**From the Principal**

This Semester, together with a strong team of school and community representatives, I will be leading an internal review of our school. We will analyse both student and school achievement and improvement, and review our overall performance.

We will celebrate the achievements of the previous four-year school plan and consider aspects and priorities that require renewed focus.

I am seeking opinions from students, staff and the community to assist in developing the future directions of the school. This wide consultative process and collaboration helps us to be sure we have a school plan that truly reflects our local context and requirements as well as covering the needs of a State School system.

An external review team, organised by the School Improvement Unit, will visit Cameron Downs on the 19th and 20th of May 2016. This is part of the Quadrennial School Review (QSR) to be carried out this year. They will conduct a full review of all school processes and report back to us detailing our strengths and making recommendations for improvements which will be included in the new school plan.

The new plan will then be endorsed by the P&C and the Principal’s supervisor.

The review team would like to hear from our school community and I encourage you to have your say. Your feedback is important and will help us to continue to deliver quality education for students at Cameron Downs.

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**New Prep student – Jack Hick**

We welcome Jack as he commences his school career as a Prep student this year. Jack has settled in well to the school routine and is taking the whole new experience in his stride.

Jack working hard

With Jack’s commencement, and the four new e-Kindy kids (see later), the student population of Cameron Downs School for 2016 has effectively doubled compared to 2015! We now have 10 students on site even though the e-Kindy kids are not classed as Education Department students.
Swimming carnival

The Small Schools Swimming Carnival was held at the Hughenden pool in Week 2. This coincided with some much needed rain in the district, and it so happened that the roads from our properties and into Hughenden were impassable on the day. This meant that most of our students were unfortunately unable to attend and compete. However, "where there’s a will, there’s a way", and luckily both Amelia and Daniel Wearing were able hitch a ride to Hughenden with Jim Lindsay in his plane, and participate in the competition to represent Cameron Downs.

Our swimming stars

Both Amelia and Daniel did the school proud and put on some spirited swims to win a good number of ribbons. Amelia won the Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Backstroke, and came second in the Medley Relay. Amelia also won the Age Champion for 11 years of age. Daniel came first in the Backstroke, second in the Breaststroke and Freestyle, and received a participation ribbon for the Butterfly.

Fund raising sale by tender

A sale by tender of various items of equipment that were surplus to the school needs was held in late 2015. This sale raised $320 for the school. Thanks to those who supported the sale.

e-Kindy now at Cameron Downs

This year we have established an e-Kindy pod at the school. Participation in e-Kindy is a great preparation for school, easing the transition into the Prep year. The program is run through the Brisbane School of Distance Education, and coordinated through the Charters Towers School of Distance Education.

Our four new e-Kindy students, Mackenzie McConachy, Jack Pensini, Hunter Larkin and Hughie Hick commenced with much fanfare in Week Three. e-Kindy runs on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

In Week Five, all the e-Kindy students and their mothers went to Charters Towers and spent a couple of days with kids from other areas and interacted with Cath Priaulx, the e-Kindy teacher. An enjoyable and productive time was had by all.

Over the last few months Stacey has put a lot of effort into resource preparation and organisation for the commencement of e-Kindy. Stacey kicked off and facilitated the first week of activities, but she is unable to continue to be the facilitator in the longer term. Lindy has filled in for the short term, but she is needed in the classroom, so we anticipate the appointment of a new facilitator in the near future.
More e-Kindy photos – a picture is worth a thousand words ....
Playgroup
Playgroup is again being held on every second Monday morning, and is being facilitated by Sarah. The RAFS ladies will be attending a special session on 14th March.

Medication for students at school
For 2016, the Department of Education and Training has issued new guidelines for the administration of medication to students at school. Please speak to Liz if your child needs to be given medication at school.

Have your say about the future of the school!
Would you like to contribute to the planning of future directions for the Cameron Downs School, and help to make our great school even better?

We would really like to hear your thoughts on what makes our school so special, and how to best manage this into the future.

Please add your comments and ideas to the survey sheets at the school, respond to the surveys on our new Facebook page or speak personally to a member of our Cameron Downs QSR team: Brenda, Lindy, Linda, Chelsea, Chris, Stacey, Amanda and Liz.

