Principal’s message

What a busy term this has been! The students have been working diligently on varied projects and they are eager to have them finished by the end of term for the assembly. In science they have been learning how to care for the environment and studying life cycles. Last Wednesday they enjoyed a visit from environmental scientist Jo Ocock and her two assistants, Jonathon and Carly. Joanne is working on a PhD and studying frogs in the Macquarie marshes. We extend a warm thanks to them for sparing time to talk with the students.

Students are also in the process of producing a short movie about democracy as part of their ‘Canberra’ unit of work. During literacy sessions they have composed many written texts including narratives, information reports and expositions (arguments). These texts pertain to their book studies; Dragonkeeper, by Carole Wilkinson and Margaret Wild texts. Please enjoy examples of their work in the following pages.

I participated in a 2 day workshop this week in preparation for the implementation of our ‘connected classroom’, which will be installed before the end of the year. The ‘connected classroom’ will allow Marra PS students to participate in ‘live’ video conferencing with students in other schools. They will also be able to listen to and interact with special guest speakers, such as famous authors, and have ‘virtual excursions’ to places such as Houston’s Space Centre, The Australian Museum and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

In conjunction with ‘face to face’ video, students will be able to receive information by other schools or consultants “virtually” manipulating our interactive white board; this also works in reverse. Yes, we are all looking forward to our connected classroom!

Anita Moore
Principal

Events next term
We already have a couple of events planned for early next term. A musical group called ‘The Junes’ will be performing at Marra PS on Wednesday 20th October. This will be an all day event, with student participation. Carinda PS will be joining us and possibly Quambone PS. On Monday 18th October, Damien Clarke, our regional ‘CAP’ consultant, will be visiting the school and conducting an all day public speaking workshop with Marra students.

Assembly
Our end of term assembly will be held at 2.30 pm on Thursday 23rd September. All are welcome to attend.

Term 4
School will resume for students on Monday 11th October.
The Day I met a Dragon

“Get to work brat, you’ve slept overtime!” yelled the gruff voice.
My eyes flickered and I groaned. Cook was standing over me like a huge (fat) monster.
“Get up!” she roared. “The emperor will want his breakfast soon!”
I kicked off the table cloth that I had used for a sheet that night. I longed for just the simplest of goat’s skin
blanket, just for one night. “But you’re far away from that,” I told myself.

As I cooked the taro, I thought of the escape I always tried to plan. I’d find my parents and....oops, my
parents were dead. Cook had told me the first time she thought I had any sense. After I’d served the
emperor and empress breakfast, cleaned a quarter of the palace, done some washing...
“Oh well,” cook finally said. “You can have some time off”.

I went to my favourite room which had lovely wallpaper covered with majestic dragons. The quilt was
embroidered with lovely Chinese flowers which I did not know the name of. It was the room for a princess
if there ever was one. I went over to the window to look at the view. The rocks were jagged and the trees
were full of shadows, but somehow the willowy trees and the pearly grey colour of the rocks seemed to
soften it and give it a sort of relaxing feeling.

As I looked down at the granite rock of the palace, something brown and hairy caught my eye. I was scared
for a moment but I forced myself to look because I don’t get any excitement at all in an ordinary day.
“Oh how exciting,” I thought.
There was a thick braided rope hanging from a metal ring about a quarter of the way down the wall. Then a
thought struck me like a bolt of lightning. ‘Escape’ was the only word that came into my jumble of a mind.
“No way,” I told myself. “Only an idiot would do that”.
Cook saved me for the first time in my life by entering the room. Have I mentioned that fat cook is quite
savage? I was really sick one day and cook made me work. I think she regretted it because I threw up all
over the emperor’s breakfast! Oh well, I went back and did the rest of the day’s work as cook had just told
me to do.

When I came back to the room it was late in the night. I looked at the rope. My escape was in front of my
eyes, but I didn’t know what to do.
One part of my mind was saying, “Stop being a scaredy cat and do it”.
The other part of my mind was saying, “Stop being ridiculous, it’s too dangerous”.
But I still didn’t know. At that moment I saw an eagle swoop in front of the window.
“Oh chings, let’s do it”. I slid down the wall and caught on to the rope.

In the morning, I looked at the sopping mat of moss on the ground that I had slept on.
“Well,” I said to myself. “I’d better get moving”.
I decided to go to the top of the mountain. By midday I’d reached a cave in the middle of the mountain.
I decided to shelter. Once I had settled down, I immediately sensed something was wrong. Before I knew it
a dragon was standing behind me. I screamed and tried to run. But I realised that would be pretty stupid. I
had nowhere to run to. So I just waited for my painful death. There was none. The dragon was standing
behind me with a look of surprise on his face.

There was a rumbling sound in my head. The dragon seemed to frown and then tried again. This time I
heard a deep hollow voice.
“Who are you and why have you come?”
I gasped, but there was only one explanation. It was coming from the dragon.
“I escaped from the palace and my name is ...um.... ‘Brat’.”
“Brat not tolerable, name is Kirsty”.

