

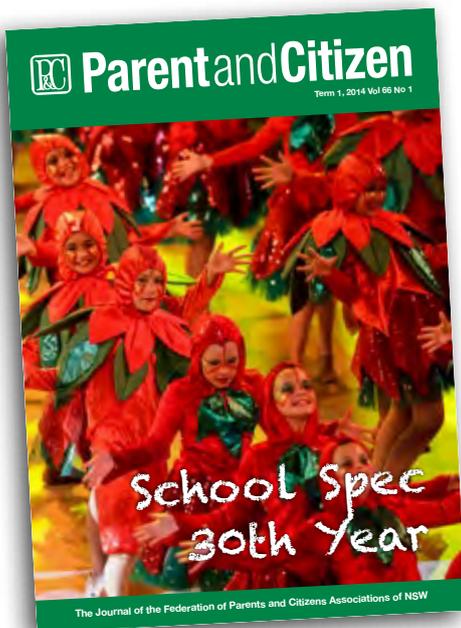


Parent and Citizen

Term 1, 2014 Vol 66 No 1



School Spec
30th Year



Parent and Citizen Journal

The Journal of the Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales

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MESSAGE TO AFFILIATES

Welcome to another school year, for those parents and students embarking on the wonderful journey of Public Education for the very first time I wish you a very fulfilling year and the best experiences as you start the voyage through your children's education. Make the most of the opportunities provided to you and your children and always remain engaged in your their education. For those starting yet another year of school, revel in the differing stages of schooling and the changing nature of parent participation and community involvement. Either way, enjoy the coming year and put your best foot forward for your school community.

A new year is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, open yourselves up to new experiences and appreciate and embrace your value as a volunteer to your P&C association and school community. It is good to establish effective communication with your whole school community, this will help develop positive and strong partnerships. As a parent or citizen offer what assistance and support you can when you can. At all times remember that the fundamental reason we are all here is for the benefit of our children.

This year, will continue to see Education reforms and changes to the way our children's education is delivered and to the way our schools are managed. We welcome the National Curriculum review and look forward to the findings that come from it; we encourage all school community members to make a submission to the review and let the Federal Government know what people at the grass roots level think of the National Curriculum. Always remember, as part of the school community you too can voice your opinion and have a say in how education looks for the students in Public Education in NSW. Don't be afraid to make your voice heard and seize every opportunity to let our politicians know that Public Education is your priority.

P&C Federation look forward to hosting conversations with you, our affiliates, on all of the important issues facing Public Education during the coming year. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page and subscribe to our e-bulletin for opportunities to participate in webinars and conversations. As affiliates we seek your comments and invite you to let us know at P&C Federation what your association is discussing and what activities you are planning for the next 12 months.

2014 is the International Year of Family Farming and I am excited to see what celebrations and events are inspired by this theme. NSW is such a diverse state in terms of geographical locality of our schools. The year of family farming pleases me personally because, as well as being the President of P&C Federation I am a 5th generation farmer from West Wyalong. To acknowledge the international year of family farming we look forward to running some inspiring stories featuring our schools, communities and students in the upcoming issues of this publication.

Enjoy 2014 for all of the achievements, challenges and development it may bring.

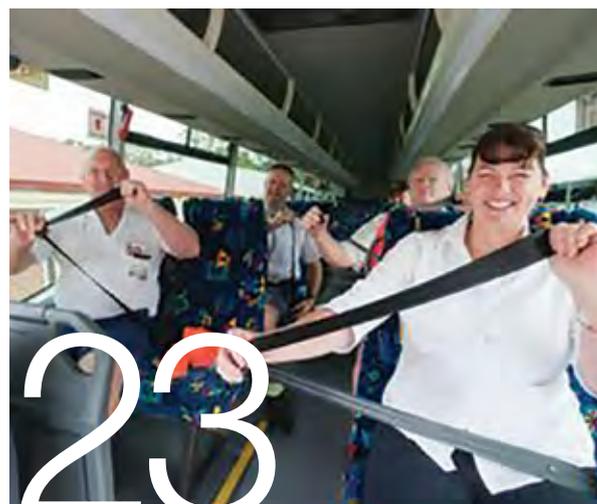
Yours in volunteeringw

Lyall Wilkinson

P&C Federation President



President Lyall Wilkinson



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Picture: Timbumburi Public School P&C forum on the Rural and Remote Education Blueprint.

