



Promoting parent participation in public preschools and schools

**South Australian Association of  
School Parents Clubs Inc**

**Annual report**

**2007-2008**

# South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs Inc

## Annual report 2007-2008

The South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs Inc (SAASPC) is the peak statewide organisation which represents the interests of all parents and parent groups in South Australian public preschools and schools. The association works to promote parent interest, involvement and participation in preschools and schools and to encourage the growth of positive partnerships between preschools and schools and their parents and communities.

We are pleased that the Minister, Jane Lomax-Smith and the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), Chris Robinson, have continued to meet with us on a number of occasions during the year. At our meetings we are able to raise issues and concerns with them that have been brought to our attention by the parents in preschools and schools. We also appreciate the support of other people within DECS who are always most approachable and willing to speak with us.

### **Executive Committee meetings**

Executive meetings are held five times each year. Meetings are structured so that business is conducted in the session before lunch and guest speakers are invited for the after lunch session. Guest speakers this year have been Haydn Lush, Director School Ministry Group who spoke about the role of Christian Pastoral Support Workers (formerly called Chaplains), the federal government funding for them and processes involved in their employment in schools; Kym Wyatt, Partnerships Manager from The Smith Family on the focus of his organisation on improving student learning through Learning for Life program and its tutors; Geoff James DECS spoke on the RiteBite strategy; Leon Johns DECS Criminal History Screening Unit on the role and the work of the Unit. Executive meetings are open to all parents.

### **Conference and Forum**

The 2007 annual conference was held in September was titled *Early Childhood: Where Lifelong Learning Begins*. Speakers included the Minister, Jane Lomax-Smith, Philip Gammage on early childhood development; presentations on dental health; playgroups; Kidsafe playgrounds; primary years. The following day conference delegates had the opportunity to visit Café Enfield.

We also held a very informative one day forum in April on internet safety, with presentations from staff from both DECS and the police.

### **Publications**

Parents Say is SAASPC's quarterly magazine which is sent free of charge to all public preschools and schools in South Australia – one copy to preschools and two to schools. Private subscriptions are available to those who would like their own copy.

In addition we compile and distribute our quarterly news sheet *Net Working* to affiliated preschools and schools. Our handbook is provided free to new affiliates and is also available on our website.

### **Information sessions**

Throughout the year invitations have been received for SAASPC Officers to provide information to parents in preschool and school groups on

*Child safe environments - reporting child abuse and neglect (previously known as Mandatory reporting of child abuse)*

Since 1991 SAASPC has been providing two hour information sessions about child safe environments for volunteers in preschools/schools. This year we have held 20 sessions across the state.. No charge is made to those attending as special funding is provided to us by the Minister.

Again this year we supported the LAP Association by running targeted sessions for LAP volunteers.

SAASPC is working with the Australian Red Cross to provide these information sessions to their Good Start Breakfast Club volunteers. SAASPC is represented on the Australian Red Cross Management group for the Breakfast Club program.

### **Principal panel selection information**

Merit selection training for Council nominees to selection panels is still available through sessions conducted and managed by a joint SAASPC and South Australian Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO) management committee. Ongoing funds from the Minister means that these can be provided by our volunteer presenters at no cost to those attending. DECS provides up-to-date information to our presenters to ensure that they are aware of any changes to the process.

### ***Invitations***

SAASPC receives many invitations to attend launches, significant events and conferences. Some of this year's highlights have included

- Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA merit ceremony and art show
- South Australian Languages Education Conference
- Children's Week launch
- Volunteer SA 25<sup>th</sup> birthday dinner
- World Teachers Day celebration
- Drug Education Showcase
- Premiers Reading Challenge awards presentations
- Civic reception for Professor Ilona Kickbusch Thinker in Residence
- Function for Retiring Principals / Preschool Directors
- Premier's be active Challenge Launch
- Peer Support AGM
- National Council of Women for Australia Day ceremony

as well as visiting many schools and speaking to their parents and principals.

### ***Media***

Our president, Jenice Zerna, as our media spokesperson, continues to be asked to provide comment by print and TV media organisations. This year she has covered topics such as discipling teachers, the Australian Primary Principals' Association charter, industrial action by teachers, healthy eating guidelines; Schoolies week, binge drinking and teenage parties, teacher shortages, school security and internet safety for children.

### ***Archives***

Our archivist continues her work of collating, filing and discarding and is always on the look out for information about parent groups. Unfortunately we are unable to store material from school parent groups.

