

Meet the Staff



I'm **Eloise Dews** and I'm managing the distance education centre. Since the very day I arrived here in 2009, I've worked with an inspirational team of DE teachers and

administrative staff who work together so that each student can learn, grow and explore their talents and develop their love of learning. However, the big job is done by you, the supervisors to whom we are eternally grateful. We continue to change every year as technology opens up new horizons and this provides a challenge for all including supervisors and so I thank you all for moving forward. Last year in my message I was looking forward to Alexander's wedding which is now done and dusted and about my good old cat Barney who is now in catty heaven. My oh my, time changes things.



Hi, I'm **Peter Cox**. I have been teaching here at the Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre for only a short time. I have been seconded for 2014 from my substantive role as Principal of Captains Flat PS into an acting Deputy Principal role

here at Queanbeyan Public School. So far this year I have been teaching Science to stage 3 in the mainstream classrooms for 2 days and work with Distance Education students, most of whom are travelling, for the other 3 days of the week. As a recent recipient of a Neita (*National Excellence In Teaching Awards*) teaching award for the use of innovative technologies in the classroom, I have been really pleased to see the wonderful online learning tools that students are accessing in QDE. Of personal interest, I am really into alternative energies and sustainable building. I have built my own house, which is completely off the grid with solar and wind generators, and many other sustainable innovations. I love talking about these things and looking at solutions for a sustainable future.



Hi, I'm **Gillian Gamble** and I have been a member of the Distance Education teaching team for a number of years after returning from teaching in the classroom. I

enjoy the challenges and the varying opportunities that the DE mode provides especially in the ever changing area of technology. I am certainly learning a lot about technology but never seem to know enough. This year I am teaching Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2 students. My students are home, overseas and travellers. It all makes for interesting communications hearing news from families wherever they are. I have had a varied employment history teaching, nursing and working in the public service. I have an interest in the fine arts but find it difficult to have time to produce any of my own work. Perhaps one day! I also enjoy being outside going for walks and cycling.



Hello. My name is **Ryan Kearns**. I have been at Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre from the end of last year. This year

I am working both in distance education and in Queanbeyan Public School with a year 2 maths group. I am very interesting in Science and Technology and I really enjoy working with all of the online tools that we use in Distance Education. Before becoming a teacher I worked as a pet sitter, a tennis coach and an accountant. I love to play tennis, read and travel. I also love hearing about my students who are travelling and living around Australia and the world. I live in Queanbeyan with my lovely wife Bec (whom some of you know from her work in DE) and my wonderful new baby boy named Joseph.



Hello all. My name is **Max Dews** and I teach here at the Distance Education Centre. I've been a teacher for many, many years and have taught all ages and stages from Kindergarten to Year 12 and even some adults in the TAFE system. I enjoy the challenges of all the technology and regard myself as 'a work in progress' in this regard. This year my students include travellers and students with special needs. I am always pleased to get feedback from the students as this helps me to understand each and every individual. My interests include a good bit of football, going to our local Hungry Jacks to read the newspapers and have coffee and nuggets and avoiding house cleaning chores. When I know these things are coming up, I sneak out to the gym and then come home when it's all done.



Hello. My name is **Suzanne Boyd**. I prefer to be called **Sue**. This is my third year working full time in Distance Education and I am enjoying working closely with all my students and families. I enjoy learning

more from the students that I teach and being a part of their learning journey. I love cooking; especially baking. I've made some very tasty treats for staff and family. I'm always on the hunt for good recipes and my favourite chef is Donna Hay. I grew up at Tathra on the Far South Coast of New South Wales and my family live in Merimbula. I absolutely love the beach, so my hobbies are swimming, stand up paddle-boarding, walking on the beach, collecting shells, deep sea fishing, whale watching and reading. I go to the coast often to visit my family and fulfil my hobbies. I have a beautiful daughter named Erin, a cheeky son named Matthew and a glamorous cat named Gucci.



Hi there all. This is **Josephine Herbert**. I have been working in the Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre for a few years now. (Wow, doesn't time fly when you're having fun!) I have taught in many different situations and countries; from

Indigenous communities up on the Cape York Peninsula to large inner city schools in London. Interestingly, my first experience with Distance Education was as a supervisor. Many years ago my son was enrolled in distance education as we went on a one year sailing adventure and, I must say, that having taught up to 30 students in a classroom, for many years, I was very surprised by how much of a challenge it was to teach just one child! I now live a relatively quiet life in Canberra and with my family, and drive across the border into NSW each day to work. My big event so far this year was to get married to Derek, the man of my dreams, which occurred just a week ago. It was a beautiful day of flowing and colourful saris, sun, ocean spray and close family and friends. I'm now on my honeymoon as you read away.



