



Promoting parent participation in public preschools and schools

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

Annual report

2008-2009

Elected officers 2008-2009

President	Jenice Zerna
Metropolitan Vice Presidents	Julie Coulter Ruth Lenton
Country Vic President	Glenda Woolford
Secretary	Leanne Sheard
Assistant Secretary	Judith Bundy
Treasurer	-
ACSSO Vice President	Judith Bundy
Magazine Editor	Marion McCarthy OAM
Network Liaison Convener	Gwen Secomb OAM
Early Childhood Convener	Vicky Hughes
Archivist	Joy Rowe OAM

South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs Inc

Annual report 2008-2009

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 many other people within DECS who are always most approachable and willing to speak with us and provide us with invaluable advice.

Executive Committee meetings

Executive meetings are held on a Tuesday 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 Leon Johns DECS Criminal History Screening Unit; Maribel Coffey, Languages Education DECS; Sue Dahl and Robyn Fawcett from AsthmaSA; and a session on Child Safe Environments – reporting abuse and neglect by Jenice Zerna and Judith Bundy.

We welcome any interested parent to attend our Executive meetings.

Conference and Forum

The 2008 annual conference was held on 19 August with the theme of homework, We had a diverse range of excellent speakers with a workshop by Mark Le Messurier teacher, author and national conference presenter being one of the highlights.

Another very informative one day forum was held in May – *Mind Your Language*, again with very interesting speakers who covered a wide range of issues on teaching and learning languages in our schools.

While attendances have been disappointing we know that those who attended both the conference and the forum have gained much information which they have been able to take back to their schools and their parent groups.

Publications

Parents Say

This magazine is distributed free to all South Australian Government preschools and schools as part of our commitment as a recipient of a ministerial grant. One copy is sent to preschools and two to schools. Private subscriptions are also available.

Included in it is up to date information from regular contributors such as the Minister for Education the Hon Jane Lomax Smith, the Chief Executive DECS, The SACE Board of SA, Safer Communities SA and CSIRO Double Helix Club. Items from preschools and schools are invited, especially news about special celebrations or other events. Information about recent developments in the education of our children is also included as it becomes available. A recent innovation of which we are proud has been the change to full color, thanks to the astute negotiation of our publisher, Adelaide Advertising Services.

Net Working

In addition we compile and distribute our quarterly newsletter *Net Working* to affiliated preschools and schools by post and/or email if requested.

Handbook

Our handbook has recently been updated and 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 mandatory notification of child abuse for volunteers in preschools/schools. In the past year we ran 26 sessions across the state with just over 300

volunteers attending. Funding for the sessions has been provided by the Minister for Education which means that no charge is made to those attending. SAASPC and Australian Red Cross also work together to provide these sessions for their Good Start Breakfast Club volunteers.

Principal panel selection information

Merit selection training for parent nominees to Principal Selection Panels was provided by SAASPC from 1989 until 1996, when it became a program run jointly with the South Australian Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO). Using a small ministerial grant, the sessions were managed by a committee of representatives of each association and sessions were run jointly with volunteer presenters. There was no charge to participants.

Presenters received training and support from the Equity Standards and Merit Protection Unit (ESMPU – formerly the Equal Employment Opportunity Unit) of the DECS Human Resources Directorate. In recent years this training included preschool director appointments as well.

Unfortunately, due to changed circumstances, a planned and advertised training session for mid March had to be cancelled, and the program was suspended until further notice. Schools and preschools were notified through the Regional Directors of this cancellation and of alternative options for assistance. In the interim, the ESPMU offered free places for Governing Council nominees at their two sessions for Departmental staff at the beginning of second term, and some were able to attend.

For those whose positions were advertised for decision before April, these training sessions were too late. At the same time, departmental officers reminded Regional Directors of their obligation to ensure that the parent nominee was familiar with the process before a panel began its work.

At the time of the suspension of the program, nine sessions had been held between 1 July 2008 and 28 February 2009 for 78 participants from 52 sites. This 'half-way' mark was in line with the average of about 150 from 100 sites over previous years,

ESPMU is still offering this 'staff' training and at the time of writing this report the future of the program is unclear.

Invitations

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

- SACE merit ceremony
- Children's week awards
- Smolicz awards launch
- AEU Teachers Day
- Multicultural Education Committee Human Rights in Action conference
- Red Cross Breakfast Club launch
- MCEETYA first biennial forum in Melbourne
- Barnardos Mother of the Year awards
- Premiers Be Active challenge celebration
- Function for retiring principals /preschool directors
- Peer Support AGM
- National Council of Women Australia Day ceremony

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

Media

SAASPC president, Jenice Zerna, as our media spokesperson, continues to be asked to provide comment by print and TV media outlets. This year she has covered topics such as corporal punishment, use of sniffer dogs in schools, new funding model, cyberbullying in schools, teacher strike action, banning of high caffeinated drinks in NSW and contributed an opinion piece on teachers to Sunday Mail

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 (Official Welfare Ladies) 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.