### ***Owls Club***

The Owls Club was formed to arrange social gatherings to enable parents to maintain friendships developed through involvement in education and parent groups. Former and current school parents come together for the Owls dinner each year which is usually held the Tuesday evening of SAASPC's annual conference.

### ***Acknowledgments***

SAASPC is an organisation of volunteers and we are fortunate that so many people willingly give their time and expertise to ensure that the voice of the parents of children and young people in South Australian public preschools and schools is heard.

We look forward to the challenges of the next twelve months and thank all those who have supported us as we work together to ensure that all South Australian children have access to a public education which aims for equity and excellence.

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## **REPRESENTATION**

SAASPC Officers and other members of our association continue to represent parents on numerous committees, boards and organisations. SAASPC welcomes feedback from parents, regarding their concerns, issues or ideas, in order that our members can truly represent a wide range of views and not just their own. Provided below are brief overviews from our representatives on just some of the boards and committees on which we represent parents.

### **DECS Absenteeism Committee**

The committee meets once a term and includes representatives from the police force, Department of Education and Children's Services, the Australian Education Union, principal associations and SAASPC. The main topics discussed during the past 12 months have been

- the action plan for 2006/7 was reviewed with special emphasis on the action planning for reducing suspensions/exclusions for aboriginal students
- ISSS technology aimed at giving daily information from the school to the District office re attendance matters allowing for prompt responses to attendance concerns

- some concern about the success of the interstate transfer procedures
- the success of the confidential transfer process to ensure students safety and anonymity
- the success in most cases of the temporary transfer process for indigenous students
- ICAN funding will not be extended
- information resource package for relative caregivers ‘Grandparents Raising Grandchildren’
- confidential transfer process and domestic violence centres now employ an education officer to ensure that the children are cared for and back at a new school as soon as possible. At the moment only in the city but hopefully will extend to the country centres
- students listed as whereabouts unknown – now 31 students left from the 2007 list
- all areas now using the system to identify absences for 10 consecutive days – some districts not fully implementing the process until they have worked through the logistics of who will provide what services
- some encouraging reports from schools where the absenteeism figures have dropped. *Gwen Secomb*

### **DECS Child Protection Steering Committee**

In 2008 the committee moved to once a term meetings with representatives from within the Department of Education and Children’s Services, the Australian Education Union, principals and preschool directors and SAASPC. The main topics for the past 12 months have been

- report from Anne Bulling re the SMART (strategies for managing abuse related trauma) program and how there has been strong support for the program both in preschools and schools
- success of the training and development for school staff for the child protection program in 2007. In 2008 there will only be one DECS staff member instead of two conducting the training for the 20% who have not accessed the training in the past 2 years
- government and non-government information sharing guidelines – a draft brochure will go to the Privacy Committee and then to the CEO’s of each government department and then to Cabinet
- Child protection curriculum. Sites will receive complimentary copies and information about online access which will be password protected. Along with the curriculum documents is a parent brochure that is part of the password protected materials. However a simpler form will appear on the ESL website
- Mullighan report and recommendations
- SMART program is being offered to child care centres in 2008. Also an extension of the SMART program called SMARTER – the ER standing for educational reform. The training looks at the deeper study of neuroscience and the brain, with the aim to have schools setting up projects to show how their actions have had improved outcomes for students. Case studies will be published for other sites to utilise and inform their future programming
- Suicide post intervention guidelines have been printed and will be available from the DECS website.

*Gwen Secomb*

### **DECS Early Years Band Reference Group**

Recommendation was made to the wording of the membership structure to read: members will include district and central office staff, parents, union members, tertiary staff, site leaders and practitioners. Because of the national agenda and the proposed Early Years Framework it was decided to meet twice per term *Vicky Hughes*

### **DECS Early Years Literacy and Numeracy Program Reference Committee**

The final payment for the 2008 Early Years Literacy and Numeracy Program will be made in August. This has strengthened early years teachers’ understanding and knowledge about literacy and numeracy using a common definition as in the SACSA framework. *Learning Together* posters will be launched in November. This program has been successfully running in Para-west and Christie Downs. This committee meets approximately every three weeks. *Vicky Hughes*

### **DECS Healthy Eating Advisory Implementation Group**

This group is a large one that met periodically through the year. Its objective is to ensure the smooth transition into school canteens of the new healthy eating guidelines that came into force at the commencement of this school year. Work shops have been implemented for the canteen managers and staff to help them understand how the new guidelines will affect the school environment. *Leanne Sheard*

