Welcome to our new students in term 4
They are:

😊 Tyra Beckett
😊 Marcus Greig
😊 Detroit Groeneveld
😊 Phoebe Groeneveld
😊 Olivia Henley
😊 Kahli Henley
😊 Jadyn Rutland
😊 Kye Rutland
😊 Lexi Rutland
😊 Harlowe Teishkin
😊 Maximilian Teishkin
😊 Daisy Thomas
😊 Lucy Thomas

What’s happened to the year?

Now you would have to agree that it goes in the blink of an eye! We no sooner wound up term 3 and now it is just about the end of this term. We have farewelled a number of students and gained some new ones. The turnover of families is constant and so it’s vital that you read the newsletter and go to our DE website for information and changes. The new enrolment procedures for distance education in NSW are now finalised and a link to these is on our site. We will be saying goodbye to a long-time colleague, Jill Hadobas, who is returning to mainstream teaching. Jill has been in distance education for many years. We wish her well for 2014. We will also be welcoming new staff but, just who they will be is not known at this stage. Families will be contacted early next year once we have a firmer idea of teachers and classes. I thank you for your patience for now. Thank you, thank you, thank you to all families for your efforts and time. It’s a constant task and you do it so well. Please enjoy the break and all the best for the festive season from all of us at Queanbeyan DE.

Warm regards, Eloise Dews
Year Book 2013

has been delivered to you!

With its beautiful cover: a collection of artworks representing our resilience, the production of the digital version of the Queanbeyan Distance Education 2013 Yearbook is now complete and it has been sent to student DET email addresses. Some of you may have received a copy in your Dropboxes. There are some funny tales and pictures, recipes, pet photos and the like. Please enjoy reading about yourselves, your teachers and your fellow school friends. A huge thank you goes to all who tried and tried again to use the proformas and who persisted to the end. Michelle, our resident expert in all things difficult, has compiled and edited and included everything from everyone. Thanks to Michelle too!

Art Supplies

If you find that in 2014 you are low on art supplies, please contact the centre and we will top up your kit. Most students will be participating in the new Artventure lessons so this may be the time to act.

During the hols...

Play for fun and learning.

Play creatively and curiously
It’s not surprising why people are drawn to play. Psychologists say fun is a basic human need. When we are having a great time we are energised. When we are enjoying ourselves we are in the moment. Play cubbies or use lots of things in the sandpit. Play water games or make some goop or slime. These recipes can be readily found on the web and are so much fun.

Play mathematically
Play board games or computer based games together. Talk about how mathematical ideas (especially chance and data) can be used to play a game, as well as develop successful strategies. Chess, Tic Tac Toe, Snakes and Ladders and Ludo are great. Play Boggle! It’s my favourite. Oh, it’s a word game and it’s heaps of fun and my fave.

Play musically
Listen to music together and sing to your heart’s content. You may have Karioke or a few CDs that you love to sing and dance to. Music lightens the heart and is a great way to learn to develop a sense of beat, rhythm, harmony, pitch. The list is endless when it comes to music. Did you know that musical ability is linked closely with mathematical ability? Well, now you do!
Hi there Distance Education families....  

It’s the Woolf family

We are the Woolf family from the A.C.T. The year 2013 was our year of adventure - a trip travelling around Australia living, working and playing from our caravan. There are five in our family - Mick and Rochelle (Dad and Mum), Charlotte (8), and the two boys Dempsey (6) and Harper (4). We packed up and left in April and are still travelling but close to the finish of our trip, as we type during this last week of November. We have also taken along two of our four dogs. We think they are the luckiest dogs in Australia to have travelled so far! As we have been travelling Mick has been relief teaching as he is a teacher and Rochelle has been working away at Distance Ed with the kids. Essentially we all do our school work and when we have seen enough of the sites at one place we have moved onto the next. Here is our story from this year.

We started off by heading to southern central Queensland via a quick stop over to find some opals at Lightning Ridge (we were unsuccessful). We stayed on a wheat and sheep farm near a town called St. George for three weeks. Mick did some relief teaching in St George and Diranbandi, which are both predominantly indigenous schools. In between fishing, yabbying and pig hunting we managed to see some really large scale Australian agriculture in progress. We also met Barnaby Joyce at the ANZAC March who was very impressed to meet some Canberrans in the town of St George.

From here we headed over to the Sunshine Coast where we were glad to have our first coastal stop, even though it was rainy and miserable weather.

We used our time here to see Australia Zoo, Noosa, and the Glasshouse mountains. We stayed with some relatives here who run a bakery and we ate lots of leftovers which was a real highlight for the kids. It’s not often that you get to pick between Caramel Eclairs and Vanilla slices for dessert five nights in a row!

