With the new year fast approaching and only 2 weeks left of our school year you would think that things would naturally be slowing down here at St Andrews Catholic Primary School.

On the contrary, school reports are being finalised, pre primary is finishing their orientation. We had an incursion today and we are celebrating St Andrews day as a whole school tomorrow.

Year 2-6 will be doing their Reconciliation Liturgy, not to mention our full school Christmas concert, Graduation Mass, Christmas Mass and Carols by Candle light.

Our school often appears to magically sail through the year like a majestic ocean liner floating on smooth waters. With our Steadfast Captain Eileen Climo confidently at the wheel, she commands the vessel (our school) with wisdom and optimism.

One of the many things I admire about Eileen is that she very rarely says No! Now she may not necessarily say yes! straight away, there may be conditions. But these conditions are put in place to ensure you don’t fail. I believe that Eileen’s greatest gift is her ability to allow others to lead. Eileen supports and nurtures her staff and encourages additional programs like the environmental committee, performing arts, EMU, Reading Recovery, JETS, CHEKS, TOM, Instrumental lessons, Chess, Seasons for Growth and Bushrangers.

I would like to share with you my favourite quote. It is written by George Bernard Shaw “Some see things as they are and ask, Why? I dream things as they never were and ask Why Not?”

This is my summary of Mrs Eileen Climo and as you may be aware our parents nominated Eileen for a NEITA Award: National Excellence in Teaching Award. Like myself, they too see someone very special.

The role of first mate is shared by Warren Smith and Bridget Jones our Deputy Principals. Both have competently taken the wheel of our luxury liner on numerous occasions. Their ability to change roles and adapt to any given situation is remarkable. We are truly grateful for their expertise.

I refer to our school as a luxury liner not only because of the immaculate grounds kept by Tony and Simon, but because of the state of the art facilities that our school provides and maintains for our children.

I recently attended a Mental Health & Well being Expo for children and youth. The focus of this forum was the importance of the well being of our children. In fact the words numeracy & literacy were not used and the thought of mentioning NAPLAN was frowned upon. Topics of discussion were bullying, internet safety, drugs & alcohol, mind silence and child exposure to advertising.
While Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes remain the focus of our teaching and learning, Catholic Education teaches forgiveness, compassion and faith. At St Andrews the “Making Jesus Real programme encourages our children to consider others and seek to do good through W.E.S.T. behaviours. Welcome, Encourage, Sorry and Thanks.

Our parish based school continues to support the spiritual well being in our children and continues to be family focused.

When referring to the well being of our children words cannot express the love and compassion our teachers and support staff extend to our children daily. We couldn’t ask for better leaders to inspire and in still W.E.S.T. behaviours in our future leaders. I offer heart felt thanks to all of our teachers at St Andrews for the dedication they have towards teaching.

Our administrative staff are the heart of the school. They bandaid countless cuts, ice numerous limbs, put up with repetitive questions daily even though the answers are printed in the newsletter each week. Its service with a smile 100% of the time, it’s going the extra mile just because they can. Muzzie, Lesley and Jacqui are the hub of St Andrews and we are very grateful for the excellent service they provide.

A new P&F levy was introduced this year and the P&F committee donated $15,000.00 to the school. That doesn’t mean that they haven't worked hard throughout the year providing opportunities like the School Disco, Mothers Day Raffle, Easter Raffle and Welcome to St Andrews Family night. Each of these activities were not for profit and were provided purely to enhance the well being of our school community. Thank you to the P&F.

Lastly I would like to thank and congratulate the School Board for their commitment and dedication in assisting the school to make continued improvements. The board members are all unbiased and we all work together for the best interest of our school, our staff and our children. This year board has assisted the school in decision making with regards to the construction of our amazing hall, Quality Catholic Schools review process, future strategic planning and financial decisions. It is a pleasure working with you.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, take care over the school break and prepare for another exciting adventure on the cruise ship “St Andrews” in 2012.

Judith Birchall
BOARD CHAIR
November 2011