### **DECS Learner Wellbeing Project Birth to Year 12 Reference Committee**

Two meetings were held in the last half of 2007. The group has representatives from various groups and departments. The progress of the project was reported on and while it was pleasing that there was a strong level of

take up and engagement by all schools, there was less take up in child care. An evaluation process and a survey took place in October. In December it was announced that the project would continue for another 3 years, and project officers appointed. It is disappointing and concerning that the group has not met at all in 2008 *Jenice Zerna*

### **DECS Middle Years Band Reference Group (Years 6-9 of Schooling)**

Meetings are held twice a term. Over the past 12 months many areas of middle schooling have been discussed including SACSA renewal – the reference group asked to develop a position on this; Middle Years of SACSA – characteristics of the learner; SACSA review and the introduction of a national curriculum. Work was suspended when the SACSA renewal as the national curriculum agenda took over. Extra meetings were held to give feedback on draft curriculum materials which were being developed by Curriculum Services. *Jenice Zerna*

### **DECS Primary Years Band Reference Group**

This group was meeting twice a term in the past, but the Executive committee decided before the commencement of the new school year that the PYBRG needs only to meet once a term. The objective for the group is to provide feedback from the PYBRG to the Executive group within the DECS. The core business of this group has been to provide networks and links for teachers in the primary years. *Leanne Sheard*

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### **Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)**

ACSSO represents the parents of over 2.3 million children attending government schools in Australia. There are ten school parent and school council organisations from all states and territories affiliated with ACSSO. Policy is determined at the annual conference and between conferences the organisation is run by the Executive which includes one representative from each affiliate plus the President. The staff of the secretariat consists of an Executive Director, an Operations Manager and an Operations Officer.

ACSSO is committed to a quality, fully funded, public education system available to all young people irrespective of their class, culture, gender, level of ability, capacity to pay or where they live. It believes that the most effective way of ensuring that our children receive the best possible education is through participation by parents in all aspects of policy making in schools and school systems. Although ACSSO operates with limited funding (and therefore staffing) it continues to be a strong advocate for public education and to pursue an activist and watchdog role.

ACSSO communicates with schools and interested individuals through a number of electronic publications including *Public education voice*, *Australian education digest*, *International news roundup*, *Languages education in Australia* and *Ensemble* (about music education).

A conference is held each year and in 2007 was in Darwin in October. Two days of the conference were open to the public – a number of the papers from the conference are on the website. The 2008 conference will be held in Brisbane.

The federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) provides a briefing for the ACSSO Executive twice a year. The continuation of these briefings has enabled ACSSO to build on its relationship with DEEWR and to gain valuable information into educational thinking at the federal level and knowledge of federal government initiatives.

The president and the secretariat are also involved in consultations and discussion with many other organizations; and the president and the Executive Director make frequent comments for the media. ACSSO is represented on over 50 committees, a heavy load for the staff, president and members of affiliates who undertake this role.

#### ***Projects***

Often in conjunction with the Australian Parents Council (APC) – the national nongovernment parent organisation – ACSSO is involved in a number of projects. Those undertaken this year were

#### ***Investing in our Schools Program (IOSP)***

This program was an initiative of the previous government which was intended to run for 2005-2008 however the former government decided that 2007 would be the final round of funding. Initially, \$700 million was provided to state government schools and \$300 million to non-government schools over the life of the program. The funding available to schools was increased with \$827 million for government schools and \$354 million for non-government schools. After the final round of applications for government schools 6,935 schools had projects approved for funding. This was a project which was strongly supported by ACSSO as it not only allowed for a range of infrastructure projects in both primary and secondary schools but importantly required that the school community be involved in consultations about the projects for which the school was applying.

The new government's Digital Education project is far more limited ie is only for computers and associated technologies in secondary schools and does not involve the school community in making decisions.

#### ***Values education***

ACSSO has dedicated a part of its website to its Values education project. It has guest columnists, often providing a controversial view of issues; information about the Good practice schools project; an online forum; the opportunity for schools to tell their 'Good news stories' about how they 'teach' values; and a quick values audit for schools. In addition as part of this project ACSSO has run focus groups – to find out what is important to Australian parents.

#### *Literacy leaflet*

The leaflet and accompanying leaflet 'Parents make the world of difference' has been a huge success. It has been translated into 10 community languages. A directory of resources has been compiled and is on the ACSSO website.