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, Education department, the Union, Principal Associations and SAASPC. The main topics discussed during the past 12 months have been

- discussion about Proposal 8 Discussion paper 3 – compulsory schooling and education- need to define in the Act and the Regulations the term and role of Authorised officers also to ensure that the new Act requires the Non-Government Schools Registration Board to take responsibility for attendance within their sectors.
- temporary transfers model hasn't worked as well as hoped, but may be an option for transfers for Aboriginal students when SA, WA and NT combine to ensure attendance levels improve.
- confidential transfers seem to working well – sadly about one child per week has to transfer and this is handled very carefully to ensure that their whereabouts is not traceable by those who are not able legally to have access to the child.
- Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN) newsletter and information sheets were made available (please contact me if you would like a copy of any of the material)

Gwen Secomb

DECS Child Protection Steering Committee

The committee meets once a term with representatives from the Education Department, the Australian Education Union, principals and preschool directors and SAASPC. This past year a representative from SAASSO and Out of School Hours Care have joined the group. The main topics for the past 12 months have been

- efforts being made to ensure that media follow stricter guidelines when reporting completed suicide
- DECS/Families SA bulletin August 2008 - The Child Abuse Report Line answering system is in place and like so many numbers there is a listen and choice of numbers to press
- a copy of the materials for Day for Daniel project emanating from Queensland; there will be a slight change following discussions about the South Australian Child Protection curriculum materials.
- Annette Bulling provided comprehensive reports of the 17 trial schools using the SMART (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma) and highlighted the fact that the program had its highest success when the whole school supported the program as the results were then excellent. It was interesting to hear about enhanced staff responses when students presented challenging behaviours that led to positive outcomes. Also it was hoped that in 2009 OSHC workers would be able to access the training. The counsellor induction program has been enthusiastically taken up by counsellors including some long term employees who have expressed very positive feedback for the sessions
- the position in Child Protection Curriculum has been continued. There has been some interest from some other states and the commonwealth about purchasing the curriculum. Trish Newport has also archived all the material; it would be useful to anyone doing some research or a PhD in the future. There has also been strong support for purchasing hard copies (versus downloading off the secure website) the curriculum documents and arrangements are in place for this to proceed
- Managing Problem Sexual Behaviours Guidelines – it is pleasing to note that this will be used by both the government and nongovernment sectors. It is a challenge to compile a document that covers all sectors of education and care/0-17
- the role of family day care and long day care providers that are approved by DECS but self employed; concerns were raised at the meeting about the need to have further discussions to overcome some concerns about best serving the needs of children and young people.

Gwen Secomb

DECS Primary Years Reference group

This group meets twice a term and consists of teachers, principals, DECS personnel and representatives from SAASPC and SAASSO.

This group has been instrumental in the forming of the Primary Years Teachers Association which in conjunction with DECS has organised conferences for primary years teachers.

Leanne Sheard

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

This group is one of the four curriculum band reference groups. Its terms of reference are to

- provide advice to the Minister for Education and Chief Executive, DECS, through the SACSA Executive on the development and implementation of national curriculum
- provide advice on the development of national curriculum birth to 12 to the National Curriculum State Steering Committee and the SACSA Executive
- provide advice to the Executive Director, Curriculum and the Executive Director, Early Childhood Services through the SACSA Executive group and about the renewal of the SACSA Framework, the Early Learning Framework and the future SACE
- investigate perspectives and issues of stakeholders represented in the Band Reference Groups regarding the transitions between the SACSA Framework and the Early Learning Framework and future SACE and the national curriculum
- provide advice to the National Curriculum State Steering Committee about supporting teaching and learning in the implementation of national curriculum
- create partnerships which support and inform future curriculum practice and policy.

Meetings are usually held twice a term. The group has membership from various groups including teachers, principals, Australian Education Union and parent organisations

Over the past 12 months many topics related to the middle years have been discussed, some of these include the renewal of the SACSA framework and where it fits with the national curriculum which is due to be rolled out in 2011, updates on the national curriculum, sharing feedback on materials related to this, looking at and giving feedback on draft curriculum materials for Aboriginal Cultural Studies and information on the SA Teaching for Effective Learning Resource/ Framework (SATfEL).