Hello all. My name is **Ruth Hayward** and this is my 5th year working in the Distance Education Centre. I am currently working part time due to my busy family life outside of school. Currently, all of my students at the

centre are living overseas. I am really looking forward to working with them and getting to know more about the exotic places in which they are located. I live in Canberra and have three young children. My family keeps me very busy but I still find time to pursue my love of reading, traveling and cooking. I also enjoy communicating with all of the distance education students through Edmodo, so make sure you jump on often and post some things we can all read and share the fun.



Hello everyone. I'm **Vickie Fowlie**. I'm the administration manager here at the distance education centre. I have been working within the Centre since 1999. Initially I started work

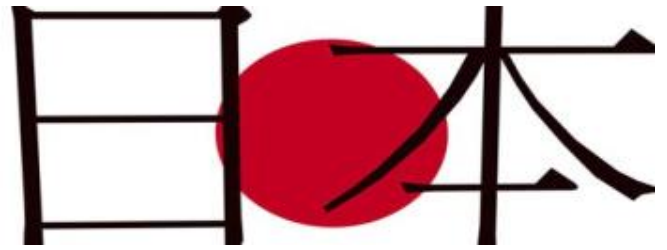
here as the school administration officer until my predecessor retired and I was lucky enough quite a few years ago to have been selected to hold the administration manager position. I am positive that I actually have the best job of all here at the Centre. I get to speak regularly with you over the phone and meet nearly all of our students and their families who are enrolled through Distance Education. My main focus at the Centre is to always try and ensure that the Centre runs smoothly and that all staff, students and their families are provided with the most up to date and best possible resources which suit every child's individual learning program.



Hi to all. I'm **Isabel Thornton**. I have been working at the Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre for over a year

and its very rewarding to work with our DE families. I work with Vickie in the office as a school administration officer. It's a very busy job with many things to do in a day. I answer your phone calls and I deliver your mail to your teacher. I also help to look after and organise library cards so your teacher can borrow books to be sent. I really enjoy my job and hope to talk to you soon.

Interested in learning Japanese?



Then we have the program for you! QDE has obtained a sequenced Japanese language learning program on DVD for students in years 3 to 6. We would like to trial the program through term 2. If you would like to trial the program, please contact Eloise by 28 April.



Students with satellite provision have now commenced using the new REACT system. At present QDE students are working with their class teachers as well as with Hay School of the Air and Bourke/Walgett Distance Education Centres. Don't forget to go to those lessons scheduled at other centres and mark these on your weekly timetable. A new timetable will commence at the beginning of term 2 so please watch out for the emailed attachment.

Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre Website has new features including website guides, links to support websites as well as access to our newsletters and details about upcoming events.

<http://www.queanbeyn-d.schools.nsw.edu.au/>

A home visit to the Gravenor family

Gillian, Ryan and Sue headed off early on Wednesday morning, 5th February 2014. It is always such a pleasant two and a half hour drive across the Monaro and up into the beautiful Snowy Mountains. The day was glorious and the water on Lake Jindabyne was like a mirror, glistening in the beautiful sunshine.

The Gravenor children, Raven, Arlo, Leven and Zollie, were keen to greet us before we were even out of the car. They were excited to show us their new lounge room extension and camping tent, which was set up outside along with beds and sleeping bags. Their school desks were neat, tidy and well organised and they were all keen to show us how well they were doing with their school work.



Arlo is becoming a keen magician and he really enjoyed jumping with Sue and Gillian on a rather large trampoline. He tried very hard to trip them over, but a keen eye and a lot of good luck kept them on their feet at all times (rather exhausting I might add). Arlo is an excellent mathematician and loves to write stories about his adventures. He is also an extremely accomplished motor bike rider.



Raven is a confident reader and spent some time reading with Gillian and then talking about the content of what had been read. Raven was keen to show Gillian some of her special places and so they did some walking and sharing. The climbing rocks gave a great view of the mountains, there was a special tree carving that all the children had

contributed to and a few other surprises were shared. Gillian enjoyed having time with Raven to talk and share. After lunch the challenge was the trampoline and that turned out to be lots of fun.



Leven is starting Kindergarten this year and is already enthusiastic to learn. He was eager to show the books he had been reading and his superb pencil holder – which was carved from a log. We did a Best Start assessment and had a fun day together.



A home visit to the Groves family

On Thursday 13th February 2014 Gillian, Ryan and Sue headed out for a home visit with the Groves family. The weather was good and after the drive out to the family home Jordan and Joshua met the teachers at the gate.

