



- Promoting parent participation in public preschools and schools

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

# **Annual report**

## **2010-2011**

## **Elected officers 2010-2011**

President	Jenice Zerna
Metropolitan Vice Presidents	Julie Coulter Ruth Lenton
Country Vice President	Nita Kay
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

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We were deeply saddened by the passing on 18 May of Vicky Hughes, SAASPC Early Childhood Convener. She was a dedicated officer and will be sorely missed.

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## **Acronyms used in the Annual Report**

AC	Australian Curriculum
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACSSO	Australian Council of State School Organisations
DECS	SA Department of Education and Children's Services
DEEWR	Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (federal)
EDSAS	DECS Electronic Administration System (SA)
ICAN	Innovative Community Action Networks
MCEEDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early childhood Development and Youth Affairs
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (tests)
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SACSA	South Australian Curriculum Standards Assessment (Curriculum Framework)
SAASSO	South Australian Association of State School Organisations
SSO	School Service Officer
TRT	Temporary Relieving Teacher

# South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs Inc

## Annual report 2010-2011

The South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs Inc (SAASPC) is the peak 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. This is becoming increasingly important as research shows that if parents are involved positively in their children's learning then the school outcomes for their children are likely to be enhanced.

We are pleased that the Minister, Hon Jay Weatherill, the acting Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), Mr Gino DeGennaro, and now the newly appointed Chief Executive, Mr Keith Bartley have continued to meet with us on a number of occasions during the past twelve months. At these 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 acknowledge the continuing support of the Minister for Education through the provision of our operational grant which also includes the funding for Responding to Abuse and Neglect and Principal/Preschool Director Panel Selection information sessions.

We also appreciate the support of the 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 David Hutchinson DECS on the new student centred funding model and Sue Emmett Curriculum Services DECS on the Australian curriculum and Janine Harvey Child & Student Wellbeing DECS on Child Health and Education Support Services (CHESS) .

### ***Conference***

The 2010 annual conference took the form of a mini conference on teacher placement and the role of the Teacher Registration Board. As SAASPC was the host organisation for the Australian Council of State School Organisation's national parent conference in October it was felt that our efforts should be put towards this. The ACSSO conference was very successful and attended by delegates from parent organisations from around Australia as well as South Australian delegates and other interested parents and educators.

### ***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 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 education is of course, also included.

#### *Net Working*

A quarterly newsletter, *Net Working*, is compiled and distributed to affiliated preschools and schools by post and/or email if requested, in between editions of the magazine.

#### *Handbook*

The SAASPC handbook on operating a parent group is provided free to new affiliates and is also available for downloading from our website at no charge. Hard copies can also be purchased.

### **Information sessions**

Throughout the year requests have been received for SAASPC Officers to provide information sessions to parents in preschool and school groups. These are:

*Responding to abuse and neglect: education and care information sessions for volunteers (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 and schools. In the past year 36 sessions have been run across the state with over 260 volunteers attending. Funding for all the sessions has been provided by the Minister for Education which means that no charge is made to those attending. SAASPC has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Red Cross to provide sessions for its Good Start Breakfast Club volunteers. In the past twelve months a link to the DECS Mentoring coordinators has been strengthened and more sessions held for this group of volunteers. Other groups to access the sessions have been the Community Foodies and LAP volunteers.

*Principal panel selection information*

This year SAASPC continued its agreement with the Minister for Education to provide these sessions for the Governing Council nominees on selection panels and has received a grant for this purpose. We consider this training to be an important factor in assisting these parent nominees to be confident and equal members of the panel, as the other members are required to be trained in the process. Due to changes to the process following a review there was a delay until second term this year while DECS employees were brought up to date, along with SAASPC's presenters. We also had to produce new materials for our sessions.

Our first session was held on 5 May and to date there have been three others with another planned. These have been attended by 69 people from 51 sites, including preschools, primary, high and area, special and multicampus schools. During the last two terms of 2010, 37 people from 14 sites attended, making the total for the period 106 people from 65 sites. These figures show that our 2011 program is well on track compared with previous experience in spite of the later start.

### **Consultations and Invitations**

SAASPC receives many invitations to attend launches, significant events and conferences, to meet with consultants and to submit responses to papers and inquires. Some of the work undertaken this year has included

- providing evidence to Teacher Registration Board Inquiry
- responding to the federal government's review into funding of schooling
- speaking to Masters students in teaching at Flinders University about parental involvement and school governance

and attending

- forums on progressing the Australian curriculum
- the federal government's Disability Standards review consultation
- the Australian Institute on Teaching and School Leadership consultation on preservice teacher education
- SACE Board parent consultations
- DECS cyber bullying conference
- DECS data governance review workshop
- DEEWR parental engagement in schooling workshop
- Health Bridges (University of Adelaide) forum on immunization of children
- South Australian Strategic plan consultations.
- Multicultural Education Committee conference
- the presentation by Thinker in Residence - John McTernan, (Delivering more effective public service)
- A function for retiring principals and preschool directors
- the launch for Come Out 2011
- the launch of Physical Activity and Nutrition Observatory: Research and Monitoring Alliance
- the Children's Week awards presentation
- the Premiers Reading Challenge awards presentation
- the SACE merit ceremony
- the Schools First Board cocktail reception to celebrate SA and NT winners of the awards
- the Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities SA AGM
- the State Volunteers Congress

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

We were pleased to again be able to sit on the panel which assesses the applications for the PIE grants for preschools and schools.

## **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 the national curriculum, stimulus spending, NAPLAN testing and MySchool website, class sizes, bullying, school costs, school buses, education grants and uniforms, truancy in schools, new SACE model, sponsorship in public schools and changes to employment guidelines for senior students

## **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 and that parents are able to participate as partners in the education of their children.

In turn we acknowledge the great work being done by volunteers in preschools and schools in their numerous capacities.

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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. Provided below are brief overviews from our representatives on just some of the boards and committees on which we represent parents.

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

ACSSO represents the parents of over 2.4 million children attending government schools in Australia. There are currently eight 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 (Peter Garrigan).

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.

The acting Executive Director resigned in September last year and for four months the only staff member was a part time casual administration employee. It was pleasing therefore when Di Giblin took up the position of acting Chief Executive Officer in late January for six months; unfortunately the part time employee left soon after. The acting CEO is based in Sydney which presents some difficulties in administering the office physically. Since she took up the position Ms Giblin has ensured all reporting to DEEWR is up to date; has made detailed responses to a number of parliamentary inquiries; has initiated regular meetings for her and the president with Peter Garrett, the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth and officers at all levels of DEEWR; has ensured media releases are produced when appropriate; has provided regular and useful information to Executive members and affiliates; and has dealt with many other matters in an efficient and effective manner.

The position of CEO is to be advertised in the near future and when appointed will have a three year contract.

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 2010 was held in Adelaide. This involved a considerable workload for SAASPC and as there was no staff support available from ACSSO for the conference; ACSSO Executive agreed it should be a shortened conference. Nevertheless, there was an impressive array of prominent South Australian speakers on the open day of the conference and feedback was very good; a full day Council (or internal) meeting was held the next day and this was followed by a half day Executive meeting.

DEEWR has continued to provide twice yearly briefings for the ACSSO Executive. These briefings not only enable 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; but provide the affiliates, through their Vice President, an opportunity to also gain it. It was pleasing that the Minister was able to address the most recent briefing in March. An Executive meeting is also held on the weekend of the briefings and teleconferences are held at other times as required.

The president and the Chief Executive are also involved in consultations and discussion with many other organisations and respond to numerous media requests - which have increased considerably since the acting CEO took up the position.

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

In conjunction with the Australian Parents Council (APC), the national non government parent organisation, ACSSO is involved in the Family-School and Community Partnership Bureau. The Bureau was launched in August 2008 and is funded by the federal government until 2012. The 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. It is physically based in the ACSSO office. To find out more about the Bureau go to the website [www.familyschool.org.au](http://www.familyschool.org.au).

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

*Judith Bundy*

## **ARTSsmart**

### *Terms of reference*

- 1 To provide leadership, advice and support that is consistent with the key outcomes of the strategy and the aims and objectives of DECS, Curriculum Services and Arts SA for all phases of the further development and implementation of the ARTSsmart strategy including but not limited to:
  - 1.1 Professional development programs for arts educators and arts practitioners
  - 1.2 Quality arts education programs and quality materials and resources in support of arts education
  - 1.3 A branding and advocacy exercise that supports the wider identification of the ARTSsmart project throughout South Australia
  - 1.4 Information about arts and education events and opportunities, and arts organisations and personnel via the ARTSsmart website and other communication means
  - 1.5 Programs of research which profile the value of quality arts education programs for children and young people.
- 2 To provide advice and support for the evaluation of the implementation of the strategy particularly in relation to its effectiveness as a strategy for educational change.

### *Membership*

DECS, Arts SA, Primary Principals Association, Preschools Directors Association, Helpmann Academy, Special School Principals Association, Arts and Education,(Carclew), Office for Youth, Aboriginal Education & Employment Services, Arts Industry Council, Country Arts SA, Outreach Education, Windmill Theatre, SAASPC

Over the last year there was only one meeting of this reference group, and that was also the final meeting. The group was updated on ARTSsmart 2011, Come Out 2011 planning, Australian Curriculum and DECS Curriculum area restructure, Creative Education Partnerships – Artist in Residence Initiative.