#### *Studies of Asia*

ACSSO and the Australian Parents Council continue to work closely with the Asia Education Foundation to develop joint strategies to implement a communication campaign about the importance of the study of Asia and its languages. A postcard has recently been developed which is to be distributed to all schools and can be seen on the Asia Education Foundation's website [www.asiaeducation.edu.au](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au)

#### *Family-School and Community Partnership Bureau*

In February 2008, Hon Julia Gillard, Minister for Education announced that the Australian government would commission ACSSO and APC to establish and operate a National Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau - initially for a period of four years - working with school communities across the country to assist them in establishing closer relations and achieving the proven benefits of working in partnership. It will do this through on-the-ground research, analysing and promoting those schools and communities that are making family school partnerships work.

The Bureau will bring parent insights into education research and policy. It will work closely with other key stakeholders. Some of the Bureau's goals are to help make cultural changes and therefore are aspirational and long term. Other benefits will be direct and almost immediate. This is an exciting new project and is due to be launched in August 2008.

For more information about ACSSO visit its website [www.acsso.org.au](http://www.acsso.org.au)

*Judith Bundy*

### **Asthma Friendly Schools Steering Committee**

The Asthma Friendly Schools (AFS) program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and is a national initiative aimed at all primary and secondary schools across Australia. The AFS program was launched in 2000 and is managed through the Asthma Foundations in all states and territories of Australia. An Asthma Friendly School adopts the AFS program strategies to support the whole school community in understanding and managing asthma. For a school to gain Asthma Friendly status it needs to fulfill the program's 8 essential criteria. The aim of the AFS program is to improve the quality of life, health outcomes and well being for school children with asthma.

When a school joins with the Asthma Friendly Schools program, some of the impacts are

- potentially life saving for students with asthma
- improved asthma awareness and management in the school and its community
- encourages an Asthma Friendly School environment
- improved health and learning outcomes for students with asthma
- complements the school's duty of care responsibility for health and safety of students and staff
- peace of mind for parents of children with asthma
- school staff are more confident in managing asthma.

In South Australia about 50% of schools are recognised as AFS schools; with about 90% registered to receive information about the program.

The Steering Committee members provide advice, information and expertise in regard to the AFS program and utilise their capabilities to be pro-active in ensuring the success of the program. Membership consists of the AFS Coordinator, representatives from the three education sectors, and representatives from an Indigenous group (Aboriginal Health Council of SA) and a state parent/consumer group (I represent SAASPC). Meetings are held 2-3 times a year at which time we receive an update of both national and State developments in the program. Information about the program can be found at [www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au](http://www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au).

*Judith Bundy*

### **Children's Services State Consultative Committee**

This has 12 parent representatives, two from each of six regional advisory committees (RACs), with other representatives from family day care, integrated children's services, northern metro, Playgroup Association of SA, Novita, remote and isolated regions, multiculturalism, AEU, SAASPC, children's services which are not publicly funded, member of parliament, the institute of early childhood education.

Its purpose is to

- advise the Minister of Education and Children's Services and the DECS chief executive on matters relating to children's services in the State.

- assess the needs and attitudes of the community
- consider reports and/or motions put to the committee by RACs
- investigate and report to the Minister on matters referred to the committee by the Minister
- meet at least five times a year with one meeting in an out of city location. This year was held in the Fleurieu Peninsula with Strathalbyn kindergarten, Port Elliot and Goolwa childcare centres being visited by the committee.

*Vicky Hughes*

### **Education and Care Legislation Reform Stakeholder Advisory Group**

The group is made up of representatives from all major stakeholders including, peak government and non-government care and education associations, unions and tertiary institutions.

Work of the group included discussion paper 1 on the SSABSA Act Reform and amendments to the Education Act 1973. The paper was put out for consultation and from it came the Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Bill. A group was formed to do work on implementing this for 2009.

Discussion Paper 2 Registration and Regulation of Schools and Children's Services was then put out for consultation until 30 June. This feedback is now being collated for preparation to report to the Minister and will also help shape the new legislation. Public consultation on the draft bill and Discussion Paper 3 will occur in August.

*Jenice Zerna*

### **Family Life SA Council**

Family Life SA aims to

- promote healthy attitudes towards sexual growth
- encourage open discussion between children, young people and their caregivers, about sexuality and relationships.
- help children to value the importance of their own family unit
- be a major provider of education about sexuality and relationships for young children, young people, caregivers, schools and the wider community.

The work of Family Life under the leadership of Director Gina Dawson has continued throughout the past 12 months. Excellent feedback is provided from the multi sectorial schools visited by Family Life educators. These skilled practitioners also provide in-classroom support for teachers in the Sexuality sections of the health and physical education curriculum, family evenings and professional development for teachers.

2008 has been more than challenging with regards to financial matters. Ongoing discussions continue about the future Ministerial funding. At the time of printing, schools have been advised of the uncertainty of the financial future of Family Life beyond this year. A tender process for the provision of sexuality services is to be implemented with Family Life being one of the groups that will participate in the tender process.

*Vicky Hughes*

### **Inter-sector Values Forums Coordinating Advisory Committee**

The issue of values education is both contested and complex but should not be seen as divisive or curtailing public debate, rather it should be seen as an opportunity to raise important questions and be the starting point for all of those who may wish to contribute.

Values education in schools is not new, although it may not always have been explicitly identified in either classroom practice or in curriculum documents – although it could never be argued that such documents were values free. Since the 1990s however governments and education departments have been involved in significant work on ensuring that values education is clearly part of their agendas.. This has included funding from the federal education department on a project which, after consultation, identified nine values for Australian schools and developed a poster – you may have seen it in your school, it has Simpson and his donkey in the background.

And then in 2004 the federal Department of Education, Science and Technology provided \$29.7 million for a national four year project which had a number of initiatives including:

- resources for primary and secondary teachers
- a website – [www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/](http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/)
- development of a values education kit (which can be downloaded from the above website)
- a project for schools to work in clusters (there have been 50 school cluster groups) called the Values education good practice schools project – a report on the Stage 1 schools and information on the schools and their projects in Stage 2 is also available on the above website
- an annual national values education conference – which I have been fortunate to attend; the last two years the SA Department of Education and Children's Services generously supported my attendance
- funding was also provided to other organisations such as the Australian Council of State Schools Organisation (the national parent organisation) for a project designed specifically for parents, part of which involved setting up a website [www.valuesineducation.org.au](http://www.valuesineducation.org.au) where government schools are encouraged to tell stories about how they make values education happen.

As this project draws to a close there is, of course, much interest being shown in how, or if, the federal government will continue to support values education in Australian schools.

I was the SA Association of School Parents Clubs representative on the South Australian advisory committee and I have been very impressed with the enthusiasm and interest shown in the project by South Australian schools and teachers. One of the key parts of the state and territory projects was that schools hold values education forums for their whole community and while these were a little slow to occur, after adjustments to the criteria which allowed schools to work in clusters, they have resulted in some very interesting and useful work. Interestingly the project officer's assessment was that the most successful schools were those that have worked with the entire school community to create a learning environment where values are not just ideas.

For more information about the program see the website [www.decs.sa.gov.au/valueseducation/](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/valueseducation/) and the federal government's values education website [www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/](http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/)

*Judith Bundy*

### **Kidsafe SA Inc Playground Safety Project Steering Committee**

Members of the group came from different areas: Department of Education and Children's Services, Licensing and Standards, Health and Ageing, Kidsafe SA, Department of Health Local Government Association and SAASPC. All meetings were held by teleconference, with the group being informed of the progress of the project and the opportunity to give feedback when required. Extra funding was received from Health and Ageing, to expand and extend the project.

The Resource Kit was distributed to early childhood sites across the state and was widely promoted, with orders being received from China and Canada.

Playground Safety Workshops were held across the state for the early childhood sector, and local government. Playground audits were also offered to some sites as required by the project, and some extra ones were offered to disadvantaged sites.

With the work of the group completed, the final meeting was held on the 16 April. Participation on the group was interesting, informative and worthwhile.

*Jenice Zerna*

### **National Council of Women**

This group meets monthly to support and encourage women in other organizations both local and overseas. There is usually a guest speaker at each council meeting. Some of the relevant topics held this year have been: The global evolution of the potato, what do young women want? Grandparents 4 Grandchildren and Water sanitation.

*Leanne Sheard*

### **Peer Support Foundation Board**

This group meets once a month and consists of mainly teachers with representation from Quit SA and Child and Youth Services. The objective for the Board is to provide support and training for teachers to ensure that their Peer Support programs are successful. Later in the year the PSF board will be celebrating 20 years of operation in SA. It is hoped to those former members of the Board and teachers that have undertaken the training programs will be able to get together to celebrate this milestone.

*Leanne Sheard*

### **Premier's Be Active Challenge Advisory Committee**

The Premier's Be Active Challenge is the replacement for the previous 'Be Active- Let's Go' program.

