WELCOME TO TERM 2
The children's holidays sound like they have been exciting, interesting and restful, a wonderful necessity after a busy first term and in preparation for this term. This is a term with great opportunities for teaching and learning and parents will receive a written report about students' progress and attend a parent teacher interview in the second last week of this term, Wednesday 18th June.

YEAR 7 APPLICATIONS FOR 2009
TIMELINE
All Year 6 students must complete an application form for entry into a secondary school in 2009. Information and the application form, with spaces for prioritising a number of secondary schools will be sent home next week. Merri Creek Primary is required to type in each student's address on the application form before we send it home to you. Year 7 application forms must be returned to the school by Monday 19th May. The school then sends on applications to the various secondary schools in the Government system. It is your responsibility to make any curriculum applications required directly to the secondary school of your choice. There is a very specific process which is not influenced by the primary school. Merri Creek Primary will then notify parents in writing on Friday 8th August, of the results of your application. Orientation day for Year 6 students at their high school is Tuesday 9th December.
TERM TWO FUNDRAISER

Our term two fundraiser is a Mars Chocolate Drive. This will be our last Mars fundraiser as that wing of the company is closing. As such it would be great if we could make this one our most successful ever. As usual we see the chocolate drive as a fundraiser for adults so we ask that you sell the chocolates at work or to neighbours, friends and family. We cannot express more strongly that we do not want or expect school families to purchase the chocolates themselves. There will be one carry pack for each family to sell containing both $2 and $4 items, with a total cost of $54 for the lot. The school makes $24 profit on each carry pack sold and we also get a reward prize that we use for our end of year raffle. Last year we were able to get a PSP as our first prize which was very popular with the students. Please support this fundraiser, keeping in mind that the profits we make are spent on your child’s education.

Bully Busters Information Night

We take a proactive approach to bullying at Merri Creek by implementing the Bully Busters program each year. The teachers undergo training every second year and then the students participated in sessions and some parents attended an information session on the Bully Busters Program. This year we will continue to run this program with all students from Prep to 6 and on **Tuesday 29th April** parents are invited to an Understanding Bullying information session in the GP room from 7.30pm-9.00pm.

The Bully Busters presenters did a refresher course with the staff covering a range of issues and procedures such as the importance of a 'whole school' approach; creating a school ethos that says 'it’s safe to tell'; locating bullying in the school; refining our procedure for dealing with a bullying incident; strategies for the prevention of and intervention in bullying as well as classroom lessons about bystander behaviour and assertiveness.

The student workshops help students to break old patterns of behaviour by teaching strategies to handle bullying, resist peer group pressure and nurture worthwhile friendships. They will learn how to recognise the different forms of bullying; what is responsible reporting; how to take safe and sensible action if you are a bystander; how to build resilience and be free of victim thinking; and assertive strategies for life.

The parent information session will give families many new insights into bullying behaviour and offer easy to implement procedures to handle problems associated with bullying. You will find out how to help your child to handle peer group pressure; what to do when your child is being bullied; how to teach your child assertiveness skills; how to approach the school with a bullying issue and how to teach your child to be a proactive bystander.

We can highly recommend this program to all parents and hope to see many of you at the information night on Tuesday 29th April.

ART NEWS

Hello from the Art room. The stickmen have invaded – we’ve been working on cartoons and giant sculpture stickmen this week. Would you check that your child has a smock so that we can start printing and painting. The Prep/One classes now have art each Monday.

Thanks from Annie and Erminia

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

2007 FUNDRAISING

Money raised by last year's Grade 6 students was used to purchase games, materials and bravery books for the Cancer Ward at the Royal Children's Hospital. Sam, Darcy and Andre are showing us the collection of goodies.

DEVELOPMENTAL CURRICULUM

Last night, Kathy Walker, early childhood educational consultant spoke to Prep/One parents about the developmental program in the Prep/One classes. Parents were very interested in Kathy’s thoughts and hearing how current research has impacted on the way we at Merri Creek deliver our curriculum. Kathy spoke of the importance of not over scheduling children and how childhood developmental stages impacts on student learning. She invited parents to look at her website to find out more about the developmental curriculum and early childhood development. Her website is [http://www.kathywalkeredcon.com.au/](http://www.kathywalkeredcon.com.au/)

Thanks to Kathy, the staff and parents who came along on the night.
ANNUAL REPORT

The 2007 Annual Report was presented to the school community at a public meeting on Tuesday 18th March last term.

It is one of the elements of the Education Department’s Accountability and Improvement Framework, which requires the school to also undertake an internal self evaluation and an external review this year, culminating in the writing of our new four year strategic plan. The Annual Report is available for reading on our website www.merricreekps.vic.edu.au.

The School Charter 2005-2007 goals which teachers and the school community have been working hard to achieve are:

- ensure all students are challenged to improve their writing and spelling outcomes.
- enhance student well being, social competence and resilience including the development of students’ PE/sport skills and personal fitness.
- ensure that each year an appropriate transition process is in place for year six students moving to secondary school.
- ensure smooth transition for students from one class to the next at the start of each year.

Student enrolment remained stable at 281, with 140 boys and 141 girls. Our enrolment ceiling of 275 enabled us to manage the Prep intake and provide classes of a reasonable size.

