



# It's a new year

## WHAT'S NEWS

### Flash Back

One year ago communities in Queensland were mopping up the mess that devastating floods had left after weeks of torrential rain.

In early January 2011 approximately 75% of the state had been swamped by walls of water.

12 months later many of the places hit have recovered but the memory of the destruction lingers with hope that this year they would be spared of any deluge.

On January 10, the first anniversaries of the disaster, special commemorative services were held in the Lockyer Valley communities where 19 lives were lost in the chaos of 2011. Governor-General Quentin Bryce, Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Queensland Premier Anna Bligh attended memorial ceremonies that recognised the courage and endurance of residents during those tragic events a year ago.

### Special Events

Some special events marked on the 2012 (MMXII) calendar likely to make the news headlines are: February 6 - the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II commemorating the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

June 6 - the last solar transit of Venus this century as it passes between the Sun and Earth. Venus will appear as a black disc against the Sun. From July 27 - athletes from around the world will gather in London England to compete at the Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

This year contains an extra day. Why – because it's a leap year. To make up for the fact that a period of 365 days is shorter than a solar year by almost six hours an extra day in the month of February is added every four years. A person born in a leap year on February 29 is called a 'leapling' and may celebrate their birthday on February 28 or March 1 in a non-leap year.

### It's a new year

Fireworks lit up the sky on the stroke of midnight marking the beginning of a new calendar year – January 1 2012.

According to the Gregorian Calendar - the standard calendar used by most countries as the official world calendar - January 1 is considered the first day of the year.

However some cultures traditionally use other calendars with alternative dates celebrating the New Year.

Whatever the date of the New Year, it is a time for celebrations and for customs to ensure good luck for the year ahead.

We use a calendar to mark periods of time into days, weeks, months and years to help us organise our lives, record

## INTERESTING FACTS

**FACT 1:** The month of January was named after Janus the Roman God of beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances. Janus had two faces – one looking forward and the other looking backward.

**FACT 2:** Australia's financial or fiscal year ends on June 30 and the new tax year begins July 1

**FACT 3:** The Gregorian Calendar was adopted by the British in 1752 who then introduced it to Australia when they settled here in 1788.

**FACT 4:** 2012 is the Australian Year of the Farmer - an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate the significant contribution our farmers make to the country.

significant events and provide useful information.

Many societies both past and present have devised calendars to suit their needs based on the cycle of the sun or moon or both.

### Chinese New Year

An alternative calendar well recognised in Australia is the Chinese calendar.

The first day of this calendar is the Chinese New Year also known as the Lunar New Year.

It occurs on the new moon of the first lunar month which usually falls between January 20 and February 20 and continues for 15 days.

This year the Chinese New Year falls on Monday January 23.

Many customs will be observed in Chinese communities as they celebrate the year of the dragon.

**THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM**  
History: Chronology, terms and concepts – historical events, developments and periods  
Mathematics: Using units of measurement – investigate time scales and intervals

### DID YOU KNOW?

Have you ever heard the expression 'once in a blue moon'. It means every now and then or rarely. A 'blue moon' is the second full moon in a single calendar month. This doesn't happen very often. They occur approximately 7 times in a 19 year period. For this to occur the first full moon must appear at the beginning of the month so that the second will fall within the same month. The average span between full moons is 29.5 days. The next blue moon will occur on August 31 this year.

**NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC:**  
We are Australian

## TASK TIME ONLINE

Go to your newspaper's website. You should find the address on the front page. Look for the NiE logo in the menu bar and click! This will link you to APN's NiE webpage.

### New Year Resolutions

The New Year sees individuals make and set personal goals reflecting changes in lifestyle that will be of benefit to them.

They hope to accomplish these objectives throughout the year in hope of improving their health, finance, careers, jobs, education and other areas of their life. What are your goals for this year? Go online and take a survey about New Year Resolutions.

## QUIZ TIME

Each week we will test your knowledge on what's been happening in the news. For the answers visit NiE online.

- 1 In cricket, which team have the Australians' played in a series of test matches across the summer?
- 2 Off the coast of which country in the world did the cruise liner, Costa Concordia, hit a reef and begin to sink?
- 3 According to the Chinese calendar 2012 is the year of the what?



Venus will pass between the Sun and the Earth for the last time this century.



Janus, the Roman God of beginnings and the guardian of entrances.