Dear Parents/Caregivers,

I must start by saying how impressed I am at how quickly students have settled back into their learning routines after two week’s holidays. As I have spent time in both classes I am so proud of the energy and commitment to every learning opportunity. I hope you all have had a wonderful school holiday, although I know many of you were busy supporting our school at the Palmer Rock-a-rama last weekend. I would like to sincerely thank Jo Bland, Jim Bland, Kylie Munro, Inala Preston, Linda Van Zwol, Elaine Todd, Jayme Marshall, Nicky Tomkinson, Faye Jenke and also our hard-working dish washer—Emilly Bland, Anthony Bland, Gwendolyn Van Zwol and Dane Preston. Thanks to their efforts, and your generous donations, we sold 47 meals on Friday night and 91 meals on Saturday night, and Inala even sold some takeaway meals on Sunday. The total amount raised (less any expenses) was a whopping $1387.23 which is an absolutely brilliant effort! We are also grateful to McCue’s Bakery and Woolworths Murray Bridge Green for their generous donations and support. We look forward to an even more successful Rock-a-rama catering fundraiser next year with some plans for improvement already discussed.

Jett Driscoll also represented Palmer Primary School at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. Jett laid a wreath made by Palmer PS students and also read a poem entitled: ‘Not a hero’ by Clyde Hamilton. I was honoured to see Jett represent Palmer PS and read the poem with such respect and enthusiasm. He is certainly fulfilling his role of PSC Chairperson and is a leader in every sense of the word—well done, Jett!
NAPLAN next week
That time of year has come again, with students in years 3, 5, and 7 participating in the NAPLAN (National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy) tests from Tuesday to Thursday of next week, with Friday being our catch up day. Language Conventions and Writing will be held on Tuesday 10th May, Reading on Wednesday 11th May and Numeracy on Thursday 12th May. Whilst this is a valuable assessment tool, a great strength of our school is knowing where each student’s strengths and areas of growth are. In saying this, the NAPLAN test results should not be a surprise to anyone as teachers are already planning, teaching and assessing learning experiences based on each student’s abilities and needs, and after the interviews held in the last few weeks of last term, students and families have had a chance to discuss each student’s assessment data and the strategies in place to support further growth and success.

Students sitting the NAPLAN tests have spent each morning with me this week doing trial assessments to enable them to become familiar with the style of the NAPLAN tests and clarify any questions before the actual tests begin next week. I have spent time explaining to students that although the questions may start easy, some of the questions in the tests actually appear to be quite complex when they are first read, and students may not know what to do initially. We have discussed the importance of using our strategies in these scenarios, taking the time to read and re-read these questions, thinking about what skill they are actually asking for and thinking about how this could be applied. We have also discussed the advantages of drawing diagrams and illustrations to help unpack and understand a question that initially appears confusing. Ultimately, the message that we feel is most important to reinforce at school and at home, is that at the end of the day, NAPLAN testing is just one assessment out of many, and that it should not cause undue stress or anxiety. If you have any questions about NAPLAN, please feel free to come and see me.

Minilit Program
Katrina has been attending MINILIT training and development on Thursday and Friday of this week, and will also be attending training and development on providing sensory opportunities for students in the J/P class on Monday. We welcome Robyne Van Disel to the J/P class on these days.

Second-hand Uniforms
As we are approaching the winter months, we would like to inform you all that we have quite a few second-hand jumpers for sale for the reasonable price of just $5. There are also quite a few second-hand polo shirts in various sizes for $5. Finally, there are still a few sizes left of our older style polar fleece jumpers for just $15 new, alternatively you can purchase our new style jackets for $50.

Premier’s Reading Challenge and SAPSASA success
We would like to congratulate Jackie Hunt on being the first student to complete the 2016 Premier’s Reading Challenge. Jackie also represented Palmer PS at the Murraylands SAPSASA Cross-Country competition yesterday and showed amazing endurance and determination by competing the three kilometre cross country run. Congratulations Jackie—we are very proud of you!

Kind regards,

Lauren