Ivana, Joshua and Jordan were eager to talk with their teachers and share news and stories. Each has their own work area and these showed evidence of children hard at work completing their schoolwork. Over a cup of tea there was much talk about the up and coming trip the family was embarking on for a number of months to see some of Australia. (You may have been following their travels on Edmodo).



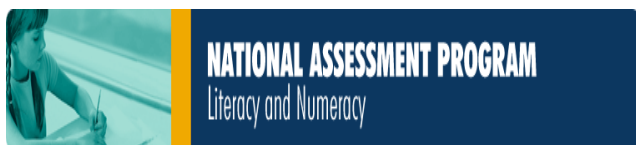
Ivana and Gillian spent some time working through activities in a unit of work that Ivana was completing. Ivana also read some of a text that she chose to share with Gillian and demonstrated her growing confidence and ability in reading. Then some time was spent talking about the art materials that Ivana had received for Christmas and hoped to take with her on her trip to visually record some of her adventures. A visit to the caravan was next on the agenda to see how the fitting out of the van was going. Ivana was very excited at the prospect of the big trip.



Joshua and Sue worked through a maths unit about 'Time'. Joshua timed Sue colouring in a triangle by clapping his hands until she was finished. Then Sue timed Joshua the same way. Can you guess who was the quickest? Sue then timed how many jumps Joshua could do on the trampoline in one minute and vice versa. Can you guess who made the most jumps in a minute? The whole family enjoyed joining in to count the jumps. Joshua is very fit and can do some amazing tricks on the trampoline. Joshua was also very excited about his up coming travelling adventures.



Jordan and Ryan spent some time working on his Best Start for new Kindergarten students. Jordan demonstrated his skill in maths, reading and in making very creative artworks. After all of his hard work, he took a break to show off his tricks on the trampoline. Jordan is very good with technology and he showed Ryan how well he can use his tablet to make recordings, look at his 'to do' list for the day and play interactive games. He was really looking forward to his trip and seeing Australia.



From 13 to 15 May 2014 the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) will be completed by all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all government and non-government schools. NAPLAN has the support of all State and Territory Education Ministers and will assess the literacy and numeracy learning of students in all Australian schools.

The results of the tests will provide important information to schools about what each student can do, and will be used to support teaching and learning programs. Parents will receive a report indicating their child’s level of achievement later in the year; around end September. Each student’s level of achievement will be reported against the national minimum standard.

Background information (student name, gender, date of birth, language background and Aboriginality) will be collected as part of the National Assessment Program. This information is confidential and is held securely to ensure that every student’s right to privacy is maintained.

Students may be considered for exemption from the tests if:

- they are newly arrived in Australia (less than one year before the test) and with a language background other than English, or
- they have significant intellectual disability and/or significant co-existing conditions which severely limit their capacity to participate in the tests.

All other students are expected to participate in the tests. Students may be withdrawn from NAPLAN by their parent or carer if there is substantial reason for their non-participation. This is a matter for consideration by parents or carers in consultation with Eloise at the DE

Centre. If you wish to withdraw your child from the tests you must sign a parent/ carer consent form. Access to special provisions and exemption from the tests must be discussed with Eloise as soon as practicably possible.

When and how does the NAPLAN testing take place for distance education students?

Test papers will be posted to your nominated address on 16 May by Express Post. **PLEASE NOTE** this is after the testing is completed by all mainstream students.

Once papers are received, they are to be completed and returned immediately to Queanbeyan DE Centre in the envelope provided (Australian students only) or by Express Post (overseas students). This will ensure the best possible opportunity for papers to be marked at the official marking centre.

Set aside 3 consecutive mornings to complete the testing as indicated here.

- Day 1 – Language conventions and Writing
- Day 2 – Reading
- Day 3 – Numeracy

Depending on where you are and when you receive your mail, your testing dates will vary.

Students attending the May Gathering will complete tests each morning as follows:

Language Conventions (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) and Writing	13 May 2014
Reading	14 May 2014
Numeracy	15 May 2014

Home students (all categories of enrolment) not attending the Gathering will complete the tests each morning once they are received in the mail.

Students travelling within Australia can either:

***attend any public or private school** closest to them to complete the tests during the testing periods in the table above. You will need to nominate the school in advance and advise the DE centre so that arrangements for your child's papers can be made **OR**

***complete the tests 'at home' under your supervision.** You, as the supervisor, will be required to sign a declaration outlining your compliance with and adherence to the stipulated test conditions.

Overseas students will complete the tests at home. You, as the supervisor, will be required to sign a declaration outlining your compliance with test conditions.

When do papers need to reach the distance education centre?

After your student has completed the tests, they are to be returned to the DE centre in the reply paid envelope enclosed with the papers. If you are located overseas and in a rural or remote area and you know your mail is slow, you are advised to return papers by Express Post. [All test papers received at the Queanbeyan DE Centre by 19 June will be posted to the Marking Centre.](#)

Who marks the papers and when do parents receive results?