Our next stop was on a friend’s farm near Townsville. They are actually the largest mango and zucchini producer on Australia’s east coast but unfortunately mango season was well and truly over. We’ll talk more about this stay shortly as we returned here for a second visit.

Moving on from here was the part of the adventure we had been planning for and looking forward to the most - Cape York. It took us four days to make it to the mining town of Weipa on the western side of the Cape. The last seven hundred kilometres to Weipa are on a gravel road which took us two full days driving and was a challenge with a caravan. Despite the large scale mining in Weipa, the remoteness of the Cape is overwhelming. It is hot and all bodies of water contain crocodiles. We spent a month up here catching mud crabs and fish. Mick also managed three full weeks of relief teaching.

Weipa is one of the schools trialling Noel Pearson’s new program for indigenous education so it was interesting for us to learn a little about that even though it was only a short time. During the third week we left our caravan in Weipa and travelled the last four hundred kms to the tip of Australia. This proved to be the biggest challenge of the trip but despite some mechanical problems we made it. We will be sure to make a large framed picture for our wall at home with that famous tin sign. That so many dream about but not many get to reach.
After Weipa we went to Cooktown. This was a very relaxed town, we think because of all the fishing and sailing, so we found it pretty easy to get along with everyone we met here. The indigenous kids here were really welcoming and we all think Cooktown is a place we could return too for an extended period of time. We stayed for a week and a bit and had a new radiator freighted up to us which Mick installed in the caravan park. Anyway after checking in with Captain Cook and his museum we headed back down to Townsville again.

We stayed on the farm here for another month. During the week the kids and Rochelle completed as much school work as we could. Harper was happy to amazingly play Lego for hours each day. Charlotte and Dempsey enjoyed the routine for a change, even if the "school teacher" had to crack the whip every now and then! On the weekends we checked out the booming city of Townsville. The surrounding towns were really friendly and we attended a few functions connected to the school Mick was working at. A highlight here for the kids was the classy five star restaurant 'Sizzlers'. The kids are still in disbelief that you can return to the ice-cream machine as many times as you like and it never runs out!! It was like where 'My Kitchen Rules' meets 'The Biggest Loser'.

After our month here we fast tracked it west to Mt Isa just in time for the biggest Rodeo in the southern hemisphere. The event was fever pitch and the cowboy/cowgirl culture infectious. We were well and truly sucked in and now have a miscellaneous assortment of big black hats and cowboy boots that seemed a great buy at the time but will probably never again see the light of day.

From here it was a few slow days into the NT and over to Katherine. We went swimming at Mataranka Hot springs and also checked out Katherine Gorge or 'Nitmuluk' as it is preferably called now. These were the highlights and we really enjoyed them but everything else, including the caravan park were not so enjoyable so we kept on moving.

We did the Darwin thing and saw Litchfield National Park then headed to our next life changing experience in Timber Creek where Mick took on a two week relief block in an Aboriginal community. We actually were given a house to stay in here which was sooo great!! Hooray a house without wheels and a real air conditioner! The kids also attended school here which increased the white population of the school by 150%. It was a fantastic opportunity for all of us. The kids made heaps of friends. Harper (4yo) caught the school bus out to the four communities with some of his class mates most days. He would then bus it home to our house and tell me about his great day, amazing for a pre-schooler. Charlotte and Dempsey enjoyed being back in a classroom especially being able to make new friends. This is the only place where we caught a barramundi and where the crocodiles don't really bother to swim away from you when you are fishing from the banks in front of them. The school gardener kept nagging us to go fishing with him in his ten foot foldable
fibreglass boat. Rochelle was happy for Mick to go without the kids but he declined also.

From here we went in to WA and the amazing Kimberley's. Despite the beauty here it was very, very hot and hard to enjoy. When it's 45 degrees you really want to swim. But if you swim the crocodiles will eat you! We thought maybe the thermometer was wrong here but when both our fridges stopped working as did everyone else’s in the campground we realised it was just simply that hot! For the record books a town near us called Fitzroy Crossing had forty consecutive days of forty degrees which started while we were staying here. Yuck!!

Our next spot is one of our favourites - Broome and its famous beach Cable Beach!! At Cable Beach we could finally swim in the ocean and spot whales from the beach. You are also allowed to drive on the beach here so every afternoon after Mick finished relief teaching at school we would finish off our Distance Ed, and drive onto the beach and relax by swimming in the ocean. You just have to keep an eye out for crocs as most nights we were there the rangers were spotlighting on the beach to catch the "big croc" which was hanging around.