Jenice Zerna

DECS Healthy Eating Implementation Group

This committee has only met once in the past 12 months. Workshops were held to promote the smooth implementation of the canteen guidelines that the federal government health and education ministers have put in place.

Leanne Sheard

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. In January, Terry Aulich, the Executive Director, left to take up another position and his role has been ably taken over, until the appointment of a new ED, by Rupert Macgregor, the operations manager. As no additional staff have been employed this has put considerable stress on the small staff of the office to fulfil ACSSO's role.

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 2008 was in Brisbane 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 2009 conference will be held in Hobart and it is planned to hold the 2010 conference in Adelaide.

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 organisations; ACSSO is represented on over 50 committees, a heavy load for the staff, president and members of affiliates who undertake this role.

Projects

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

Family-School & Community Partnership Bureau

In August 2008 the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau was launched. This is an exciting new initiative, funded by the federal government for 4 years. The Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau is dedicated to greater parental engagement and community involvement in schools. It conducts research, disseminates best practice and provides practical support and advice to parents, principals, teachers and others about how to build and sustain partnerships. Two initiatives which predated the Bureau but were instrumental in its formation were

- the National Family-School Partnerships Framework that had been developed at a national gathering of educators and parents and was subsequently endorsed by all Education Ministers
- the Family-School Partnerships Project began in 2004. Expressions of interest were sought from schools keen to do something special around engagement with parents and families, and 61 schools were selected and given a modest grant – \$10,000 – to support their partnership endeavours. Schools were helped to put their ideas into practice, and their efforts were monitored by researchers whose task was two fold. Firstly, they gathered evidence about what worked and what didn't. Secondly, they assessed how well the principles of the National Framework, and the various dimensions of partnership that the Framework proclaimed, were actually realised through or reflected in the partnerships that each of the schools developed.

The Bureau publishes a quarterly newsletter – to subscribe or to find out more about the Bureau go to the website www.familyschool.org.au.

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. For more information about ACSSO visit its website www.acsso.org.au

Judith Bundy

Asthma Friendly Schools Steering Committee

The Asthma Friendly Schools (AFS) program was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as a national initiative aimed at all primary and secondary schools across Australia. The AFS program was launched in 2000 and managed through the Asthma Foundations in all states and territories of Australia. An Asthma Friendly School adopted 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 was to improve the quality of life, health outcomes and well being for school children with asthma.

When a school joined with the Asthma Friendly Schools program, some of the impacts were

- 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 have been recognised as AFS schools; with about 90% registered to receive information about the program.

In South Australia a Steering committee provided advice, information and expertise in regard to the AFS program and members utilised their capabilities to be pro-active in ensuring the success of the program. Membership

consisted of the AFS Coordinator, representatives from the three education sectors, and from an Indigenous group (Aboriginal Health Council of SA) and a state parent/consumer group (I represented SAASPC). Meetings were held 2-3 times a year at which time we received an update of both national and state developments in the program. Information about the program can be found at www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au.

It has recently been announced that an Adolescent and Children's Asthma Program (ACAP) will replace the AFS program as a federally funded initiative managed by the Asthma Foundations in Australian schools. A focus of this project will be on emergency training for asthma and other linked conditions for education staff, with the scope extending to include settings for 4 year olds in formal education. It will also incorporate asthma self management messages for adolescents and a focus on information for parents/carers.

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 metropolitan area, Playgroup Association of SA, Novita, remote and isolated regions, multiculturalism, AEU, SAASPC, children's services which are not publicly funded, member of parliament, and the institute of early childhood education.

Its purpose is to

- advise the Minister for Education 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 committee members visited Strathalbyn Kindergarten, Port Elliot Kindergarten and Goolwa Children's Centre on 25 July as part of the annual country day visit and were welcomed and encouraged to ask questions about the operation of each centre. It was very interesting day.

Meetings were also held in September and November 2008 and May 2009. Key discussion points were

- new DECS regional boundaries
- endorsement of the Rural Care Worker Program SA 2008 Evaluation report with support for the needs of small country communities
- Legislative Reform discussion paper number 3 – General provisions for education and early childhood development
- the progress of the implementation of the Virtual Village: Raising a Child in the New Millennium's ten major recommendations. Some concerns were raised about the development of the first seven children's centres
- DECS to provide a single constitution for integrated services
- Early Years Learning Framework – trialled in four sites and due for release in July 2009.

The July 2009 meeting was deferred until the new committee members had been nominated and approved.