Tests are marked by independent markers and after papers are marked, a NAPLAN report will be sent to you. Your child's results are strictly confidential. Results can be discussed between your child's teacher and yourselves.

Additional information about NAPLAN can be found at:

<http://www.naplanforparentsnsw.com.au>

Please email eloise.dews@det.nsw.edu.au for further information.

Attendance at school in DE

Your child, while on distance education, is enrolled as a student at a NSW Department of Education and Communities school. Each set of work represents the work your student is to complete for their learning for the length of time indicated on the pack. This is usually two weeks, or in some instances, one week.

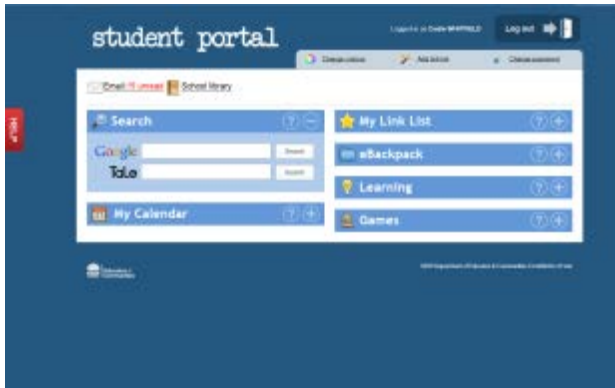
[The regular return of work demonstrates students have been in attendance at school.](#)

Students in distance education are allowed to be absent from school for legitimate reasons! Should the work not be able to be completed for any reason, you need to inform your child's teacher. Your child may be sick or on leave for a special reason (to attend an appointment requiring travel or for urgent family business for example). Alternatively, you, the supervisor, may be ill and not able to fulfil your role. In either instance, where work is unable to be completed, call or email or write a note so the teacher can record the absence and help you with re-organising.



Yes. They really do and they are the key reason why schools exist in communities. Are you seeking practical ideas to help you with your children? Then this is the site for you! It has great information about a range of challenges parents and kids face today which is research based and 'easy to read' information regarding the needs and make-up of diverse groups of children. **Kids matter** is a whole school approach focussing on the mental health of children in their primary years of schooling. QDE is a Kids Matter Centre providing professional development for parents and workshops for students. To learn more about Kids Matter please go to the website at <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary>.

The Student Portal and Student email accounts



Screenshot of the Student Portal homepage

Every student in a NSW public school has access to the Student Portal. This includes our DE students. Within 24 hours of your enrolment being finalised you will have access and your student will have their own email account.

The Student Portal

Each student has a login and a password which will take them to their own portal page. Above is a screenshot of the portal page. This page is accessed via our DE website. Go to the login tab then to student and use your unique login. This is usually first name, then a dot, then surname. Most accounts these days, are followed by a number. From this page, you are able to go to the student email account. It even tells you how many are unread.

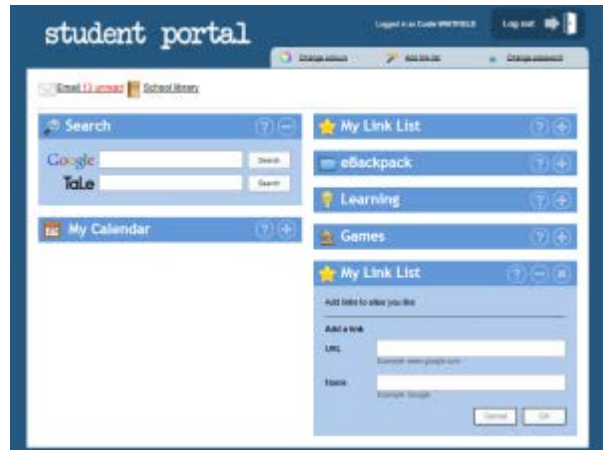
Student email accounts

This is also your child's email account name followed by @education.nsw.gov.au If I were a student, mine would be

Eloise.dews@education.nsw.gov.au

Passwords have all been issued to individual students. **The centre will use this email account to correspond with you.** It will only be where the content of correspondence is sensitive that we would contact you via your private email account. This will be our general practice from the beginning of term 2. Once you are in the portal you will see a number of drop-down menus which all contain

various sites. You can also add to special website links to 'My Link List' for easy access. The library tab will take you to the school library catalogue where you can request library books online to be sent out with your set work. There is a google bar for searching and a Tale bar for going directly to the Primary Student Tale website – another good place to search for something you may need.