The Advisory Committee met on several occasions – July, August and November to advise on the nature of the program and its implementation during 2008 – the second year of the program. A number of suggested changes were made to make the administrative side less time consuming for the schools, including making the recording of student performances easier.

The selection criteria for awards and the nature of rewards for the successful students were also discussed and recommendations made.

The committee has a wide membership from interested stake holders – such as the project manager for the previous 'Be Active Let's go' program Rick Baldock, Flinders University, UniSA, Special Schools, Local Government, Department of Health, ACHPER (Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation), SA Olympic Council, Recreation SA, Sport SA, SAASPC, DECS personnel, The Children's Hospital, Russell Ebert (Port Adelaide Football Club) and Brett Burton (The Adelaide Crows). The Project Officer is Mark Williams.

A special aspect of the Challenge has been the appointment of ambassadors who will visit schools to speak to the students. The 2008 ones are: Shaun Burgoyne, Mark Soderstrom, Ryan Fitzgerald, Angelo Constanzo, Natalie Von Bertough, Sam Woosnam, Brett Burton, and Warren Tredrea.

The 2008 Challenge was launched at Unley Primary School on Thursday 21 February, when Shaun, Mark, 'Fitzy' and Angelo led the students in a number of activities.

*Marion McCarthy*

### **Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA)**

The Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia was the independent statutory authority responsible for the administration of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). Students from South Australia, the Northern Territory and some Asian educational institutions undertook accredited SSABSA courses.

SSABSA continued its work throughout the past 12 months to ensure that the students who will be the last to complete the old SACE would not be disadvantaged by the change over to the new SACE. The new SACE Board began its work from July 2008.

As in past years, the annual Merit Ceremony was held on the grounds of Government House to recognise the students who received a mark of 20 in at least one subject.

The final meeting of the Board was held at the end of June 2008 with the Minister for Education and Children's Services attending to thank staff and the Board for their valuable work over the years. *Jenice Zerna*

### **South Australia Dental Service Consumer Advisory Panel**

The Consumer Advisory Panel works within the Central Northern Health Services Community and Consumer Participation Framework. Membership is formed from various association and community groups and reflects the special needs and interests of the communities that they represent.

Participation on this group is important for us, and it is the topics that affect the School Dental Clinics/Services that are our main focus. Over the past 12 months many topics have been discussed and feedback given where appropriate. Some of these have been: fee waiver and co-payments, client relations policy, SA Dental website, general information brochure, waiting lists and clinic consolidation/closures – the Minister for Health endorsed the closure of 11 clinics which was not a popular decision in those schools affected

Two new Commonwealth Dental Health Programs are due to start on 1 July 2008

- Teen Dental Plan for 12-17 year olds whose families receive Family Payment Part A. These families will receive a \$150 voucher to use for a preventative care check up. The service will be run by Medicare.
- Commonwealth Dental Health Program which this will be similar to the old program, although the approach will be more flexible and focus on waiting lists, increased visits for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, preschool children and chronic disease. *Jenice Zerna*

### **Special Needs Education Network (SNEN)**

This group is a coalition of disability advisory groups whose purpose is to seek appropriate ways of supporting and providing information to parents of children with disabilities. It works in close liaison with the Department of Education and Children's Services, and Catholic and Independent Schools are also represented on the group.

In the last twelve months the two main issues which have arisen have been:

- concerns with the provision of the taxi service for children under new guidelines about routes to be followed. This has been resolved satisfactorily, and
- ongoing concerns about provision for the continuity of Out of School Hours care as children move from primary to secondary school. The group is attempting to establish how wide this need is by contacting the schools with special education units. Also, Hamilton Secondary College is in the process of setting up a trial program using holiday care based at its special unit.

#### *Other item*

Last year a new brochure setting out contacts for helpful existing support services was distributed to schools for the use of parents seeking help, and just recently, a resource for teachers - "Autism Spectrum Disorders – a starting guide for teachers" has also been made available to Special Schools and Units and DECS Disability Coordinators in an initial distribution. Others will follow.

The group also received information and some brochures about a Disability Expo to be held at the Adelaide Showground Jubilee Pavilion on Friday 24 October from 10.00 am to 5.00pm

SNEN also had a representative on the PIE grants committee for the award of the 2008 grants.

Our last meeting was held at the Special Education Resource Unit, based at Marlborough Street, Henley Beach, where we had the opportunity to view the extensive range of resources which are available for loan to parents, together with expert advice. *Marion McCarthy*