Vicky Hughes/Gwen Secomb

Education and Care Legislation Reform Stakeholder Advisory Group

This group was formed in January 2007 to work on the proposal to reform education and children's services legislation over the following two years and to assist the work of the Legislation Law reform unit. Membership of the group consists of representatives from all major stakeholders including, peak government and non-government care and education associations, unions and tertiary institutions.

Over the past 12 months, the group was kept up to date on the progress of Discussion paper 2 *Registration and regulation of schools and children's services*, when consultation was completed. Work is progressing on finalisation of proposals to draft a Bill to establish an Act which will concern the registration and licensing of all schools, care and early childhood services.

Discussion paper 3 *General provisions for education and early childhood development* was put out for consultation. After taking into account the feedback the Legislation Reform Unit is in the process of finalising proposals to draft a Bill to establish an Act which will concern the general provisions for education, care and early childhood development services including governance.

The meetings covered many aspects, including issues and concerns with regard to both papers, for example the opportunities to have extra consultations with the Legislation Reform Unit. Work of the group will continue to include the development of Discussion paper 4 on employment in government education, care and early childhood services.

Jenice Zerna

Family Life SA Council

Family Life SA has aimed 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.

Unfortunately due to the difficulty of securing ongoing financing a special meeting was called on 13 August at which it was resolved to dissolve the association.

Vicky Hughes/Gwen Secomb

Inter-sector Values Forums Coordinating Advisory Committee

As a result of the National Values Education project being funded (by the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) for a further twelve months (until December 2009) this committee was resurrected. Its role is to

- advise on the project work plan
- monitor the project to ensure that milestones and reporting deadlines are met
- provide professional support for the duration of the Project
- encourage the use of values education resources developed by the Australian Government for values education and the development and use of complementary local resources.

The Advisory Committee includes representation all sectors, principals association, the teacher professional development association, universities and parent groups.

This Committee also oversees the South Australian Civics and Citizenship Education project, a smaller program funded by DEEWR. The aim of this project is to document good practice in Civics and Citizenship Education via grants to South Australian schools. This documentation will be used to develop professional learning activities to disseminate ideas and good practice across the sectors. DEEWR considers this program links very closely with values education and that the committee structures already established will also effectively support civics and citizenship education.

It is intended that only two meetings will be held – the first one took place on 13 February at which the project officer provided an update on both the Values and the Civics and Citizenship projects. Both projects have a professional learning focus and a grants to schools program. Information was also provided on the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project now the VASP project. This project commissioned successful schools to demonstrate and document good practice. There are 14 clusters across Australia; with three of those in South Australia

- South Australia is involved in the Cross Border Values Cluster (Victor Harbor Primary, Mataranka NT, Yankalilla PS, Spearwood Primary WA, Birdwood SA and Peregrine Tas). This project is focusing on thinking and moral philosophy in the classroom.
- Flinders Parkk PS, Fisk Street PS, Underdale HS. This project is focusing on the need for successful transitions and the values that need to underpin these programs
- Australian Juvenile Detention Centre cluster led by SA Youth Education Centre.

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

Judith Bundy

Literacy and Numeracy Committee

This is a cross sector committee with representatives from Department of Education and Children's Services, Catholic Education and Independent Schools and a parent representative from SAASPC. This year the group is chaired by Margaret Kellett, Policy and Program Officer, Literacy, Numeracy and ICT, DECS. The program for this year is the same as last year, with the emphasis on literacy and numeracy at the local site level and funding being used to hold the Literacy and Numeracy Expo.

A delay from the federal government meant that the first meeting for this year was on 29 June. This meeting was for the selection and distribution of funds to applicants for Literacy and Numeracy Promotion Projects – local activity funding for childcare, preschools, and schools, (individual or clusters) and regional activities.

Literacy and Numeracy Week 2009 in South Australia will be held at the Education Centre, Hindmarsh on Monday 31 August and Tuesday 1 September with free registration. Keynote speakers will be Professor Jan Watson on perspectives on numeracy in a globalised world and on Tuesday Professor Christopher Walsh on 21st century literacy practices for a globalised world. Workshops will be held in the afternoon.

In addition regional showcases will be held in Eyre and Western, Limestone Coast, Yorke and Mid North.

Glenda Woolford

National Council of Women of South Australia

The objects of the National Council of Women are to

- promote the interests of women and to secure their proper recognition in the community
- educate and uplift the outlook of the community on the status of women, the importance of the family and the nurture and upbringing of children
- to provide a bond of union between women's organisations, and a means of co-ordinated expressions for the societies affiliated with the council
- represent the interests of women in general before parliament, local governing authorities and the courts
- promote the moral and social welfare of the community.