Screenshot of 'My Link List' and all tabs

This is what the drop-down box looks like for adding your own links to the web. There is a pull-out **Help** tab at the left-hand of the home page which tells you all about the tabs and the general operation of the portal. Please refer to it to troubleshoot or learn about possibilities. The learning tab has a link directly to the Adobe software which has been purchased for use by students. This is a great suite for DE students to access. Please download it if you haven't already done so.



Everyone has been very busy creating wonderful artworks from **ArtVenture** and uploading them on **Edmodo** for the QDEC students and teachers to see. Log on and share what you have made and see what your fellow students have been making lately.



The Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC) is set by our State Premier to all students from Kindergarten to year 9. The reading 'worm' is the logo this year. It is a great way to help students discover a love of reading. It is also a wonderful opportunity to help develop essential learning habits such as being organised, meeting deadlines, taking responsibility for their reading and valuing regular reading.

The Challenge will run from the beginning of the year and end in August. Students in K-2 must have 30 books read to them to complete the challenge.

Students 3-6 must read 20 books independently or with some help. If any students in K-2 are independent readers they can enter the 3-4 challenge, reading 20 books themselves. Only 5 books can be personal choice books that are not on the PRC list, whatever Challenge undertaken.

Our DE library has a number of PRC books, many labelled on the title page, for our students to read for this challenge. You may have books at home you can read too.

Students should enter the books they read online at the Premier's Reading Challenge Website (see below for web address) All DE students are registered so **log on, using your DET username and password.**

Students then click on "Personal Reading Record". In the box that says PRC ID, students should type in the PRC number for each book read. And then click on the 'enter' button to the right. The book's details should come up automatically and therefore be 'added' to your student's list. If you are unsure if the book is a PRC book you can search this (and the PRC ID

number) using the search box on the top left hand side of the website.

Be careful of spelling and ensure you do not include 'The' or 'A' if at the beginning of the title. For Example, 'The Diary of a Wimpy Kid' is entered as 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'.

When you add a personal choice book (you can read a maximum of 5 books that are not on the PRC book list), you need to do the following;

First, log on to the PRC web site using your username and password, next go to 'Personal Reading Record' and along the top of the page are a number of choices. Click on 'Add a Choice Book', then type in the title of the book and the author and press 'search'.

It may find and accept this book but if not, a new page will come up saying there were 'no matches with the search'. At this point, retype the title and author, but in the section which is headed "STILL can't find a book", click on 'add'. This should add the book to your list.

If you have any questions about the Challenge, or you would like to sign up to read please go to:

<https://products.schools.nsw.edu.au/prc/home.html> or access directly from the QDE website – Links for Learning.

A spark of an idea

If you, as a student of QDE, have a real passion or interest in learning about some place, person or event, culture or other thing then talk about this with your teacher. We can work together so that you follow your passion and develop your love of learning about those things and issues that are important to you. It's never too late to get a spark of an idea!



Dear DE families everywhere

Please join the DE staff and enter the Premier's Sporting Challenge. It begins 29 April so we will be doing some of the challenge while we are at the May Gathering. All staff members are participating this year in the Staff Challenge and supervisors and grown-ups; you may like to join this section too to make it a fun family activity. Students; if you are in K to 2 you have your own challenge and if you are in 3 to 6, you have yours. This way we get to challenge ourselves while we build life-long good habits while improving our physical and mental wellbeing.

Primary Sport Challenge. Logon using your DET username and password and you're in and ready to go. Just find the link to the Primary Sport Challenge.

At the time of the writing this newsletter, the new 2014 activity logs for primary students is still being prepared for upload to the website ready for the beginning of the challenge from the beginning of term 2. Here is last year's challenge activities for students in K-2. You can see they are all fun with lots of variety

teacher will send you a hard copy on request but you may have to wait a little while to receive it in the post. If you are waiting, don't forget to record your activities somewhere. Here is the activity suggestions chart and the daily activity log for students in 3 to 6. There is so much to choose from and really, any activity is able to be recorded.



Activity Suggestions and Get Active Tips



The Suggestions chart on how to get active for students in K to 2



The daily activity log for students in 3 to 6 Go to the website. The FAQs page has it all!!

As soon as the 2014 activity logs are on the website, please download and print so you have your own activity log ready to start. Your

A long-standing DE family's farewell messages about their experiences and about...

Invaluable Life Lessons

Hi! We're the ***Roberts family*** and we would like to share with you some of the joys and trials we have encountered whilst studying by Distance Education in an isolated NSW community for the last 4 years.



Jonah – Year 6

Hi I'm Jonah! Doing Queanbeyan Distance Education has made school a lot easier for me. I used to find it quite difficult in a small local school and it was such a long way from home that it took over an hour and a half just to get there each day! During my time in QDE I have been able to pack up my work and travel to some fantastic places like New York, Los Angeles, Disney World, Colorado, Darwin and Elcho Island – which is a remote Aboriginal community where my Grandparents used to live. This is all because of Distance Education! I believe that doing QDE has given me greater opportunities to do subjects that really interest me and has allowed me to learn more things and improve my knowledge, however the downside is that I don't get as many friends and I don't get to play as many sports because I'm isolated in the middle of the bush. We live and work on an outdoor education campus where there are always Year 9 students visiting for residential camps. I have learnt to make friends easily with people of all ages and I feel much more confident than I did before I started distance ed. Recently I was nominated for the first ever 'Clear Speech Awards' and I was asked to present a 3 minute speech at the National Press Club of Australia in Canberra. We included this in our schoolwork and I practiced a lot!!! When the time came I felt confident standing up in front of all those people and I was excited that my family and grandparents, my teacher Jo and even the principal, Eloise all came to support me. The best surprise of all was that I actually won the award for the 9-12 year age group!



I don't think I would have had the courage to do something like this if I hadn't been attending Distance Education and learning to have confidence in lots of different situations. I think QDE has given me an opportunity to be boosted ahead of other kids with my general knowledge. Mini School is another great opportunity to gather with students who are all studying DE for different reasons and have fun doing activities together! Finally, the teachers are fantastic because they understand you when you're having trouble and they really try to help you. It's great that they let you make a project out of your everyday experiences so that you can do your work and manage your time to have a holiday too! QDE has been a fantastic opportunity for me!

Jonathan – Year 5

Hi I'm Jonathan! Queanbeyan Distance Education is very good for children traveling or living in a remote area like us. Our family lives in the middle of nowhere about one and a half hours from the nearest town so we are very isolated, but we love to travel in our holidays so Distance Education works very well for us! I have found that Distance Ed is actually not that bad because it offers a lot of opportunities to us. On the other hand though, it can be quite tough not having any friends our age nearby. During our time with QDE we have been able to go on some amazing holidays such as our latest to the United States of America and a holiday we took two years ago to visit our Grandparents in an Aboriginal community.



Jonah and Jonathan 'Mushing' a team of sled dogs Breckenridge Continental Divide - Colorado, USA

Would you believe that we have even been adopted into an Aboriginal tribe and given Yolnu names, we were even taught by Aboriginal elders how to make spears and how to hunt for crayfish and bush honey! We have also been able to take time off when we have been busy or for important events because we just work harder to make up for it on other days. I think our education is somewhat better than other kids in normal school because we get twice as much done every day and we can take time off to go and do other interesting things! QDE is great for our situation out here in the bush. Mini School gathering is also a great opportunity for all of the QDE kids to meet up and do exciting things together like going to Questacon or doing art. The teachers are very nice and understanding. They are also great at letting you off if you don't get all your work done! QDE is great for us and we love it!

Rachelle – Supervisor/mum, Life Skills coordinator. Thoughts from an imperfect 'Supervisor'.

I never wanted to be a teacher. In fact I'm a nurse and although I love my kids I was afraid I might kill them if I had to stay at home and 'teach' them all day every day. Distance Education was not my idea of fun and I had made that point clear to everyone who had made the suggestion. It was with great reluctance that I finally had to face my fears and step into the role of 'supervisor' to my children. The thought of sacrificing my own personal life and trying to squeeze it into my part time work life was daunting to say the least.

I have to be honest, at first I panicked with every new set of work that arrived. On Sunday night I would be filled with dread and begin worrying about how I would get through another Monday. I frequently rang the school and was greeted with such gentle reassurance and calm guidance from the boys' teachers and also from the Principal Eloise, that I soon began to settle in and accept that everything was going to be alright. We were encouraged to attend Mini School Gathering and I can now say without hesitation that this is the most valuable experience and supportive networking opportunity for supervisors and it is one that should not be missed if at all possible! There's nothing quite like putting a group of supervisors in a room and just letting them talk; sharing horror stories of children rolling on the floor crying and refusing to work, sharing tips for keeping the kids motivated, comparing timetabling techniques and best of all, just knowing that you're talking to someone who understands. It was at our first Gathering that I learned my most valuable piece of information.... You don't HAVE to complete ALL the work in the bag in order for your child to have a great education! Now this is not an excuse to take it easy, but it is a relief if you're someone like me who was so compelled to have



everything completed and repackaged neatly back into a sensible order with explanatory notes attached for any deviation in the program and have it in the bag shipped back on the last day of the fortnight. My children began to hate school because I was always pushing them to do more and more. By taking the time to chat and discuss the matter with their teacher, I was able to find out that some of the work being provided was purely for interest sake, or so that we could choose one topic over another. Deep breath, calm down, start again.