Paluma Environmental Education Centre visit
In preparation for our 2016 school camp, which will be held at Paluma Environmental Education Centre, Paluma, we had a half-day visit from the Principal and teacher who run the centre, Ashley and Louka. The purpose of the visit was for Ashley and Louka to meet the students in their own environment and engage in some activities so that everyone became familiar and began to build a working relationship.

While Ashley spent time with Mrs C and Mrs Townley discussing the activities and curriculum areas to be covered at the camp, Louka conducted some insect collecting activities which had all the students absolutely enthralled.

They collected insects in the school grounds using scoop nets for the grassy areas, “bashing trays” for the trees and collecting trays for the leaf litter. Louka had containers with magnifying lids to enable close examination of the samples. The collecting and observation activities were a real hit, with the students often giving shrieks of enthusiasm as they found another bug! Louka is very knowledgeable and gave an interesting lesson in the classroom about habitats. This was a great preparation for our upcoming camp.
Louka explains a point about insects

The “bashing” frame was very popular

Amanda in Townsville
Baby Abby Thomson contracted an infection and was transported to the Townsville Hospital for treatment. Abby is now recovering, but will need to remain in Townsville for ongoing care for about 6 weeks, accompanied by Amanda. Best wishes to Amanda, Abby, Zoe & Alan.

School Parade
We will be holding a school “Parade” on Monday mornings from now on. This will give our school captain some responsibilities in assisting to run the Parade, and will provide a means of communication for school activities. Parade will be at 8:30 am on Mondays, and everyone is welcome to attend. The first parade was to be held this week but some welcome rain put a stop to that, as only one student could get to school on that Monday. Hopefully next week!

Staff professional development
Mrs C attended a 2-day Principal’s meeting in Townsville. The first day was a workshop on Age Appropriate Pedagogy, and the second day focussed on assessment, processes for the Quadrennial School Review, Responsible Behaviour Plans for students, curriculum matters and Advancing Education with the introduction and fast-tracking of the new Digital Technologies curriculum. The new Australian Professional Standard for Principals was also discussed.

Mrs C attended the Dalrymple Alliance Professional Learning Community meeting in Charters Towers.

Both Mrs C and Lindy Hick went to Charters Towers to attend a one-day workshop on “Quality Teaching & Learning - Early Reading”, presented by Canadian Dr Lyn Sharrat, who is a recognised expert in this field. The day provided valuable additional insights for the teaching of early reading.

Last Saturday, both Mrs C and Lindy attended a “Seven Steps to Writing Success” workshop in Townsville. This was an excellent day, providing some very useful resources to support the development of quality writing.

Variousi, Shona, Lindy & Mrs Crase (Mim) were the replacement teachers during these absences.

Thanks to Jacob Pensini
The recent very welcome rain caused a bit of a flood through the grounds of the Principal’s residence as the water ran off the adjacent paddock. Thanks go to the ever-helpful Jake, as he graded a drain to divert the water away from the house when we have our next rain event.
New shelving for the Prep Shed

We have installed new larger shelving in the “Prep Shed” to store the play equipment and to make it more easily accessed by the variety of users.

The school students, the e-Kindy group and the Playgroup all make extensive use of this equipment, which will now be more easily available. We have also purchased some more plastic bins to enable the storage and labelling of small items in some sort of order.

So much more shelf space now

Easier access to our play equipment

How long will the order last?

Thanks go to John Cowan who welded up the steel frames. John and Peter Crocos had a “Cut and Stick” day at Peronne, whereby Peter cut the steel and John did the welding.

First Aid training

On Sunday 6th of March, Mark from St John’s Ambulance came out to Cameron Downs School to give us a full-day refresher First Aid course. School staff, community members and three participants from Prairie school attended.

Probably the most critical aspect was the CPR training where we learned the skills and then practised the resuscitation procedures on the dummies provided – the rhythm of 30 compressions of the chest followed by two breaths, was drummed into us. CPR may be critical in saving a life in situations of accident, heart attack and stroke.

We also focussed on the First Aid treatment of wounds, broken bones, bites, stings and burns.

Let’s hope we are up to the task if we do have an emergency.

Yes, I still have all my fingers!

We now know how to treat an embedded object injury
**Brenda’s Corner**

It is hard to believe we are in week 7 already! Wow, time flies when you are having fun... or extremely busy! The Small Schools Swimming Carnival which was hosted by Cameron Downs went well, even though due to wet weather only Amelia and Daniel represented the school, but they did us very proud, competing well and as usual displaying great sportsmanship! Well done to Amelia and Daniel. Extra points should be awarded to Amelia and Daniel for commitment as they arrived in style for the carnival, with roads inaccessible, they flew into town for the carnival! That’s dedication!

This term the students in Years Prep to 4 have been looking at safety issues in health. They have looked at fire safety, health around the home, cyber safety and stranger danger (as part of the Daniel Morecombe program). Amelia in Year 6 has been looking at physical fitness and how this can benefit the school and community.

In art we have been doing visual arts, the students have looked at art from around the world and are learning techniques along the way such as patterning, shape, symmetrical, asymmetrical, overlapping shapes and texture.

Last week I updated my CPR skills at a first aid course held at the Hughenden State School. Cameron Downs staff has also completed a first aid course, this ensures we all have valuable skills needed in an emergency.

Not only has school life been busy, but home as well with my family moving my mother back to Hughenden. Mum and Dad lived at Broadford Station from 1974 till 2001, they then retired to Townsville. Mum has now made the trek back to Hughenden and is now residing at the Hughenden Aged Care Accommodation. They say once you cross the Flinders River you will return! Mum has settled in well and enjoying being out west again where people have a down to earth friendliness! Also on the weekend I joined a photography course put on by the Flinders Poppy Group. The weekend was very informative and enjoyable. I hope I can pass on some of my new learning to the students at some stage.

I hope between now and the next newsletter we have some significant rain to all celebrate!

**From the Chappies**

In this newsletter, I’d like to continue with my series on the seven key roles of chaplaincy in schools. Last time we looked at social and emotional support. This time we’ll look at the role of mentoring and role modelling.

Whether we like it or not, our choices and behaviours are influenced by people around us – not necessarily by everyone around us, but there are certainly people in our lives who shape us more than others.

If we’re fortunate, those who do influence us will do so in positive, not negative ways. It starts at an early age.

How often have you heard it said that children are like sponges, or that young people need good influences? We are social creatures, looking to others for clues on how we should conduct ourselves as we make our way through the world.

We come across people whose behaviour we want to emulate; people we aspire to be like; people who provide us with inspiration, motivation and direction. Sometimes, we refer to such people as our “role models”.

Role models are particularly important for children and young people. In a child’s early years, their sponge-like personalities take in a lot from those around them, particularly their parents. As children move into their teenage years, their sources of influence broaden out to include their peers, although family remains a highly influential social unit.
Adolescence is a time of identity formation and young people look to people outside the family to help them shape the people they are becoming. The presence of a caring adult outside the family who can serve as a role model or mentor to a young person has been shown to be a protective factor against a broad range of negative life outcomes including school disengagement, unemployment, drug use, criminal activity and violence.

Young people with such an adult in their lives have been shown to demonstrate increased self-esteem, resilience and mental health. Interestingly, when young people are asked who their role models are, only a small percentage identifies famous people. Rather, their role models are their parents, other family members or people they come across in their everyday lives.

School chaplains are such people. Almost by definition, a chaplain is an adult who takes an active interest in children and young people, trying to influence them in positive ways through providing inspiration, motivation and direction.

One of their six direct-practice role areas is “Mentoring and Role Modelling”. Through this aspect of their role they not only provide a good example themselves, living out positive values and providing guidance on general life issues, but they also can create opportunities for school-based peers and community-based adults to be good role models for students.

While there are many valuable things that school chaplains do, it is perhaps this aspect of their role that is the most beneficial of all.

Next time we’ll look at the role of educational support.

**Community BBQ and Tennis Night**

On Sunday 20th March we will be having a BBQ and tennis night at the school from around 6:30 pm. Please BYO drinks, and a food plate to share. Come along and bring your tennis gear.

**Swimming lessons**

Each Friday afternoon this term the students are travelling to Hughenden for swimming lessons, ably conducted by Lynette and her helpers.

**Newsletter mailing list**

We would like to be sure that everybody who is interested is able to receive the Newsletter.

If you know of someone who would like to be included in the emailing list, please contact Linda or Liz, or email lwear1@eq.edu.au or ecroc2@eq.edu.au, respectively.