase additional copies for personal and family use.

Inspired by the impact in Yarrabah, Mission Australia's Head Office has since ordered 120 ATSIM Bibles to be used across Australia, including Far North Queensland, Mornington Island, Dubbo, Coffs Harbour, Whyalla, Darwin and Perth, ensuring that God's Word continues to reach communities in culturally meaningful ways.

Mr Gela is working with the Yarrabah Anglican leadership to explore future partnerships such as strengthening youth, men's and women's ministries and holding children's holiday programs. Northern Australian Conference ATSIM Director, Pr Soani Vosalevu has also been closely involved, witnessing firsthand how these Bibles are bringing encouragement and hope to local communities.

"Interdenominational collaboration is a powerful thing," stated Pr Vosalevu, "When we combine our resources with existing community connections, we can share God's love in even greater ways."

These growing partnerships highlight the far-reaching impact of the ATSIM Bible; bridging denominations, strengthening relationships, and most importantly, helping people across Australia connect with God's Word in ways that reflect their culture, language, and identity.

Lorraine Atchia I Administrative Assistant AUC ATSIM



Dr Phil Flint, Sharon Callister and Ben Carblis





Confirmation Service at St Alban's Anglican Church in Yarrabah where young people received their ATSIM Bible

GOD'S STRONG WAYS

Outdoors: Country, God's Healing Ground

There is something healing about stepping outside. The moment our feet touch the ground and our eyes take in the sky, our spirit begins to feel lighter. Country has always been more than ground beneath us. It is a living place of story, healing, and connection. It is also one of the greatest ways God shows His love, through His creation.

The Bible reminds us, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands" (Psalm 19:1). When we are outdoors, we are not only enjoying creation but also spending time in God's classroom. Walking outdoors we are reading His lessons of peace, strength, and hope. Every bird call, every breeze, every flower, every sunset is another page in the book of nature that points us to Him.

Sunshine as God's Gift

Ever notice how good it feels to sit in the morning sun? God made sunshine to do more than warm us. It gives life. Just a little time in the sun helps our bodies make Vitamin D, keeping our bones strong and helping us fight sickness. It also lifts our spirits, making us smile easier. God knew exactly what we needed when He created the sun to shine down on us.

Blue and Green Healing

As we look around and see the deep blue of the sea, the green shade of a tree, the endless open sky, these colours speak peace into our minds. Scientists now call it "blue and green therapy," but we have known the healing power of waterholes, bushland, rivers, open spaces and resting under a big old tree. Spending time in these places helps to quiet busy thoughts, settle our stress, restore balance, brings peace to our mind and even helps us sleep better at night.

Earthing – God's Way of Grounding Us

Walking barefoot on sand, grass, or soil is more than a nice feeling – it brings health. It's called "earthing" and helps our bodies release tension. Genesis reminds us that God formed man from the dust of the earth. When our feet touch the earth, we're reminded we belong here, connected to Country and to our Creator. It's God's way of grounding us, bringing us back to Him.

Fresh Air – God's Medicine

Breathing deeply outside is one of God's simplest medicines. Fresh air cleans our lungs, gives us more energy, and makes us more alert. That's why after being cooped up indoors, a deep breath outside feels like medicine to the soul. So, open the windows and doors and let the outside in.

Jesus and Nature

Jesus loved being outside. He prayed in gardens, taught by the sea, and rested on mountains. If the Son of God found peace and strength in creation, shouldn't we do the same? Ellen G. White put it beautifully: "Nature is God's physician. The pure air, the glad sunshine, the beautiful flowers and trees, the orchards and vineyards, and the outdoor exercise amid these surroundings, are health-giving, life-giving" (The Ministry of Healing, p. 263). Being outside is part of God's plan for us to live well. Spending time outside is a way of following His example, opening our hearts to listen, and drawing close to God. We too can find peace in the bush, by the rivers and ocean, or under a shady tree.

So, when life feels heavy, step outside. Walk barefoot, sit by the water, or just look up at the sky. Breathe deep, thank God for His creation, and let Country speak to your heart. Out on Country, we can hear His voice more clearly and be reminded that we are loved, cared for, and never alone. As you breathe in the fresh air, remember creation is God's gift of healing, connection, and love for His children.



Melissa Leistra I Health Course Coordinator
Mamarapha College

Mamarapha College

Embracing Opportunity

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."
Isaiah 40:31

As we look back on 2025, it's clear that this verse has been the heartbeat of Mamarapha College. It's been a year of incredible growth, held together by a faith that just won't quit.

We've seen our student numbers climb, which tells us that Mamarapha is becoming known as a place where people feel safe to learn and grow. The best part? So many new students come because they heard about us from friends who have attended or graduated. It's a beautiful thing to see people eager to find the same blend of spiritual and academic life that changed someone they know.

One of the biggest highlights has been welcoming guest lecturers and experts from all over the South Pacific. They brought fresh perspectives that made our courses even richer. But what's really special is that they didn't just come to teach; they came ready to learn from our students, creating this amazing space where everyone is growing together.

Of course, good growth brings its own set of challenges. With so many new faces, things have gotten a little tight, especially with housing. But instead of seeing this as a problem, we're looking at it as an opportunity. We're already making plans for new on-site housing that will be a hub for both study and community. We're also working hard to break down financial walls by building partnerships for scholarship funds, because we believe everyone who feels called to be here should have the chance.

Everything we do is built on three simple ideas: transformation, healing, and equipping. Our name, Mamarapha, literally means "God who heals," and that's a promise we try to live out every day. The goal isn't just for students to deepen their walk with God, but for them to leave here ready to carry that same healing and hope back into their own communities.

This year hasn't been easy. We've had staff and students navigate deep personal loss and the weight of everyday life. But we hold onto the truth that suffering builds endurance, which in turn builds character and hope (Romans 5:3-4). Every hard moment has pushed us to rely more on God and on each other.

Looking forward, we're as committed as ever to making sure our education truly serves our First Nations students. We're constantly talking with Indigenous leaders and our own students to keep our programs relevant and empowering. Their stories of resilience and calling are what keep us all going. We are so thankful for every prayer, every bit of support, and every person who has partnered with us.

Together, we're building something that feels like a real expression of God's Kingdom—grounded in faith and lived out in love.



James London I Principal Mamarapha College





Women IN Pastoral Ministry SCHOLARSHIP

Are you a woman who is currently studying or interested in studying ministry at Avondale University or Mamarapha College?

Apply now for the Australian Union Conference *Women in Pastoral Ministry (WiPM) Scholarship*!

Applications close 16 January, 2026

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