Dear Parents and Families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students,

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) meetings are held after school, twice a term, at one of the local schools. At a recent meeting which was an AGM, Ms Rosemaree Whitehead was re-elected President for 2013. Congratulations to Ms Whitehead who has worked consistently in the community over the last twelve months. She has signed Partnership agreements with many schools including Karabar High School, Queanbeyan High School, Queanbeyan South Public School and Queanbeyan Public School.

Sista Speak is an Aboriginal girls' wellbeing program designed to run in partnership with the local community. The young women participate in a variety of activities to improve their self-esteem, understanding of career options, finance and ability to make positive life choices. The program has supported four Year 6 girls to build their communication skills. It was presented in two parts. The first two lessons were held at QPS and the last two lessons were hosted by QHS. Linda Anderson, Aboriginal Education Worker at QHS, presented the program that was well received by the girls.

'We enjoyed meeting new people and getting to know them. We have built good relationships and learnt to trust our new friends.' Jordan, Shauntia, Gemma and Nikita

Two students from Stage 2 participated in the Patrick White Young Indigenous Writer’s Competition this year. Tamia Newton, Year 3, wrote a poem and Felicity Pinner-Gare, Year 4, wrote a short story. The quality of the entries was extremely high and while they did not receive an award, they have both been encouraged to continue with their writing. Congratulations to both girls for their commitment to learning.

Additional transition to school activities have been organised and implemented this term for 2013 Kindergarten students. These activities, developed by Mrs de Ligt and taught by Mrs Rosser, provide the children with further opportunities to successfully prepare for school by developing skills that increase their confidence as they journey towards the new year.
Three members of staff, Kim Radoll, Rosemaree Whitehead and Wendy Imrie, trained as facilitators in the ‘No Gap No Excuse’ professional learning package in Aboriginal Education. Every member of staff has committed to undertaking the training to embark on a journey of learning that will enhance understandings and build relationships leading to the improvement of educational, social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal students.

A Parent and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program, called ‘Stylin Up’ ran in the school during terms 3 and 4. Participants covered a range of topics including developing positive attitudes and goal setting, improving communication skills and building confidence and self-awareness. The sessions provided opportunities to for new friendships and fun.

Aboriginal families and school staff came together for the Christmas Gathering to celebrate the children’s achievements, to recognise the many successful activities and to have fun as we move towards Christmas and the New Year.

Queanbeyan Schools as Community Centres (SaCC) – Facilitator: Brooke Hardy  
ph: 6297 2167

Children starting Kindergarten next year attended a transition to school playgroup at the SaCC on Thursday and Friday mornings. The children brought a snack for morning tea and a hat for outdoor play. A qualified teacher ran the preschool-style sessions to develop children’s ‘ready-for-school’ skills.

Hayden Page has facilitated the Homework Club that operated in the SaCC three days a week for students from Kindergarten, Years 1 to 2 and Years 3 to 6. Everyone enjoyed a healthy afternoon tea snack before beginning the homework activity time. The tutors helped students complete set tasks and provided a variety of opportunities to practice literacy skills.

The SaCC is hosting an Open Day on Tuesday 12 February from 10am-12pm. Families with a child aged 0-8 years, are invited to visit the centre to meet the staff, other parents and children. There will be a free BBQ, face painting, arts and crafts, games and toys, mini kindy gym, outdoor activities and a special craft activity with Duncan Smith (Aboriginal friend to QPS).

We are committed to working with families to provide Aboriginal students with the chance to enjoy more choices and opportunities to experience success. I look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Yours sincerely,

Kym Hawes
Principal