Broome was a really relaxed town and the people super friendly. It had some cool hippy markets and heaps of bands and buskers which really create a great feel despite the searing heat. We finished off the term in Broome and used the holidays to make our way down the WA coast to Perth. We stopped at Ningaloo Reef which is truly amazing and then Monkey Mia.

We camped at a really cool spot and again due to the cold huddled up to the fire each night.

Our next stop over was the first time we have camped on Australia's most famous river the Murray. It was really nice here and we continued exploring the Murray system all the way into Victoria.

To date we have driven nearly 45,000kms. We have collected over eighty cloth patches from each little spot we've stayed in and will sew them onto a big map of Australia when we are home. Mick has worked in fifteen schools and Rochelle and the kids have worked really hard to keep on top of the Distance Ed work. The challenge has been keeping up a routine but despite this it has been great to have so much assistance and support from the teachers there. We hope everyone is having a good year and we would like to let Ms Ruth and Ms Gillian know that we thank
them so much for all their work. Especially waiting for our next address each time we moved on - that must have been a real pest! See you later - the Woolfs.

You are now able to access a wealth of information directly from the Kids Matter site through our homepage. Topics on family issues, child behaviour and emotions are readily available, are short, to the point and practical. You may have time over the holiday period to make yourself familiar with this site so you can draw on it if and when the time or occasion arises.

**Your fees for 2014**

Among other student purchases, your paid fees allow your students to access online learning sites. Please pay your fees at the beginning of the school year. We have endeavoured to keep the fees as low as possible. The fees are:

Each student resident in NSW or travelling in Australia  
= $50 per 12 month period or part thereof

Each student living temporarily or travelling overseas and receiving work wholly electronically or through diplomatic post  
= $50 per 12 month period or part thereof

Each student living temporarily or travelling overseas and receiving work via the post  
= $100 per term.

A resource deposit for newly enrolled students of $50 is held in trust and refunded on the return of all resources.

Please Direct Deposit your fees to  
Bank name: Westpac Bank  
Account name: Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre Administration Account  
BSB Number: 032-001  
Account Number: 16-7845  

Further information about fees can be obtained by contacting the office on (02) 6299  

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**Some good sites for parents**

**Raising Exceptional kids.**

Michael has an education background, and holds a Master of Educational Studies with research into what makes healthy families tick. There’s some very solid and inspiring information here which is easy to read and apply. For those who prefer to take in information via video, you will find plenty of these too. It really is worth a look.
Learning online in 2014

Many of our families have access to a number of our subscription-only online learning sites such as Reading Eggs, Reading Eggspress, Raz Kids, Mathletics, Maths Online and Ziptales for example. They have proven to be most successful and we are continuing to subscribe to most of them in 2014. Students have been provided with access free of charge and this will continue next year. However, we have limited places available in each site. Hence, teachers have been selective when programming for each of their students and have determined that the use of a particular site for a student is going to be beneficial in progressing their understanding of concepts, of learning to read or to spell or to comprehend at different levels. These are just some examples. In each set you will find that students have set work to complete online. If it is that you are not completing this work online and your enrolment in the site isn’t being utilised well, then your use of that site may be withdrawn so that the other students can take up a place. It’s the old adage of use it or lose it for next year. Here’s some info about some of our online learning sites and how to use them well.

Artventure

Most of our students are starting some great learning at Artventure. It is a wonderful new addition to our suite and it is full of step-by step art lessons for kids. We are certain that our kids will be producing some great art of their own which we want them to share on Edmodo.

It will be important to take a digital image of finished artworks and upload to desktops and then to Edmodo. If that thought doesn’t sit well, ask your children how to do this and they will know! Jo is going to be continuing the facets of learning in the visual creative arts via the Edmodo site so this is a vital next step for all families.

Go to www.artventure.com.au

Spellodrome

We have subscribed to a wonderful spelling program called Spellodrome. For those parents who already use Mathletics, Spellodrome is owned by the same company (3P Learning).

Spellodrome was designed by educators and is a teaching and learning tool that is designed to improve spelling through key strategies. Using play and practice, students enjoy spelling and improve their results. The image below shows you the student home page after the child logs in.

Each tab represented here are the online activities which the children can use. When you click on these tabs, they take you to different home pages and allow you to access a variety of online activities. A tab that often gets missed in the ‘Writing Fun’ tab. The image below shows you what the ‘Writing Fun’ home page looks like.

