From the Principal ...

Term 2 this year has been both challenging and rewarding at Arawang. Our student leaders are blossoming in their new roles in the school and we can see the benefits to both the senior and junior students from the opportunities that we can offer.

We were delighted to welcome the new school board whose parent members have already been more than supportive of the school. Details about preferred means of contacting the parent board members are in the school newsletter.

Work has begun on building an action plan outlining future support for our indigenous students through the $10,000 grant we have received. We want to make sure these funds are used on well focused activities. Speaking of building, construction on the new school building is proceeding with renewed vigour, and we now expect it to be completed around September.

Despite all the publicity and angst about NAPLAN across the nation, we believe our students were well prepared for the challenges of the testing program, and we are most grateful for the professionalism and dedication of the teaching staff which meant that the experience was calm and orderly at Arawang.

Considerable effort has also been put into delivering our first ever mid year reports and we welcome your feedback about them.

Next year, pre-school hours will increase to 15 hours per week. This has meant a change in organisation of how the pre school campuses will be run. We look forward to having our pre-schoolers here for extra time next year.

The celebration of learning continues on a daily basis at Arawang; we thank everyone in the school community who helps us whether it’s by coming into classrooms, or transporting students; or the many other means of supporting our programs.

Roz Lambert

Super spellers abound

A new, whole-school event was launched this term – the Arawang Spellathon – and it proved to be very successful as both a fundraiser, and as an educational challenge.

“We wanted an activity that had an educational benefit at its core,” says principal, Roz Lambert, “so when a Spellathon was suggested it seemed a good way of combining the need to raise funds for resources, at the same time as reinforcing the need for children to focus on spelling as a key learning activity.”

The students were each given a list of words to learn and were then tested on the list in class. Students were sponsored for every word that was spelled correctly, or in some cases, a donation was provided in general support of the child’s motivation to do her or his best.

“The Spellathon was very popular,” says literacy coordinator, Brooke Calvert. “Some students decided to challenge themselves further to learn more difficult words. We were delighted to raise $5,500, which will be used to purchase resources for students in years 3-6.”

In recognition of both the spelling and fund raising efforts, book prizes were made to children in each class who spelled the most words right, or who raised the most money.

“We’re very lucky to have such a wonderful parent and carer community that saw the value in supporting this activity,” says Roz Lambert.

Term 2 is Rostrum term at Arawang, a program that encourages students in the senior school to develop their public speaking skills by developing a speech over a period of time, and practising their presentation, using palm cards. Several students presented entertaining talks, but the stand-outs were Brook S, who explained “Why everyone else is always late”, and the winner, Callum L, (right) who gave his views on iPods and iPhones.
This term, Arawang has kept up to the beat offering many musical opportunities for children throughout the school. In May, as part of the Musica Viva schools program, a five-piece musical group, Tigamura, presented a concert to the whole school. Their music has origins in Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay, and features lively dances and expressive lyrical songs.

Lucy V from 6/5J reported, “The music Tigamura played on their ancient Inca instruments was mesmerising, they played with real passion.” Spencer G, from 6/5M said, “The thing I loved the most was when they said, ‘cha cha cha’ and we started dancing.”

The new Year 5 Band has had an exciting start to its year, with the first combined band practice where they played alongside clarinets, oboes and flutes, at Fadden Primary School. This was quickly followed their debut at the Arawang Assembly. “It was an outstanding performance,” says Lynne Kowalik. “They wowed the audience with several pieces, including Let’s Rock, Donkey Round, and everyone’s favourite, We Will, We Will Rock You!”

Lynne also reports that the Year 6 Band is going from strength to strength this year. “They are playing fabulous pieces such as Bohemian Rhapsody, Pirates of the Caribbean, music from Shrek, and a wonderful medley of Scottish songs called Gathering In The Glen.”

As well as a combined band practice at Chapman Primary School with players from Chapman, Curtin and Hughes Schools, they have a busy time ahead with performances planned for Arawang Assembly, the Band Festival, Floriade, the Arawang Fete and Bandstravaganza later in the year.

The 2/1, 4/3 and 6/5 choirs are all sounding beautiful due to their hard work during choir rehearsals, and are looking forward to Floriade, assembly and Mirinjani performances later this year. The 6/5 Choir is also preparing to compete in two sections of the National Eisteddfod where they will be singing in Welsh, as well as performing an exciting song about bear hunters. They will also be singing a new Australian choral work, composed by Mrs Kowalik’s brother, Graeme Leak.