“How do you know what my name is?” I asked.
“I have knowledge that when Kirsty comes along I know her name."
Suddenly I heard the noise of hatchets cutting through overgrowth.
“Soldiers coming after Kirsty,” said the dragon.
“What do we do?” I exclaimed loudly.
“Kirsty shuts up and I scare them away.”
I felt offended as the dragon stepped forward and bellowed loudly. He stamped his big paws as a terrified face appeared through the shrubbery. He took one look at the dragon, muttered something over his shoulder and then ran.

The dragon turned around. “Couldn’t we have just flown away?” I asked.
“Li has not took to the air for years, wings are cramped”. 
“But, uh, who is Li?”
“I of course am honourable Li!” said Li very grandly. But then his eyes turned from bright orange to black with a tinge of red.
“Why have your eyes changed colour?”
“Eyes change colour when mood changes. This colour is an anxious colour. Li anxious about big army coming after me and Kirsty.”
“How do you know a big army is going to come after us?”
“General dragon knowledge. Have to get away.”
“We can’t walk because the trees are too big and dense. You would crash into them. We have to fly,” I said firmly.
“Li don’t want to fly but no choice,” said Li reluctantly.

“Well Li,” I said, getting into action. “Spread your wings out,” I commanded.
“Li cannot spread wings. Need special ointment”.
“How am I supposed to know how to make a special ointment?” I demanded.
“Kirsty find wild thistle, maple tree leaves and dragon nuts”.
“How do I know what these are?”
“You will know when you see it, now go!”

I wandered off feeling rather rejected. I hadn’t gone far when I noticed some weird shaped nuts. A ping seemed to sound in my head. Dragon nuts! Soon I had found all the things the dragon had asked for. I was about to head back when I heard shouting and the silver gleam of strong iron chains. Guards! I turned to run but strong hairy arms clamped around my shoulders. I screamed and stomping noises came from the cave.
“The dragon’s coming,” said the man who captured me.

Li came stomping up and his eyes turned white. I struggled, and then threw the nuts, thistle and leaves to Li.
“Eat them. If they’re magic just eat them!” I gasped.
The voice in my head complained but he ate it. He reached out a paw and flicked away the man holding me. I scrambled up onto Li’s back and he gently stretched out his wings. A dagger flew through the air and hit Li in the side.
“Push off with your tail and hind legs!” I commanded. Li pushed with all his might and slowly spiralled into the air. I clung onto his scales for dear life. Li pushed me up his neck with his long horny tail.
“We’ve done it!” I yelled triumphantly as we flew over the palace.
We lived an exciting life from then on.

Ida Dawson, Year 3
Social class systems in Ancient China

In ancient China there were five main classes. The imperial family made it very tough for the other four classes.

The Imperial family
The emperors of the imperial family were at the top of the social scale. They ruled a palace in the capital city of Beijing and they did not have to obey any other humans. Emperors had many wives and children; they were the main imperial family. The emperor chose one of his sons to be the emperor after he died. They were very rich.

Nobles
Nobles were very privileged because they were looked after by the imperial family and they had extravagant houses. They worked particularly in the military for their money. When there was a new imperial family there was normally a new set of nobles. They often became landowners and collected taxes from the people who lived on their land. This made them wealthy, but they had to give the imperial family some of their income.
Peasants
Peasants were farmers and they produced food for all of the social classes. Peasants were very poor and they lived as a family unit. The men never had a day off. The women worked in the fields too, but they mainly weaved clothes. They also had to pay taxes.

Merchants
Merchants were animal breeders and money lenders. They were considered to be the lowest social class in Ancient China because they did not contribute to the good of the whole society. They became very wealthy and were considered a threat to the emperor and the nobles. They had to pay heavy taxes and were sent to join the army.
**Slaves**

There were a very small percentage of slaves in Ancient China. Some slaves were relatives of criminals and some sold themselves or their children because they were poor.

Older people in ancient China were well respected by society, because they were thought to be wise and have great knowledge. Whatever social class you were born into, you were expected to stay in for life. Women were not considered to be equal to men in Ancient China; they were not valued as highly.

Ned Dawson, Year 6
Jack and I

I woke up before Jack and then I woke him up. He went mad and he woke the whole palace.

Jack my snake and I were in South Africa with heaps of giants surrounding us. There were 1,000,000 of them! Jack was spitting in their eyes and they died in a second.

A wizard appeared. He grabbed Jack and turned him into a mouse and he turned me into a dog. Jack hated the wizard. I tried to turn myself back into a person, but I turned myself into a mouse instead. KAP-OOF and all these mice came!

Jack kept on running around in circles and the mice got scared and ran off. We were outside and it was getting cold when we came upon a house. We went in to get warm, but we didn’t see that there was a cat. It came running after us. We ran up to the roof with it behind us. Then it grabbed us and threw us in its mouth.

While he was trying to chew us, we gnawed at his teeth so he couldn’t chew us. Then his mouth opened wide. We jumped out and ran out of the house. We stayed as mice for the rest of our lives.
My Grandma
My Grandma’s name is Albie. I see her only once a year and she gives presents every time we go down there. She is special because she takes us places I have never been.

Archie Ray, Year 1

My Family
I love my puppy a lot because he plays with me. I love going to town with mum and dad because they give me a lollipop.

Jet Hall, Kindergarten

The Day I grew Wings
One day I woke up with wings on my back. I used my wings to fly to Grandma’s house. My wings were rainbow coloured.

Lucy Earl, Kindergarten