This is great for the students as not only does it teach different text types, it also shows them examples of what a text type for each year group should look like. The students can then type their own text type on line and save it or email it to their teacher!
Mathletics has so much to offer our students and there are some real hidden gems for our students to use. The middle section displayed here shows you all the maths strands covered in the Australian national curriculum. This is where the students click on a maths strand tab and learn specific numeracy skills for that strand.

Here on the right is a score tally to show the students online progress. The 7 tabs on the left show you different 3P learning sites that the children can access as extras.

**Mathletics**

The second part of the ‘concept search’ is far more comprehensive and is interactive in showing the children the many concepts within each strand such as time.

**LIVE MATHLETICS:**
This is an online maths challenge site where the student can challenge someone around the globe or verse the PC.

**PROBLEM SOLVING:**
This tab is locked and the students can access this activity by earning gold bars. See the tab under the ‘My awards section’ on how to win gold bars.

**CONCEPT SEARCH:**
This includes two great activities. The first is an ‘Animated dictionary’. This dictionary is great to find math definitions and explanations.

This is the home page you see after you have clicked the above tab. The rainbow coloured tabs are broken into year groups.

When you click on one it will take you to that particular year groups activities. This is a great way to teach initial maths concepts and ideas. This page is a glimpse of what you will see when you click on a certain icon or picture it will take you where you need to go.

**RAINFOREST MATHS:**
This is an interactive math program created by Jenny Eather. Jenny Eather also created writing fun. This is one of the Mathletics hidden gems.

This is one of the Mathletics hidden gems.

When you click on one it will take you to that particular year groups activities. This is a great way to teach initial maths concepts and ideas. This page is a glimpse of what you will see when you click on a certain icon or picture it will take you where you need to go.

**TIME TABLES TOONS:**
This tab helps the children learn their times tables through singular times tables songs played via a cartoons in various music styled video clips. All of the times tables can be played and learned using this fun learning tab.
A number of early learners are enrolled in the Reading Eggs program because it actually teaches children to read. It builds and reinforces reading knowledge and skills very well to the end of Year 2. However, as with any online learning, each step is sequential and important. Students in Kindergarten are generally starting work on map 1 and complete 4 maps in the year. Each map has between 8 and 10 stepping stones or lessons which, in turn, contain 6 to 8 interactive activities each. This means students should complete 2 stepping stones (lessons), and the activities for each, per day. It seems a lot but the lessons are quick and fun. There are hard-copy worksheets and teacher’s notes for each stepping stone which will be included in student set work.

You’ll notice on map 1 that a number of areas in the left panel are locked. As students progress in their map work, these begin to unlock. The most important of these areas are the Storylands, Driving tests and Skills Bank areas. As they become available, these should be included in the reading program. The teaching and learning in Storylands cannot be overstated as it helps children to become creative thinkers and writers.

Children’s Holiday Reading

Research has shown that all children experience reading loss if they don’t read over the summer holiday vacation. You can maintain your child’s reading skills if you encourage daily reading.

Suggestions for holiday reading are:
- To borrow from your local library and
- Parents – please read with your children on a daily basis.
- purchase a magazine that is of interest to your child or
- Re-read favourite books that may be at home.

Children of all ages love to have stories read to them. Reading chapter story books on a daily basis is something for your child to look forward to. Listening to a story being read is fully engaging. If your child is already an avid reader, make sure there is plenty of reading material available and time made for reading in a busy day. As parents, if you like to relax with a book or magazine, encourage your child to do the same especially when having down time indoors.

Happy holiday reading to all
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurological disorder that affects the function of the brain. There are a number of symptoms individuals with ASD tend to display, with the most prevalent including:

- Impairments in communication and social interaction
- Repetitive patterns of behaviours and activities
- Difficulty making eye contact
- An aversion to touch

ASD is referred to as a spectrum disorder because symptoms can be found in a variety of combinations which range in severity. People on the autism spectrum can range from being non-verbal individuals to high functioning, academics. No two individuals with ASD will display characteristics in the same way. Effective strategies depend on a thorough understanding of ASD as well as the understanding of the individual with the diagnosis.

To fully comprehend how people living with autism have strong negative reactions to seemingly minor disruptions, we need to understand how they perceive the world. Here is some worthwhile information on autism from the book, From Anxiety to Meltdown, by Deborah Lipsky - a book which is a highly recommended resource on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Lipsky was diagnosed was autism, aged 44. She knows first-hand how hard it can be for an individual with ASD to fit in with our modern world.