“It’s a very exciting piece,” says Lynne. “It features some very unusual sounds, such as psst, tap, and gurgle gargle!, which requires great concentration from the singers, and makes the audience really sit up and take note.”

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Musica Viva’s Tigamura band performed at Arawang this term

Arawang’s I-2 teacher, Alison Inskeep has been mentoring a student from Canberra College as part of the Big Picture Education program. Big Picture Education is a non-profit organisation aiming to achieve change in the education system. Canberra College student, Georgia Muis, has been working in Alison’s 1-2 Insects class, learning first hand about the challenges of teaching in the 21st century.

“Georgia has made an enormous contribution to the children in the classroom,” says Alison. “And she is so enthusiastic, she has already registered as a Learning Support Assistant with the ACT Department of Education.” Another indicator of Georgia’s commitment to teaching as a career is her decision to begin university studies this year, even before she has finished year 12.

“Mentoring a young adult has been very rewarding for me,” says Alison. “I have watched Georgia blossom and become passionate about teaching and develop wonderful relationships with students.”
This term at **Weston Preschool** the children enjoyed taking part in a fitness program, called *Catch me if you can*, designed to increase physical activity and develop motor skills.

CSIRO’s *Green Machine* visited in May, providing a fantastic hands-on session with magnets, light and reflection, energy storage, sounds, vibrations and balance.

A working bee also laid the groundwork for the future planting of a children’s garden, with a delicious morning tea being the pay-off for the many helpers who turned out for the task.

### Leading the way

This year’s school parliament was inducted this term in a special ceremony including local federal member of parliament, Annette Ellis. Some new roles have been defined for this year’s group, including playground mediators, who provide basic first aid (band aids are so important) and recognising children who are playing cooperatively in the playground.

School parliament meets regularly and aims to offer students with an opportunity to contribute to some decisions about the how the school runs, and to educate about the parliamentary system and how it functions.

This term, year 6 leaders attended the Capital Kids, Capital Leaders program. The course offers attendees a day long workshop with students from other schools, and covered how to set goals, the importance of resilience, and the qualities of a leader.

They were fortunate to hear from the 2009 Young Australian of the Year, Pierre Johannessen; a member of the Kulture Break dance group, Francis Owusu; and the voice of *Blinky Bill*, Robyn Moore. The day also provided the students with an opportunity share information about current leadership initiatives occurring in their own school.

Zali J was voted in as Arawang’s Prime Minister this year; and receives her badge from Annette Ellis and Roz Lambert.
This term saw the arrival of more than 60 sets of guided readers and over 100 home readers purchased with $5,000 donated by the Arawang P&C Association. The resources were bought for use mainly by K-2 classes, and are to be used by classroom teachers and Arawang’s literacy coordinator, Brooke Calvert.

Brooke says that both teachers and students were excited to explore the new books. “A big thank you to the P&C for supporting our belief that ‘working in partnership with our community enhances student learning’.”

Waramanga Preschool went on an excursion this term to see the “Wombat Stew” stage performance of the book by Marcia Vaughan and Pamela Lofts.

One fine day, on the banks of a billabong, a very clever dingo caught a wombat and decided to make ...

“Wombat Stew
Wombat Stew,
Gooey, brewy,
Yummy, chewy
Wombat Stew”

“My Favourite part was when the emu did her ballerina dance.”

Afterwards, we read the story in several different ways including dramatising the making of the stew.

Arawang made the most of being in the national capital this term, when Questacon brought its travelling Q to You exhibition for the K-2 classes.

The show supported units that have looked at invention and the use of energy in our everyday lives; and investigated the forces of pushing and pulling in the On the Move unit.

“The children were really engaged and enthusiastic,” says Candice Hourigan, Year 1-2 teacher, “and the presenter, Patrick, inspired the students with his presentation about various forms of energy. It was an extremely valuable ‘incursion’ for us – he was able to do mini-explosions and other activities that we would not have been able to do here. He also left us some equipment that we are using in our investigation play sessions.”

Three cheers for the members of Arawang People, our chess team which came third at the Woden/Weston chess championship this term.

Finn P, Tommy P, Andy P and Stephen R (pictured right with their trophies) move onto the ACT Chess finals held in August.

Congratulations also to year 3’s Anthony L, (left) who scored an amazing seven (7) wins in seven (7) games.

Teacher, Gina Brown, takes the chess club every lunchtime on Fridays. She says she has been very proud of everyone’s improved ability and positive attitude this year.