At the completion of the meeting members were thanked for their participation and work over the years of the reference group. At this time I would like to thank DECS for the opportunity to participate on the group.

*Jenice Zerna*

## **Asthma Australia Advisory Groups**

There are two programs which have been funded:

- *Asthma Child and Adolescent Program (ACAP)* (\$5.4m over 4 years)

In the past twelve months 475 training sessions have been held for school staff, 127 training sessions for preschool staff; 12,500 school staff and 490 preschools staff have been trained. Since ACAP commenced in November 2009 60,025 education site staff have received training. In some states the training has been linked with staff professional development days. In addition new national branding and resources have been developed including training packages for education staff and a new training tri-fold for education staff. For the future an online training option for education staff is planned; resources for parents in schools and preschools and a first aid summary are to be developed; and an adolescent focus group will be set up.

- *Asthma Community Support Project (CSP)* (\$3m over 4 years)

This project is aimed at people in rural and remote areas, older Australians, Indigenous Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse groups and those from low socioeconomic areas. In the past twelve months 703 CSP sessions have been conducted across Australia reaching 12,789 attendees. A number of core resources have been developed, plus a range of checklists and key target brochures

### *Terms of reference of the advisory groups*

To provide individual and collective information and advice to:

- inform quality program information and service provision
- maximise program reach, ensuring the needs of priority populations are identified and met
- connect AA to key potential partners
- ensure local Foundations develop strong partnerships and support for program implementation
- inform program management, monitoring and evaluation and reporting to the Department of Health and Ageing.

### *Participants*

Organisational representatives from: Australian Rural Health Alliance, National Council of the Ageing, Principals Australia, Australian Asthma and Respiratory Educators Association, SA Association of School Parents Clubs, Early Childhood Australia, Australian Lung Foundation, National Centre for Vocational Education and Research, Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, National Asthma Council, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Asthma Australia Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Country Women's Association, and a training, assessment and evaluation volunteer.

### *Meetings*

Only one formal meeting is held each year but updates are provided when appropriate and I have met with the CEO of Asthma Australia and the Project Manager of ACAP to discuss how parents and schools can best be informed about the program.

*Judith Bundy*

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

This committee has not met for the past twelve months.

## **DECS Absenteeism Taskforce**

Meetings are held once a term with representatives from Department of Education and Children's Services, the AEU, Sapol, Families & Communities and SAASPC. Key issues discussed during the year were:

- representatives from four city schools spoke about their efforts to get children to attend school (Site Strategies for Improving Attendance). One can only be amazed at their tenacity and their focus on what is best for the students. The time spent on non teaching and learning is huge. All speakers gave some excellent suggestions for improvements at the DECS head office level that could make life easier and in the end more children at school each day
- ICAN and Mentoring programs updates at each meeting
- information handouts – joint DECS/Families SA procedures, interagency processes for high risk children: chronic school non attenders, home visit protocols, student mentoring and youth development brochure
- DECS website re attendance policies
  - o [www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/AttendancePolicy.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/AttendancePolicy.pdf)
  - o [www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/AttendanceRequirements.doc](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/AttendanceRequirements.doc)
  - o [www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/InteragencyProcessesforHi.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/InteragencyProcessesforHi.pdf)

- presentation at the November meeting by Andy White, Aboriginal Inclusion Officer and Tina Quitadamo, Aboriginal Education Coordinator, Western Adelaide region office Flinders Park, about Connect West program aimed at assisting Aboriginal students in their transition from year 7 to secondary school. A pilot program began July 2009 with \$1500 ICAN funding for 12 months. Then in May 2010 they received further \$500 ICAN funding to double the number of students being offered the program and to add four more secondary schools. The program has been very successful and links health and education and is worthy of ongoing funding
- discussion about the chronic non attenders and the role of FamiliesSA and Sapol and schools and it was agreed that this will be a focus for the work of the committee in 2011
- 12 extra student attendance counsellors to commence next year (previously only 10 positions, now 22)
- Datamart will now be able to send an email alert to the principal when a student has ten unauthorised absent days.

Gwen Secomb

## DECS Australian Curriculum Early Years Advisory Group

### *Terms of reference*

The Early Years Curriculum Advisory Group has responsibility for providing advice to the Executive Director, Early Childhood Services and the Chief Executive, DECS through the Australian Curriculum Steering Committee in relation to:

- the National Reform Agenda for the early years
- the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework
- the development of the Australian Curriculum
- the implementation of the Australian Curriculum
- supporting teaching and learning through research based pedagogical practices in the implementation of the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the National Curriculum with particular reference to *Reflect Respect Relate* and the *Teaching for Effective Learning* initiatives.

The Early Years Curriculum Advisory Group members have responsibility for:

- canvassing the views and concerns of the group they represent and raise these at the meetings
- reporting to the groups they represent on decisions and issues raised at meetings
- creating partnerships which support and inform future curriculum practice and policy
- promoting curriculum continuity between prior to school and school settings.

### *Issues discussed during the year*

- single intake – DECS is working through the implications and hoping to put out regular bulletins of information up until the implementation in 2013 for preschools and 2014 for schools
- report about National curriculum implementation for phase one and the next phase to include the arts, languages and geography. All agreed that learning languages as young as possible is the most beneficial and it needs to continue through the years of schooling with high quality teachers. Concern that geography was not rigorous enough
- information about plans to produce an R-10 Aboriginal cultural studies resource
- information about the federal Dept of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website on the trial for assessment and reporting - it is linked to the Victorian website and information about the legislation passed in Victoria that will impact on all Australian states and territories
- assessment processes planned for the national reform agenda; it was noted that at the moment parents and students do not 'get a guernsey' in the assessment of the site; issues raised about challenges when sites do not come up to the standards
- report regarding resources and support for the Early Years Learning Framework and that the DECS Early Years website now has more resources.
- Australian Curriculum discussion paper 3 *Managing curriculum in composite classes*
- The National Quality Standards will become operational on 1 January 2012. Victoria was the host for legislation and South Australia is preparing to present the South Australian version to Parliament in June this year. With the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) there will be a move to one system instead of three regulatory bodies in South Australia. For more details contact Sherylee Dawe Sherylee.Dawe@sa.gov.au or go to [www.decs.sa.gov.au/childrensservices/pages/earlychildhoodreform/](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/childrensservices/pages/earlychildhoodreform/)
- the funding has come through for the appointment of a Director for the SA Assessment Authority; this appointment is separate from DECS
- a paper tabled about the transition policy with discussion on whether it should include all transition points in a child's education
- CPCs will now be known as School based preschools.

Gwen Secomb

## **DECS Australian Curriculum Implementation Advisory Groups**

### *Terms of reference*

Each Advisory Group will provide advice to the Chief Executive, DECS through the Steering Committee in relation to:

- development of the Australian Curriculum by ACARA
- similarities and differences between the SACSA framework and the Australian Curriculum
- the implementation needs of DECS schools and teachers.

Advisory Group members who represent stakeholder groups will:

- canvass the views and concerns of the group whom they represent and raise these at meetings
- report back to the groups they represent on decisions and issues raised at meetings.

### *Membership*

Membership includes DECS curriculum consultants, SAASPC, Aboriginal education coordinators, teachers, principals, Australian Education Union, universities, and professional associations.

### **Primary / Middle Years Advisory Group**

Some of the discussion and topics covered at meetings include: regular updates on the progress of the Australian Curriculum, nationally and within South Australia, giving feedback on discussion papers eg General capabilities; composite classes – managing the curriculum; feedback is gathered at the meetings, often by small group work and then coming together as one to discuss each group's comments, other feedback can also be given electronically; Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) and where that fits in the Australian Curriculum. SAASPC will continue to represent parents as work continues on the group. *Leanne Sheard and Jenice Zerna*

### **Senior Years Advisory Group**

Discussion has focused largely on implementation:

- a number of concerns regarding the tightness of time lines and lack of resourcing for implementation of the AC; in addition there has already been a considerable disruption in schools when teachers have had to come out of the school to do professional development for the new SACE. Teachers do not just want to see the curriculum for years 11 and 12 in a few subjects. They want to see the 'whole thing' – ACARA is planning to publish a paper which will provide a big picture and hopefully address this concern. It appears that in the trial schools teachers will stop teaching the SACSA and start the AC – that it is not a matter of mix and match. MCEEDYA is requiring substantial implementation by 2013. There is also an expectation in 2013 that there will be greater consistency in reporting – using ABCDE gradings. In order to meet this expectation it is anticipated that South Australia will be required to change its definitions of at least some of the grades. There is also likely to be political pressure to have consistency around year 12 results
- the relationship with the SACE Board - the AC for years 11 and 12 will be offered through the SACE Board and badged as a SACE subject; however there has been an undertaking that the SACE Board will not offer subjects that duplicate any AC subject but also that its subject offerings will not be decreased by the implementation of the AC
- the release of the Content Standard together with the Achievement Standard for English, history, maths and science in years 11 and 12 occurred in 2010. However the timelines for consultation and feedback was very tight and a SA cross sector response was coordinated through the SACE Board.

It was intended that the group would meet at least once per term. However there has only been the one meeting in the past twelve months due to a delay in ACARA responding to the initial feedback and providing new drafts; in addition ACARA has allowed its timelines for senior years to slip and dedicated resources to meeting the F - 10 timelines have also slipped. A decision on the revised implementation time line for SA is awaited and it is likely the senior years implementation will occur later than initially expected. *Nita Kay and Judith Bundy*

### **History Advisory Group**

The first meeting of the group was held early in term 1, with discussion on the terms of reference, planning and organisation for future meetings. Discussion so far has been on what is happening with history and the Australian Curriculum, resources to use and needed, relevant websites, sharing practices, discussion paper on managing curriculum in composite classes, and the general capabilities.

The last meeting was held at the Migration Museum in the city; with a guided tour included (the museum is one of a group in the DECS Outreach Education program). It was very interesting and informative, and something worth visiting. Following the tour we heard about the programs and resources that are available to schools. Members of the group involved in the AC history implementation projects shared information about the work that they are doing in their schools. SAASPC will continue to represent parents as work continues on the group.

*Jenice Zerna*

## DECS Child Protection Steering Committee

The committee meets once a term with representatives from the Department of Education and Children's Services, the Australian Education Union, SAASPC and SAASSO. Key issues discussed during the year were:

- SMART and SMART-ER programs run in conjunction with the Australian Childhood Foundation have continued into 2011 and SMART program for 2011 which will focus on primary age students, including sessions for SSOs. The 2011 *Transforming trauma* resource has been uploaded to the DECS website. A discussion paper *Trauma in the contexts of war and relocation - addressing the needs of refugee students* is being edited and will soon be available on the Australian Childhood Foundation website
- Keeping Safe Child Protection curriculum has been reviewed and Evie Ledger, Child Protection Curriculum advisor joined the group during the year
- Department of Family and Communities is conducting all criminal history checks for DECS – far more comprehensive than just a police check, as they access the child protection database. Already this format has picked up some cases of persons who would get a lesser police check
- a suggestion from the committee that the new enrolment form include a question about the parent's interest in volunteering so that the criminal history check responsibilities can then be explained
- concerns about sporting groups processes for criminal history checks
- responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people document is available
- noted change of title for children under Guardianship of the Minister (GOM) to Young People in Care.
- the Reporting Abuse and Neglect training for 2012 will be updated. It is hoped that the training for DECS staff will be done online with accountability checks to ensure that the person receiving the accreditation has actually completed the training. It is also pleasing that all teacher education facilities have agreed 'that students will complete the shortened version of training ie volunteer training before they go on placement. The full day training will then be completed just prior to registration
- Trish Hall has joined the committee during the year and provided updates on matters to do with absenteeism. She spoke about the ability to link student absence with NAPLAN results, about the ability for principals to receive an email alert when a student is absent for 10 consecutive days (also the ability for an individual site to make this time span less if considered desirable to keep track of absences). Trish also spoke about the work of tracing chronic non attenders when schools are unable to be assured of the child's safety – a very difficult task
- the latest draft of the Framework for the *Management of volunteers in DECS sites* Feb 2011 was given to us for comment
- Lee Duhring, Policy Advisor-Child Protection Initiatives, reported on her work related to child protection for young people in care. Schools with three or more young people in care (August 2010 census) have been granted TRT funding to release staff to meet and review individual education plans for the students. EDSAS will not be altered to reflect that children under the guardianship of the Minister are now known as Young people in care. A mid year joint DECS/Families SA newsletter will be distributed to all schools with young people in care and added to the DECS website. This newsletter will include a checklist that makes responsibilities of Families SA and DECS staff explicit. There have also been some concerns raised about unsubstantiated ages of unaccompanied humanitarian minors enrolled at DECS schools and the impact of older and younger students at same venue
- a Safe Schools Symposium: homophobic bullying was held on 16 May. Those attending were encouraged to be prepared when they returned to their site to give positive feedback about what they had learnt or could be shared with their colleagues.
- Gaye Brimacombe, Executive officer and chair of the meeting, spoke about the update of the document *Protective practices* and it is hoped that this will be ready early next year. *Gwen Secomb*

## DECS Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Advisory Committee

This committee, which met for the first time on Friday 13 May, brings together representatives on advisory groups from four projects working on healthy lifestyle projects but all with a different focus. Linking these will mean that their efforts will be coordinated to avoid unnecessary overlap and provide mutual support. The groups represented at the meeting were 'Eat Well – Be Active' which is funded by SA Health and co-managed by DECS and SA Health, with services being provided by ACHPER (Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation) and Blueearth, (a voluntary organisation with an interest in this area), the 'Premier's be active Challenge', the 'Right Bite Strategy' and 'Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Gardens'.

At the meeting these activities were outlined, along with information from the Canteen Association, which has a vital role in assisting the Rite Bite strategy. The implications for the anticipated relationship to the proposed National Curriculum were discussed also. *Marion McCarthy*

## **Drug Education Network (DEN)**

The Drug Education Network:

- is convened by the cross sector school Drug Strategy management committee
- is supported by funding to states from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- assists in meeting the strategic targets of State and National Drug Strategies, education sectors and non government and government agencies, through fostering collaborative partnerships in the provision of quality service to young people.

The network provides an opportunity to:

- promote consistent and open communication between agencies and education sectors when developing resources and/or providing drug education services/support to students, school and sites in accord with the national Principles for school drug education, 2004
- inform other members about current trends, perspectives, resources, programs and activities related to drug education
- ensure that approaches to drug education complement that of the schooling sectors and are consistent with principles of good practice, policies and guidelines.
- network, strengthen partnerships and share understanding about good practice across education sectors, government and non-government agencies and organisations.

Format of network meetings:

- meetings will be held approximately once a term
- meetings will have a theme/current topics of interest, or guest speaker /s
- there will be the opportunity for all members to have input around topics and their current priorities.

Membership:

DECS Drug Education Strategy and Learner Wellbeing, South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC) SA Police (Sapol), Families SA, Catholic Education, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA), Red Cross Save-a-mate, Lions foundation, QuitSA, Encounter Youth, Life Education, Association of Independent Schools, Northern Area Community, Youth Services (NACYS).

At each meeting the group is updated on current work within DECS and members share what is happening within their specific group, and at times there is also a presentation.

Some of the topics covered over the past twelve months are: DECS Drug Strategy – the outcomes of the Alcohol education in the middle years inquiry 2010, students and parent engagement; Parental engagement – the advantages to parents, students and schools by engaging parents in learning; DECS Intervention matters policy document, revising of the document and the release of the updated document; managing drug incidents in schools requires effective partnerships and the SAPOL Drug Action team spoke about the Drug Diversion Initiative relevant to students / young people in schools, and police interventions and schools.

Meetings are interesting and informative. The group will continue to meet and carry on its work.

For more information see the DECS Drug Strategy go to [www.decs.sa.gov.au/drugstrategy](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/drugstrategy).

*Jenice Zerna*

## **Education and Early Childhood Development Legislation Reform Stakeholder Advisory Group**

### *Context*

Since 2007 the Minister for Education and Children's Services has been undertaking a progressive reform program of legislation pertaining to children's care, development and education in South Australia. A Legislation Reform Unit, which reports directly to the Minister, was established to coordinate and manage the legislative reform program.

The Stakeholder advisory group was established by the Minister, to work with the Legislation Reform Unit to support and inform the reform process. 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, parent associations. Meetings for this group are held regularly.

Over the past year work has continued on the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards Bill 2011) by the Legislation Reform Unit, with regular updates given at meetings and feedback given when required. Work is in its final stages and The Bill is close to finalisation.

In July 2010 the Hon Jay Weatherill, Minister for Education and Minister for Early Childhood Development launched the final discussion paper Number 4 *Employment provisions for staff in government education and early childhood services* for consultation, with consultation finishing on 1 November 2010. Work is continuing on the feedback received.

As well as the work on the South Australian discussion papers, there has been continuing work and consultation on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care and Out of School Hours Care Bill. Updates, discussion and feedback have been regular agenda items, with an additional special meeting being held.

Feedback by the group is given when required, and this also includes individual meetings with stakeholders.

Meetings will continue until the work is complete. For more information on go to [www.edlawreform.sa.gov.au](http://www.edlawreform.sa.gov.au)

*Jenice Zerna*

## **National Council for Women South Australia**

The National Council of Women South Australia is a non government umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives which:

- seeks to raise the awareness of women to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to encourage the participation of women in all aspects of community life
- works for the empowerment of women and to promote equal status for women and men in law and in fact
- develops national policies and responses on behalf of women at national and international levels.

The women on this committee come from all types of women's service clubs eg Zonta, Girl Guides, Penguins and various church groups.

The meetings are held once a month at the house on South Terrace.

*Leanne Sheard*

## **Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle (OPAL) Strategic Advisory Committee (STAC)**

OPAL is SAs new childhood obesity prevention program based on the French EPODE (Ensemble, Prevenons l'Obesite des Enfants) campaign, and will run over 8 years. The aim of OPAL is "To improve eating and activity patterns of children, through families and communities in OPAL regions and thereby increase the proportion of 0-18 year olds in the healthy weight range"

*Terms of Reference, Membership and Composition*

- the STAC is an advisory committee to SA Health through the OPAL State Coordination Unit
- the STAC is responsible for advising the Government of South Australia through SA Health on the strategic implementation of OPAL in South Australia and contributing to its success
- the STAC includes a Chair and Deputy Chair who were appointed for an initial term of two years
- the committee is comprised of representatives from key areas related to healthy eating, physical activity, healthy weight, communities, business and government who are committed to the aims of OPAL
- the STAC invites experts to participate in particular meetings in order to provide relevant information to the State Coordination Unit
- the staff from the OPAL State Coordination Unit attend meetings, provide support to the STAC, report on the OPAL initiative and make use of STAC advice.

There have only been two meetings of this group over the past year. Updates and information were provided on the progress of OPAL, particularly about the announcement of the four councils from the second round, Whyalla City Council, Copper Coast, Charles Sturt and Port Adelaide-Enfield. The new councils started on 10 September 2010, and as well as these four councils there was also one from the Northern Territory, and interest from other states and territories. We were updated on the progress of the tender process for the third round of councils - the next group of councils will be announced in August. Information was provided on the evaluation process within the OPAL Council areas including evaluations from schools. The third theme - Make it a fresh snack - has been decided and themes will now last for six months.

A date for the next meeting has not been set at the time of writing. For more information on OPAL go to [www.opal.sa.gov.au](http://www.opal.sa.gov.au).

*Jenice Zerna*

## **Peer Support Foundation Board**

The Peer Support Foundation is a not for profit making educational organisation, committed to improving the quality of life for South Australian youth through peer education.

The Peer Support Program is based on the belief that positive relationships can be developed by improving the skills, confidence and self esteem in people, particularly from an early age. The objective is to provide training for teachers so that they can provide the right training for the leaders of the Peer support programs in schools.

The Board has been very quiet this year with only one meeting held to discuss the future of the Foundation.

*Leanne Sheard*

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

The Premier's *be Active* Challenge finished in November 2010 with the usual reception and celebration of a successful year. 50 high achieving schools received a framed certificate and \$1000 from the Premier. In total 37,400 students completed the 2010 challenge in 296 participating schools (38% of schools with primary schools predominant). This included 429 students with disabilities. 2010 was also the year of the Champion, following on from bronze, silver and gold medals. It is intended that 2011 will see the 'Legend' and finally in 2012 the 'Hall of Fame' awards.

*Marion McCarthy*

## SA Dental Consumer Advisory Panel

### *Role*

To advise the Executive Director, SA Dental Service on matters pertaining to

- operational policy and strategy
- effective consumer participation

as they affect oral health programs and impact on quality oral health service outcomes.

To advocate to the Executive Director on behalf to the community and to promote attention and sensitivity to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised consumers and communities.

### *Terms of reference*

The Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP) functions within the Central Northern Area Health Services – Clinical Governance Framework. Its aim is to

- advise the Executive Director, SA Dental Service on matters of operational policy and procedure to ensure community and consumer views are represented and considered
- advise the Executive Director, SA Dental Service on strategies which improve and promote consumer and community participation at all levels
- identify and advise the Executive Director, SA Dental Service on priority areas and issues requiring consumer and community participation
- develop a strategic Community Participation Plan for consideration by the Executive Director: SA Dental Service
- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the approved Community Participation Plan
- Assist the Executive Director, SA Dental Services and senior management in their communication with SA Dental Service's community and consumers
- act as representatives of the community to the Executive Director, SA Dental Services
- assist the Executive Director, SA Dental Service in the development and ongoing monitoring of key performance indicators for service quality and accessibility
- participate in other activities and projects as agreed with the Executive Director, SA Dental Service from time to time.

### *Membership*

Membership is from various associations and community groups, reflecting the special needs and interests of these groups, organizations represented are the SA Financial Counsellors Association (SAFCA), Council on the Ageing (COTA), SA Council of Social Service (SACOSS), Independent Representative, Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia Inc, SA Self Management Alliance (SASMA) – Diabetes SA, Disability, Ageing and Carers (DFC), Mental Health Coalition of SA, Multicultural Communities Council of SA, Liaison through Aboriginal Health Workers Network and South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC)

### *Meetings*

There are six meetings a year held every other month.

Throughout the year the group has been informed on various topics as well discussing many more. Some of these were the Oral Health Plan 2010-2017; SA Dental website and frequently asked questions; waiting lists; recruitment of dentists; dental therapists treating adults; SA Dental Service Executive Reports; new dental clinics. In addition presentations were made on the Teen dental scheme; Special Needs Unit – Adelaide Dental Hospital; Remote dental services in SA schools; School dental services.

The last meeting was held at the new Elizabeth GP plus Health Care Centre. At the completion of the meeting we were taken on a tour of the dental facilities including the school dental area which is very open and spacious, but still giving privacy for patients and has more clinic chairs, allowing for more children/students to be seen - a very impressive facility!

Meetings will continue in 2011-12. The group and its work is an important part of SA Dental and is highly valued. For further information on SA Dental go to [www.sadental.sa.gov.au](http://www.sadental.sa.gov.au).

*Jenice Zerna*

## South Australian Cross-Sector Languages Forums

### *Purpose*

To provide a forum to

- discuss and share information related to the development of state and national languages education policy, programs and projects
- strengthen the connections and collaboration between sectors and key languages stakeholders in South Australia.

### *Terms of reference*

- exchange information on languages state and national initiatives
- explore areas for cross-sectoral collaboration on state and national projects
- support consistent and effective communication across sectors and languages stakeholders
- other matters raised by the forum,

### *Role of members*

- attend 2 forums a year or nominate a proxy when unable to attend
- disseminate information on the work of the group to the sectors and organisations they represent and advocate for languages education
- provide information on languages education from the relevant sectors and associations.

### *Membership*

DECS; South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC); Catholic Education SA; Association of Independent Schools SA; Intersector Secondary Principal's Education Coordinating Committee; SA Catholic Primary Principal's Association; SACE Board; SA Primary Principals' Association; Ethnic Schools Board; Multicultural Education Committee; Ethnic Schools Association; TAFE SA; Head of School: Education, University SA; Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University SA; University Adelaide; Dean of Education, Flinders University; Languages Department, Flinders University; Modern Languages Teachers Association of SA; School of Languages; Open Access College.

During the two forums in 2010-11 the group was kept up to date on the Australian Curriculum – Languages and discussed issues raised by members of the group. There was a presentation on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity by Kathleen Heugh UniSA, and the presentation raised some interesting points as well as interesting discussion.

Earlier this year a forum was held to look at, and discuss, the draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum-Languages paper. A presentation was given by guest speaker Associate Professor Angela Scarino giving some interesting information. Participants then formed groups and gave feedback.

The group will continue to meet.

*Jenice Zerna*

## Studies of Asia State Advisory Group

### *Terms of reference*

- to provide advice regarding initiatives, priorities and strategies to support uptake of the *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia*
- 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.

### *Membership*

SAASPC, 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.

One meeting has been held this year which provided an update on projects in SA. A proposed second meeting was postponed until a suitable date can be found.

*Judith Bundy*

## **Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group**

The Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group (VMAG) members come from the major services that make up the voluntary sector such as the arts, sports, conservation, health and welfare, education, disability and charity. Members are appointed by the Minister for Volunteers and the current term for members is due to expire in August 2011.

Its role and responsibilities are to

- assist in the development of a positive and active policy agenda for community engagement and ensure the Government receives expert policy advice on identified policy and program issues in relation to volunteers and volunteering
- monitor the progress of the *Advancing the Community Together Partnership between the Volunteering Sector and the South Australian Government* and set priorities, specific targets and timeframes in terms of commitments made
- ensure that implementation of the *Advancing the Community Together Partnership between the Volunteering Sector and the South Australian Government* is effective, the partnership's stated aims are achieved and that it is working in the best interests of the community
- provide advice on appropriate consultation/engagement mechanisms - across Government and with the community
- provide advice and information to the Office for Volunteers (OFV) to assist in research activities
- report on an annual basis to the Minister for Volunteers.

The secretariat for VMAG is provided by the Office for Volunteers. VMAG meets about four times a year. Discussions this year have included: the membership and role of VMAG itself; the *Advancing the Community Together* partnership document; a project initiated by VMAG and carried out by the OFV to determine free, or low cost, access to computers and internet training provided by local governments - this is now available online [www.ofv.sa.gov.au/ICT\\_Resources](http://www.ofv.sa.gov.au/ICT_Resources); State Volunteers Congress and Volunteers Day; Responsible Officer requirements for community groups; the new requirements for the Standard Chart of Accounts for the not for profit sector; and possible activities for IYV+I 0 (International Year of Volunteers ten years on).

*Judith Bundy*