There's always time for Fun

Our family has always embraced what I refer to as 'Life Learning'. This is a mentality which seeks out answers to daily questions, which seeks to learn from other cultures and which embraces learning as a fun part of everyday life. This means that when our kids ask 'How long did it take to build the Opera House?' we take the time to find out not only that, but also the story behind it's builder and any other unique facts that we can uncover. Because it is a question that has first been posed by the child they are already primed to find more information and they are already seeking out a lesson although they don't recognise it at the time. I know it's sneaky, disguising lessons like that, but the truth is that kids love to learn. We never have to teach our kids to ask 'WHY?' but often as a parent I had failed to help them answer those questions until I came to the realisation that they were golden opportunities to teach my boys about the world in which they live and to nourish in them a love of learning and an inquiring mind. As time progressed and the boys have grown older and more skilled they have embraced this mentality without even realising. They now undertake 'research' in their own time and frequently come to me with amazing facts – mostly about science, engineering, cars and fire throwing! Perhaps if you have girls the interests might be a little different!

It may seem fanciful to try and live like that. Supervisors need headspace too and sometimes having to answer every question that comes your way is tiring. We all have days when we are not in the frame of mind to 'study' or complete schoolwork, but this is the beauty of 'Life Learning' particularly in Primary School. If you teach your kids to have enquiring minds in everyday activities you don't mind Downing pencils and setting up in the kitchen to bake a cake together or going out with Dad to service the car, or perhaps even handing out plastic tubs to go bug hunting! All of those things will bring some relief to not only you as a supervisor, but also to the kids who are climbing the walls. After the activity, give the kids a piece of paper or a project book and ask them to draw a picture or write a bit about what they've learnt with you. Lesson done!

Because of the freedom that Distance Education brings we have had the opportunity to travel. Before setting off on a holiday we have another 'Life Lesson'. It's exciting for the kids to look at a map and see the places we are planning to visit. It's interesting to research and find out the amazing historical sites along the way and the stories that go with them, so we make a project out of it and submit it as part of our schoolwork through negotiations and planning with their teacher. As an example of things we learnt before our recent holiday to the USA: We watched a documentary about the Brooklyn Bridge, how it was built and the lives that were lost in its construction. When on holidays we walked across the bridge and marvelled at its size and beauty. Before leaving home we watched an engineering program about the Qantas A380 on which we would be flying, completed some further research online and drew a diagram with labels and amazing facts. We also learnt about the Wright Brothers who pioneered the first successful aircraft and then visited the site where they built their plane and made those historical, record breaking flights.



Visiting the site where the Wright Brothers launched their first flight.



Cultural 'cousins' on Elcho Island



Skimming rocks at sunset – Elcho Island

This is but a sample of topics we researched in order to connect our learning with our life experience. We chose to look a little deeper than the average tourist purely because we have adopted a love of learning. If you're feeling overwhelmed, stop. Make a cup of tea or coffee for yourself, take a deep breath and look around you. What can your children learn from your life? Don't hesitate to ring the school and discuss your concerns or put forward some ideas for life lessons that you think might fit in with your home program or relieve the work load a little. Don't struggle through alone feeling as though no one understands. We've all been there at some stage and I cannot stress to you enough that you could not find a more understanding Principal in Eloise Dews and a more caring and professional group of teachers than there are at the Queanbeyan Distance Education.

It is with sadness that we are leaving QDE at the end of this term. It has been difficult at times due to our isolation, but it has also been an amazing opportunity for our children and one which they will likely never forget. We don't need to study by distance education or travel around the world to learn great things... life is full of opportunities if we are willing to seek them out and with a little creativity we can also encourage our children to learn the invaluable lessons that life has to offer. Will you join us on the journey....?

The QDE staff wishes you all the very best as you depart away.
Thank you so much for all you have contributed to the life of our centre.
We will miss you greatly.

Contacting teachers

The Centre's staff can be contacted between 8:30 AM to 3 PM Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours teachers can be contacted using either the phone and the answering machine or the email address supplied by the Department of Education and Communities. All teachers have made this email address known to their students.



The Centre's email address: queanbeyn-d.school@det.nsw.edu.au can be found on the Centre's website <http://www.queanbeyn-d.schools.nsw.edu.au/> and also on the contact card supplied at enrolment.

Please note: The DEC Code of Conduct advises teachers about maintaining a professional relationship between themselves, students, and supervisors.

This means that teachers are discouraged from using social media such as Facebook and Twitter as a means of communicating with students or parents. The DEC portal has also blocked the use of Skype and other similar video/call sites. Teacher's personal devices such as mobile phones for either calls or text messages are also not recommended.



QDE is a Kids Matter campus and we urge you to spend time browsing the Kids Matter website. It has practical helps, advice and essential contact details and referral information. Please visit and see for yourself. www.kidsmatter.edu.au



!! Fees Reminder!!

Queanbeyan Distance Education Centre is a public education facility and is part of the NSW Department of Education and Communities. We try to keep costs and charges to families as low as possible.

Queanbeyan Distance Education levies two types of fees. The first is a general service fee of \$50 per student per year. This contribution helps cover the cost of consumable materials used by each student. This fee is payable each year of a student's enrolment. It has not been our practice to invoice families for this fee. Instead, a reminder letter is sent and final notice is provided here in this newsletter.

A second resources fee of \$50 is a 'one-off' fee which is charged to cover returnable resources such as books, USB drives, maths kits and other items necessary to the delivery of student programs. When an enrolment is completed and all resources on loan have been returned, this resource deposit is fully refunded. In a case where items have been misplaced, damaged or not returned, the cost may be deducted from the resource fee before a refund is given.

An Overseas Student Fee of \$100.00 is payable at the time of enrolment and prior to the beginning of each term. *Exemptions under this category only applies to students where hard-copy mail is forwarded to a locked or diplomatic bag within Australia OR where a family elects to receive and send work wholly electronically.*

Payment of fees, as explained in the enrolment package, is a condition of enrolment and of continuing enrolment. Fees can be paid either by cheque, money order, cash or direct deposit. We do not have EFTPOS facilities. Receipts for payments received are provided.

Further information about fees can be obtained by contacting our office on (02) 6299 2966. Special circumstances are considered with regard to the payment of fees. Please discuss this with the centre manager at the time of your student's interview.



Dropbox

We have been using Dropbox for a while now as it is a reliable cloud server providing a substantial amount of free space and through which we can deliver and receive student work electronically and immediately. It is, however, a little tricky to install and use initially. Please be assured that it will be worth the effort. To make these first steps as easy as possible, please go to:

<http://www.slideshare.net/ceheit3/dropbox-tutorial-for-pc> or click on either icon below

For PC users

For Mac users



Here you will learn how to install, use and take advantage of the features of Dropbox. Your teacher will be referring you to it or you are already using it. If you would like further help or just can't seem to fathom it or get it to work, please call Eloise or email and we can go step by step.

Important Term Dates

*Students last day for Term 1 is
Friday, 11 April 2014*

*Students first day for Term 2 is
Tuesday, 29 April 2014*

(Unless otherwise negotiated)

Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 May 2014

Start Tuesday, 13 May –8.50am for NAPLAN students OR 11.00am for all other students

Finish Thursday, 15 May - 2.00 pm from Lanyon Station OR 2.40pm from school

You will need to provide:

- ✓ With the exception of dinner on Wednesday night, all other meals for the duration of the gathering, including packed morning teas and lunches for students each day
- ✓ Snacks as required
- ✓ Drink bottle
- ✓ Sun screen and hat
- ✓ Back pack for food and water bottle
- ✓ Digital camera –blank with full memory, USB cord and fresh batteries
- ✓ Clothes and shoes for sporting and outdoor activities in the May weather



Visit the beautiful Lanyon Station and Mugga- Mugga cottage. How historical!!



And visit the Queanbeyan Printing and 'old time' Museum – Even more historical!



Enjoy dinner together with everyone at school on Wednesday night



*****PRESS REPLY NOW AND TELL US IF YOU ARE COMING OR NOT*****

Allergy awareness environment for the duration of the gathering.



NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
Literacy and Numeracy

Join Australian students in *Years 3 and 5* everywhere in completing the NAPLAN



Bring your current set of work with you – the whole shabang!



INFORMATION FOR ACCOMMODATION

For the May Gathering

DEC ACCOMMODATION SUBSIDY FOR NON-LOCAL AREA FAMILIES

Please make arrangements for your accommodation at your chosen venue.

The Centre will subsidise and reimburse **DEC families' that reside outside of the local Queanbeyan and Canberra area up to a maximum of \$135.00 per family per night.** This will only apply for accommodation on the following 2 nights during the gathering:

- Tuesday, 13 May; and
- Wednesday, 14 May

Cheque reimbursement will be paid upon the presentation of the receipt for payment.

There is a wide variety of accommodation available in Queanbeyan for you stay during the gathering. Queanbeyan is a very busy town for visiting contract workers and salespeople so please ensure to booking early to secure your accommodation.

If you access the following link: <http://www.visitqueanbeyan.com.au/> you will find a valuable website about Queanbeyan including listings and websites for all motels, hotels and caravan parks in town.