There was high parent and teacher satisfaction with the school and slightly higher teacher absences than in 2006, attributed to the high susceptibility of graduate teachers to all the infections in a school community, in their first few years of teaching.

Teachers remained committed to professional learning and improving and applying their new knowledge and skills in their class programs in writing, spelling and the developmental curriculum, while constantly refining their practice in all areas.

Year 3 AIM data shows students Reading, Writing and Spelling was well above the State mean and within the School Family Occupation density range, while Maths remained at a similar high level and within the SFO density range. Year 5 AIM Reading and Number were above the state mean with Reading approximating the SFO range and Maths below, while Writing was below the state mean.

If you would like a hard copy of the 2007 Annual Report please complete the return slip on page 4 and hand to the office.

HOMEWORK AT MERRI CREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL

In 2005 the school undertook a review of the Homework Policy. It will be due for review either at the end of this year or early next year. There is a copy of the current policy attached to this newsletter. If you wish to have input to the review you are welcome to attend Education Committee meetings where we review the school’s curriculum policies.

SOME GREAT OFFERS

Some items left from the Fete are available for purchase from the office:

- Lonely Planet current editions for sale:
  - $15 Amsterdam, Antarctica
  - $15 Bahamas, Turks & Caicos
  - $15 Belize, Dubai
  - $15 Dublin, Honolulu, Waikiki & O’ahu
  - $15 Jordan
  - $20 Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands

- $20 Argentina, Central Europe
- $20 Florida, India
- $20 New Zealand

- Cans of soft drink, 50c each
- Bottled water, 600ml, 50c each
- Primas, $4 for pack of 6
- Wines for sale:
  - McWilliams 2006 Inheritance Shiraz Cabernet, $5 ea
  - McWilliams 2007 Inheritance Sauvignon Blanc, $5 ea
  - Banrock Station 2007 Chardonnay, $6 ea
  - Deakin Estate 2007 Sauvignon Blanc, $7 ea
- Jars of Tomato and Apple Chutney, $3 ea

Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform

The establishment of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides an unprecedented opportunity to integrate early childhood services and schools across Victoria.

The linking of early childhood services and schools marks the beginning of a new era in the health, wellbeing, learning and development of all Victorian children and young people from birth through to adulthood.

The Victorian State Government is excited to present a proposed five year reform agenda for early childhood services and schools that will drive improvement and integration and help us to deliver the best possible outcomes for all our children and young people.

Their proposed reform agenda is outlined in discussion papers and they are seeking feedback from families, practitioners, education and early childhood stakeholders and the wider Victorian community to assist in the development of a Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform.

If you would like to have your say in shaping Victoria’s future directions and supporting our children and young people to be the best they can the Blueprint discussion papers can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/blueprint.
GOOD FRIDAY APPEAL
A total of $86.15 was collected from students for the Royal Children’s Hospital Good Friday Appeal. A cheque has been forwarded and we thank you for your support.

LOST AND FOUND
We have a number of plastic containers and bowls that were left behind at the Fete. Please check the table near the office.

LOST PROPERTY NEWS
Parents and students are reminded to check the Lost Property tub regularly. Un-named items left at the end of term will be sent on to Diabetes Australia. Thank you to the families who have supported our fundraiser by ordering labels from that’s mine. Labels can be ordered online www.thatsmine.com.au or by using the order forms available at the school office. Items that are clearly named can be returned to the owner promptly. We had a large number of lunch containers without names having to be thrown out at the end of term one as they were growing a variety of fungi. Please write your child’s name on the lid and bottom of the containers so you can get them back. Our attempts at sustainability are failing when we have to throw lunch containers into landfill because they have been uncollected for weeks. Please help us to help you.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
Grade 5/6 students will have the opportunity to participate in digital photography sessions with Jo Wheeler on a Friday afternoon during Golden Time this term. The photographs will be displayed later in the year as part of the school’s Art Show. If there are any parents with particular skills who are available to assist or provide advice about digital photography, Jo Wheeler would love to hear from them.

HATS
The Education Department has directed schools to ensure students wear approved sun hats until the end of April. May 1st will be ‘Hats Off Day’. Please help us enforce this directive by ensuring your child has an approved hat at school daily until the end of April. Children will be expected to start wearing hats again at the beginning of September.

NORTHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL
Open Day – Wednesday 16th April
NORTHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL runs a Year 7 ACE Program for higher achieving students. Applications for 2009 close Thursday 24th April and application forms are available from their website (www.nhs.vic.edu.au) or the school. ACE Program testing will be held on Saturday 3rd May. Contact Kate Morris for more information – 9488 2300.

NORTHCOTE AUSKICK has moved from Merri Creek (behind Northcote High School) to MacDonnell Park (behind Northcote Swimming Pool).

BOOK COLLECTION
Are you able to donate second-hand board and picture story books which are in good condition and which your children no longer need? A state government funded program “Best Start” will collect these books from MCPS and distribute them to neighbourhood houses, playgroups, kindergartens and child care centres. Any donations to this worthy cause can be left at the office.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO THE OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
Child’s name: _________________________
Grade: ______________________________
Yes, I/we would like to receive a copy of the 2007 Annual Report for Merri Creek Primary School.