

## **Text from the welcome speech given by Principal, Mrs Kym Peterson, at the 125 year celebration assembly.**

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Gembrook Primary School.

I would especially like to welcome: Councillor Graham Legge (Graham is also a previous principal of the school) the EDEC principals- Wayne Burgess (EMS) Tanya Cooke Darrylyn Boucher John Chiswell and of course Mark Carver previously of Gembrook but now from Emerald PS

We are fortunate to have many people from the wider community of Gembrook here today.

I would like to welcome each and every one of you to the school. I would like to especially extend a warm welcome our guest speakers Judy Parker who was a student at the school some time ago and also her father Bill Parker, a well known member of the Gembrook community, a local historian who has lived and worked in Gembrook for many years. Welcome also to Bill's wife Lorna. Lorna came to Gembrook to teach in the 1930s. She was a popular teacher amongst the students and was also a popular member of the community, especially with Bill whom she later married.

It is indeed a pleasure to stand here today as principal of Gembrook Primary School. 125 years is an extremely long time and Gembrook is an amazing environment with a truly unique community.

There are institutions in every town that give life to the people who live there and provide a focus for social gathering. In Gembrook we have the RSL, the sporting clubs, the pre school, the market and of course Gembrook Primary School!

Over the 125 years it's hard to imagine the many stories that could be told: bushfires, snow falls, sporting successes, weddings, births, deaths, triumphs and tragedies. So much has come before and so much is to come. I am sure many of you will be sharing your stories and memories about times at school with each other today.

Gembrook has a rich heritage. There are children here at school today whose parents, cousins, uncles, aunts, grand parents or great grandparents also attended this school. Then there are others whose families, once they had discovered this friendly hills community decided to stay. All of these children will leave their mark in some way on this school.

There have been many teachers and principals of the school who have also contributed to the rich history of our school. At all times during the history of the school there has been teachers who have made great contributions to the lives of the children who have grown up in the Gembrook community.

So what has changed at this school and in this community in the past 125 years, or should I say what hasn't changed? You could all tell stories of hearing about those who walked miles (not Kilometres) to school, or rode here on horseback, when electricity first arrived in town, when children brought wood for the fire in the classrooms. Indeed much has changed.

Even though much has changed, there is much that has remained the same. Families are still actively involved in our school and local community activities are still important for our families. Thankfully children today still like splashing in puddles, reading books, getting muddy, playing games like footy, the tooth fairy still visits Gembrook and today's children still wait to see what Santa brings. It is indeed wonderful to see that whilst the world around us is moving at a very rapid rate that today's children still are allowed to be kids, especially here in Gembrook, a wonderful place to have a school and raise a family.

We must therefore acknowledge and give thanks to all those who have come before, and contributed to this school in so many ways... parents, children, teachers, principals and the wider community. And as a vibrant school community we look forward with great excitement and expectation for the school with 'a view to the future'.

Lastly thank you for joining us today to celebrate this special event.