Children with autism are often perceived as having behavioural issues. These behaviours are often a direct result of a lack of understanding of what the needs of a particular child are. Children with ASD are often put through many interventions by the adults in their life, who try to adapt them to an environment which is foreign to them. Lipsky gives us the example of a tiger – a tiger’s natural environment is a jungle. We can take a tiger out of a jungle and teach them to perform in a circus. They will learn to comply and at times, follow the rules they have been taught. However, at times, the tiger may snap without warning or refuse to do what they are taught. The same is true for a child with ASD. For a non-autistic bystander, tantrums, meltdowns and bad behaviours are hard to understand. However, if we can try and understand the thought processes of an individual with ASD, this may help to alleviate some of these behaviours.

The golden rule for individuals with ASD is ‘scripting’ – Every second of every minute of every hour needs to be scripted. Individuals with ASD have a compelling need for everything to be run orderly and timetabled into their day. Spontaneity is almost incomprehensible, and to break routine can result in chaos. Individuals with ASD feel like they have lost control of their environment when routines change – unpredictable events mean losing the safety barrier that is essential to their life. To help individuals with ASD feel relaxed and prepared, we must explain in detail exactly what is going to happen in every situation, and the plan must not change.

- Tasks must be scaffolded and visual guides provided.
- Reduce the demands of handwriting – try to use laptops or I pads where possible.
- Increase visual supports to assist with instructions
- Include social skills training
- Assist with time management issues to ensure that all task are completed
- Show ‘how to’ rather than tell ‘what to’
- Have rosters and timetables with picture cues
- Keep the timetable the same each day

If you would like to find out more information on ASD, the following websites are useful:

www.autismtraining.com.au
www.autismaspergeract.com.au
Dr Bill Rogers, a behavioural expert and educational consultant helps parents and teachers to implement the skills inherent in positive discipline practice. We would like to share some of his top tips with you to help keep students on task, ensure that the set work is finished and that your school day runs as smoothly as possible.

All students need to have a safe, friendly and supportive environment to learn in. Routines need to be made and adhered to. Students and supervisors need to co-operate with each other by:

- Listening when each other speaks
- Discussing and talking about work/making a plan
- Being prepared
- Trying their best
- Being courteous to each other

When making rules with your student, it is important to keep the rules simple, few in number and positive in expression. Instead of saying something like, ‘Don’t swing on your chair’, it is important to state it positively and say, ‘Sit nicely’. Always state what you want to see.

It always helps to publish the rules in a large, poster format where students can refer to during their school day. Even in a Distance Education setting, this is important to help children to focus on their task. Students need to know that they have to finish their tasks, and should be encouraged to do so. Rogers talks about the importance of encouragement and how it supports a child’s self-esteem and growth as a person. Raising children (and teaching them) is exhausting. However, there are two kinds of exhaustion. I hope that you can be the latter.

“There are two kinds of exhaustion…..

One arises from lonely battles and unappreciated efforts, losing ground and growing and gnawing feeling of hopelessness that you cannot make a difference. The other type of exhaustion is the kind that accompanies hard work as part of a team, a growing recognition you are engaged in a struggle that is worth the effort and a recognition that what you are doing makes a critical difference for a recalcitrant child. The former type of exhaustion ineluctably takes its toll on the motivation of the most enthusiastic teacher. The latter has its own inner reserve that allows us to bounce back after a good night’s sleep. Indeed the first type of exhaustion causes anxiety and sleeplessness, while the second induces rest and regeneration of energy.”

For more information, please visit the website:-

www.billrogers.com.au

From Ruth in DE

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014**

Please go to....

**Wait out!!**

For now (the end of 2013) we are determining classes as new enrolments continue to come to hand. Please be patient and as soon as we can at the beginning of the new year, your teacher will contact you. The office will be closed until Wednesday 29 January. However, our email addresses are sure to find us.

The Distance Education Centre’s email address is: queanbeyp-d.school@det.nsw.edu.au and can be found on the Centre’s website at http://www.queanbeyp-d.schools.nsw.edu.au/
Fynn McGroder travels the Indonesian waters with his family. He, like Jamey, is so into research; thinking deeply about our global environment and how we are managing it. Duke, his little brother, starts next year!

A oldie but a fave pic of Jamey McGloughlin (with Ruth and Eloise). Jamey and his mum came to visit all the way from Geneva. He’s a ‘big picture’ thinker who will be in Year 6 in 2014. No doubt, he’ll continue to inquire about everything! He’s so into how the world can be made a better place for all the creatures who inhabit it.

Happy snaps of curious kids

Fynn McGroder travels the Indonesian waters with his family. He, like Jamey, is so into research; thinking deeply about our global environment and how we are managing it. Duke, his little brother, starts next year!
Have a happy holiday and thank you to all students, supervisors and parents from all of us at Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre