How delightful it was to see all those happy faces yesterday? It was uplifting to see our enthusiastic students, passionate and dedicated staff and proud families. I know the students and staff have lots of stories to share about their holidays from fun birthdays to catching a 90cm cod, buying a new horse, moving house and so many much more.

Thank you to Mr Eastick and Mr Mott who worked in all that heat during January to ensure our school grounds were beautiful for our students to return to. We are very proud of our school grounds and know both gentlemen have a high standard they strive toward. Also I would like to thank Mrs Sayasenh and her family and Miss Ford for organising their classrooms and creating another organised maths/science storeroom. Your precious holiday time and the hours I know you put into ensuring your classroom was lovely for our student to return to is appreciated.

A massive thank you to all involved in the Australia Day Ceremony. From all reports our students sang (and played guitar) beautifully. Our students always rise to the occasion and make us proud. Thank you to Marion Vile and Mrs Pech for supporting the students and giving up your valuable time to rehearse and coordinate the students so they had the opportunity to participate. Thank you to all the student who participated. Congratulations to Ahlani for being awarded Greater Hume Shire School Student Citizenship Award.

On a personal note, I would like to thank our students, staff and community for their understanding of my health issues last year and this year. Mrs Koschitzke, Ms Peachy, Mrs Pech, Mrs Wiltshire, Mrs Wells and Stacee strived for the last two to ensure our students (especially Yr 6) had a wonderful last two weeks. I thank all of our staff for their team effort and Ms Peachy for her strong leadership. I also respect the hours staff put into clearing the teacher resource room. If anyone saw the massive job at hand they would understand how proud I am of the ladies’ efforts.

Thank you to Pennie and her student committee for organising and running the disco for our students at the end of last year. Our students were very lucky to have such an opportunity and I know the hours it would have taken to prepare. Thanks Pennie! I also felt so honoured to hear your support for my recovery over the last week and yesterday in particular. (I apologise to the families I didn’t get to speak to personally over the phone- I nearly got there!) I can’t describe how proud I am to be the principal of such an amazing school where students, families and staff support each other, show empathy and strive for the best for our students.

At this stage I am on sick leave for all of Week 1 and during Week 2 I will work half days in the office (but I am not permitted to teach face-to-face). Probably 9:30am -1pm. Mrs Sayasenh will always be the relieving principal in my absence. Please feel free to contact her if you have any concerns.

WE have an amazing opportunity this year with our eager students, talented staff and encouraging and supportive families to really strive for excellence. Please allow our new staff over the next few weeks, to really get to know our students and school because they need to be thorough with the collection of student/school data and learn about the students as individuals before learning sequences can be planned.
New Students

To our families and students returning from 2013 we are so happy to see you return to our lovely school. We would like to wish a special warm welcome to our new students and families. Jacques has joined our Year 5 grade. We welcome him (his mother Carolyne and his older brothers in high school Jules and Ben) to our school.

Our adorable Kindergarten students James (his mother Rebecca, father Ashley, younger siblings Will and Savanna), Austin (his mother Lisa, father Justin and younger brother Mason), Izack (his grandmother Heidi and grandfather Bruce). Tom who now joins his older brother Russell and Logan who also joins his older brother Zack.

Next week Marcus returns (hopefully with that fish he is striving to catch for Ms Andrews). We also welcome another new family. Saffron will be joining Kindergarten and her older brother Conar will join Year 2 (and their mother Jessica). I know all the students, staff and community will facilitate a very smooth transition for all our new students and their families making them feel valued and a sense of belonging. We are proud of how encouraging our students are of each other and how they all play and learn together.

This year we have 17 students in the K-2 class and 21 students in the Year 3-6 class and a total of 38 students which is very exciting.

Staff

We have also welcomed a couple of new staff members to our team this year. Thank you to the support and friendliness our students and families have already shown.

Mrs Boutsakone Sayasenh will be teaching our Year 3-6 and will be relieving principal when Ms Andrews is not on the premises. I would like to thank Mrs Sayasenh for her massive effort yesterday for providing every parent the opportunity to share information about their child(ren). I am sure Mrs Sayasenh slept well last night.

Miss Mia Ford has also joined us this year. When Ms Andrews returns to ‘normal’ routines, Miss Ford will be teaching K-2 every Monday and will also be available when Ms Andrews is out of the school to teach K-2. This is to provide continuity for the K-2 students. Miss Ford will be teaching K-2 for all of Week 1 & 2 while Ms Andrews is on sick leave.

Mrs Leanne Koschitzke (my knight in shining armour) will continue as our School Administration Manager (S.A.M).

Mrs Koschitzke works every Monday, Tuesday and Friday. She also works alternate Thursdays.

Mrs Christine Pech will continue being another valuable staff member. Mrs Pech will teach K-2 every Tuesday 11:30-3:15 and teach Year 3-6 every Wednesday 11:30-3:15. This will be the library day for each class.

Dr Maggie Watson will join us each Tuesday beginning Week 4 for science. All classes will be split into Stage groups for lessons. Early Stage 1 will be Kindergarten. Stage 1 is our Year 1/2 student. Stage 2 our Year 3/4 and Stage 3 our year 5/6 students. While half of the class are involved in science (including garden/environmental science) the other half will be with their class teacher. This provides smaller classes and facilitates intensive learning.

Mrs Wendy Wiltshire will continue with us in 2014. Mrs Wiltshire supports Mrs Sayasenh with the learning in the Year 3-6 class on Mondays and the first session of Thursday. She will also support teachers in the provision of art lessons on Thursday from 11:30 -3:00 for each class.

Mrs Kirrilee Twyford will be briefly with us for the first 4 weeks this term to support the learning in K-2 for half days on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Mrs Twyford will be a qualified teacher mid-year so I am sure we will see her again later in the year as a teacher.

Mr Dylan Cook will be with us on occasional days during Term 1. He will conduct the Best Start assessment for our new Kindergarten students this Friday and provide casual days for us. He will be here Friday of Week 1 & 2 and will be coordinating our K-2 Water Fun Day while our older students are at the swimming carnival.

Mr Barry Mott will be one of our General Assistants (G.A). Mr Mott will be working on Tuesday to Support Dr Watson in the garden and also to assist us in maintaining buildings and equipment.

Mr Craig Eastick will continue with the landscaping and irrigation ensuring as always our students have an aesthetically beautiful school grounds.

Mr Matt Hunt will be coordinating our Active After School Sport Program (AAS) each Monday.

Mr Tony Wenke from the Rivernia Conservatorium of Music will join us each Thursday every term from Week 2 onwards. He will provide recorder and guitar lessons.

Ms Michelle Andrews will continue as principal with a teaching load (When she returns from sick leave). This year Monday will be her administration day. Tuesday morning she will teach K-2 and then from 11:30 – 3:15 will be our Learning and Support Teacher. Wednesday to Friday she will teach K-2.

Active After School Sport Program

This wonderful program begins next Monday. Mr Hunt will coordinate this program. Mrs Sayasenh will provide Matt with assistance and Miss Ford will focus on supporting the K-2 students in this program for the first half of the session. It will run from 2:45-3:45pm. This means that students who need to catch the early bus will need to decide whether they will participate for half of the session and then catch their usual bus home or whether a parent/carer is able to pick their child up from school at 3:45pm. The students who catch the second bus will just catch it as usual. A permission note is going home today. Please understand that NO child can participate without the note returned. Please be very clear with our staff about arrangements for your child to participate/be picked up/walk home etc as we want all students safe.