Workshops have been held in September 2008 and May 2009. In September, migrant women who are now Australian citizens told of their homelands, their journey to South Australia and their adjustment to living in Australia. In May the focus was on crafts such as basket weaving and embroidery, and dancing and story telling.

A Christmas function was held in December to meet the patron-in-chief Mrs Liz Scarce, wife of the governor, which was also attended by SAASPC President Jenice Zerna and SAASPC Secretary Leanne Sheard.,

Ruth Lenton

Peer Support Foundation Board

At the start of 2008 this group thought that it had finished its work but with the implementation of the Future SACE a new life has emerged. This has come through the implementation of the personal learning plan requirements. The executive and the board have also been working with the refugee association to implement programs for their young people.

Leanne Sheard

Premier's *be active* Challenge Advisory Committee

The Premier's *be active* challenge Advisory Committee is a large, diverse group of representatives of organisations with an interest in promoting children's healthy and active life styles. It includes representatives from DECS, the office of Recreation and Sport, local government, Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), Flinders University, UNISA, special schools, Sports SA, both government school parent organisations, Port Adelaide Football Club and the Crows Football Club.

Two meetings have been held, one in September 2008 and the other in April 2009.

The Challenge is for students from Reception to Year 9 to undertake 60 minutes of physical activity per day for five days per week over four weeks. The goal for a school is for at least one student to complete 10 weeks of the challenge. Students record their activities and time.

Those students who achieve the challenge receive a medal. 2009 is the year for the first 'gold' medals – for those children taking up the Challenge for the third year.

Grants and awards are available for 'high performing' schools based on criteria which take into account the school's situation eg number of students, number who have completed the Challenge, the nature of the School's population, children with special needs, for whom provision is made, and so on. On 7 November 2008 a celebration was held at Sports Park for presentation of these awards to 50 high performing schools and students and staff from all over the state attended.

A major strength of the Challenge is the contribution of its large group of ambassadors who come from a variety of sporting backgrounds such as the two AFL clubs, the Adelaide United Football Club, netball, basketball and individuals such as paralympian Katrina Webb, netball coach Jan Sterling and media personality 'Fitzy'. They visit schools to promote the Challenge and enthuse students.

Funding for the program ceases in June 2010, so the Advisory Committee is seeking ways of ensuring that the work will continue.

The original DECS Project Officer for the Challenge, Mark Williams, recently left to take up the position of State Manager OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle Program). He has been replaced by his Deputy, Leah Cassidy. We wish them both well in their endeavours.

Marion McCarthy.

South Australia Dental Service Consumer Advisory Panel

The consumer advisory panel continues to work within the Central Northern Health Services Community and Consumer Participation Framework. Meetings are held bi monthly and membership is from various associations and community groups and reflects the special needs and interests of these groups.

Over the past 12 months the group has been kept informed on many topics related to the different areas of dental policy and care, and have also had the opportunity to give feedback when required. Topics which have been covered have included Department of Health Consumer and Community Participation Guide, Commonwealth

Dental Health Program, Teen Dental Plan, New Aboriginal Dental Health Program for Remote Communities in SA, and updating of policies and brochures.

From time to time a guest speaker attends the meeting eg on the opening of the Coober Pedy Clinic, the Crunch & Sip program for schools, SA Dental Service disability action plan. These are just a small number of examples of what has been covered over the past year.

The group and its work is an important part of the SA Dental Service and is highly valued.

Jenice Zerna

Studies of Asia State Advisory Group

The terms of reference for the group are

- to provide advice regarding initiatives, priorities and strategies to support uptake of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia*.(MCEETYA 2005)
- to build strategic partnerships and capacity for consistent and effective communication and promotion of Asia Education Foundation and South Australian studies of Asia projects, resources and programs.
- to work collaboratively to advocate for and strengthen studies of Asia across state and national curriculum initiatives (eg. National Curriculum Board, National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program).

Its members are from

- South Australian Association of School Parent Clubs
- Flinders University
- Global Education Centre
- Catholic Education Office
- Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
- South Australian Primary Principals' Association
- South Australian Secondary Principals' Association
- DECS Curriculum Services
- DECS Community and Tertiary Liaison
- DECS Schools and District Operations Functions

Members of the group are expected to

- disseminate information and consult with their respective groups
- provide representative advice
- attend meetings a minimum of twice a year.

The first meeting of this group was held in November 2008 but unfortunately no further meetings have yet been held. At the meeting an overview was provided on the establishment and work of the Asia Education Foundation; information on the new National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSPP); a presentation on the range of studies of Asia projects and initiatives in South Australia; discussion on the effect of development of the national curriculum and issues facing the teaching and learning of Asia languages.

Judith Bundy