I know Mr Hunt is very excited and he will be positive and have the students eager!
**Farewell and Thank You**

We were informed at the end of the year that Mrs Wells (Kitchen Specialist) resigned. We thank her for her conscientious effort over 2013 and wish her good health and happiness in the future. In particular we acknowledge her Yr 3-6 lessons, Education Week Luncheon, Yr 6 Farwell. We have decided to put the Kitchen aspect of Stephanie Alexander Kitchen program on hold until Term 3 when Mrs Sayasen will be trained to conduct the program. Some parents have offered to assist staff in providing occasional opportunities for our students to participate in kitchen activities. I thank them and more information will be provided in the near future.

In Term 3 it will operate as a K-6 program. Miss Ford will also attend training and provide learning opportunities for K-2.

In the meantime Miss Ford will provide creative activities in the kitchen during Term 1 & 2.

I thank our community for their anticipated understanding. Our priority right now is to have our classrooms up and running smoothly, happy student engaging in meaning learning before introducing a new program for our new staff. The garden will still operate from Term 1 and the students will have the opportunity to bring produce home for families to utilise.

**Music**

Miss Ford is sending a note home today for parents to show an “Expression of Interest” for recorder and guitar lessons.

This year we require families to pay for their lessons. It is not compulsory, just an opportunity we wish to provide our students. Our K-2 students will learn recorder as a class for 20 minutes and I am really hoping all K-2 will participate in that session.

Please return the note by Monday so Miss Ford can organise groups for next Thursday. More information is provided on the note.

**Home Learning (Homework)**

Our staff really wants to coordinate a whole school approach to home learning. Please respect and understand our decision to hold back home learning until Week 3. Our staff really wants to know our students before ‘relevant’ home learning can be set.

We were also given some feedback yesterday and at our meeting next week, as a staff we will discuss this issue.

Mrs Pech will begin library lessons next week so our students can borrow books. There are lots of things you could have your child do in the meantime including writing a learning journal; learning timetables (Yr 3-6); reading; telling you about what they have learning; researching a topic they are interested in; creating art/music.

**Heat Provision**

During this extreme heat, staff have decided that the students may play outside during the morning, recess and while waiting for the bus. Lunch will be in the Year 3-6 classroom where a rated ‘G’ movie will be shown and students have the opportunity to choose other indoor activities.

**Swimming Carnival**

The Walbundrie Network of Small Schools will be holding their annual swimming carnival Thursday 13th February. All students who turn 8 or older this year are expected to attend. The younger students will have a Water Fun Day at school with Mr Cook.

More information about events will be provided in the near future.

Unlike last year, when we attend activities at the other schools we will not be offering our students the opportunity to pre-order sausage sandwiches. Students are requested to provide a packed lunch for the swimming carnival or may use the kiosk on site at Jindera Pool. More information about this will be provided at the next P&C Meeting, or feel free to discuss with Ms Andrews on her return.

**P&C Meeting**

Our Parent and Citizens Meetings are held every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 7pm at school. Last year we had an AMAZING P&C group who were collaborative, hard-working and also very social. It is a body that assists the school to provide a safe and enjoyable playground and fundraise for school priorities. We urge each family to try to have a representative at this meeting as a lot of information is relayed, decisions are made and people have a voice on their ideas for our school. This year is also our 125 year anniversary and this will require many ideas and ‘hands’. Please contact Michelle Donovan P & C secretary if you would like to add anything to the meeting agenda and if you would like to receive the minutes.

email address: timmichell@bigpond.com

First Meeting is Tuesday 11th February.

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**ACTIVE AFTER SCHOOL SPORT**

Dear parents and students. For Term 1 we will be having 2 activities for our Active After School Sport.

**Athletics:** For the first 3 weeks of AASS we will be doing athletics, with running, jumping, throwing type activities.

**Tennis:** For the other 4 weeks of AASS we will be hitting balls and learning about tennis up at the Burrum tennis courts. Permission notes need to be back to school by Monday or child is unable to participate.

It should be lots of fun!!!

Regards – Matthew Hunt

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**Newsletter Attachments and Permission Notes**

- General Permission Note
- Active After School Permission
- EOI Music note
- Burrumbuttock General Store information on hot lunches