Rural and Remote

Term 4, 2013 the Department of Education and Communities released the Rural and Remote Education Blueprint for Public Education in NSW. This blueprint sits within a raft of reforms that the NSW Government has implemented or is in the process of implementing; these include Every Student Every School, Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan, Local Schools Local Decisions, Great Teaching Inspired Learning and Connected Communities. The Rural and Remote Blueprint is specifically aimed at closing the educational gap for students in regional NSW.

P&C Federation advocates for the voice of community in Public Education in NSW as such we wanted to hear your voice, the community voice. P&C Federation invited individual school communities to discuss their concerns and opinions by sharing correspondence with P&C Federation and participating in a webinar. This blueprint release drew a lot of response from P&C Federation affiliate school communities. As is typical of affiliates their concerns relate to the day to day operations of the school and how this will affect their child and the learning environment.

Some of the key conversations have noted the Blueprint clearly identifies some of the difficulties getting teachers out to

rural schools, and the lack of professional development opportunities. As well it seems to provide recognition of the importance early childhood and resources for it.

However the greater part of the discussions has raised a number of concerns, the main points referred to the details of are that **Principals at larger schools are already over worked, it is impossible to imagine how they'd effectively manage another school?**

Timbumburi Public School P&C President Ross Briggs noted, "Our primary concerns within this reclassification are the possibility of our principal being reclassified a lead teacher and our school becoming a satellite school of a larger school.

Ross in speaking for his P&C Association and greater school community further states, "Although at this point we have no formal indication regarding any changes to our school, we feel that it is highly important that parents are aware of the possible implications of this blueprint. There are no provisions in these changes for the protection of immediate on site decision making for your child in relation to risk management, curriculum and operational practice. Distribution of school budgets to ensure that our children have access to resources that are tailored to their individual needs. Individual and personalised access to the principal to discuss our

children's overall education and welfare and the guarantee of on-site daily management and educational leadership within our school."

Other affiliates have complained that distance is already a big enough issue without having a hub 100km away. **What if a school does not want to be part of the hub model? Can schools refuse to be part of a hub without risking financial savings?** It was also noted that there are already networks with other small schools but are excluded from larger school networks. **Why not bridge geography altogether and make hubs with both rural and urban schools?**

Technology reliance is an issue. Lots of classrooms are connecting online but internet access, speed and reliability are a problem. **How accessible is the NBN for schools in the public education system?**

The idea that a school could be a "branch" of another school is a major upheaval that seems to have been sneaked in despite appearing nowhere in the blueprint. Concern with branches of schools is, the smaller school will get "eaten" and will then be closed. Many affiliates are afraid that the Rural and Remote Blueprint is the stepping stone to school amalgamation and closure. The Education Act allows for one teacher schools to close without the same processes that apply to larger schools. Also the Education **Act allows for a parent body to vote to close a**

school, how does this work if your school communities are hubs and your site is proposed to be closed by the other hub sites?

One affiliate school community called on P&C Federation to advocate for their needs, President Eleanor Berze asserted, "As a parent body, we are absolutely against the decision to reclassify our school or any other schools. We feel it is extremely important that there is a Principal on site at all times to deal with any situation that may arise with students, parents and staff. Our school would not cope without our Principal. Taking away our right to have a Principal is stripping us of our independence and is demeaning to the community."

Rural and remote communities do not want to lose their local identity. It is feared that once a school is gone there won't be a community. In some instances the school is the biggest employer in the town, if the school closed, the town is threatened as a viable population. Community sustainability is vital; education is one element of the bigger regional picture.

It was noted by P&C Federation that the Rural and Remote Blueprint sits with all other government reforms and that community consultation is the key to decision making and

the Local Schools Local Decisions specifically advocates for community contribution.

This means that school communities across New South Wales need to raise the Blueprint as an Agenda item at their next P&C meeting. Communities must be active in ensuring that all members are informed and that all communities have a right to priorities their student population's educational needs.

Now more than ever Principals, staff executive teams and parents and citizens need to come together. Community unity and a focus on the school objectives is a priority. P&C Federation advocates for the opportunity of every child enrolled in public education to realise individual success irrespective of any factor including in this instance geography. Let us all work towards closing the educational gaps.

If you haven't yet seen the Rural and Remote Blueprint we suggest you visit www.dec.nsw.gov.au and have a look. Education belongs to everybody; let your voice be heard.







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\$5 billion extra funding for our kids. Why would Tony Abbott say no?

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE GONSKI FUNDING

The Gonski funding will improve the education of over 1 million students in NSW schools.



Authorised by Susan Haggood, Federal Secretary, Australian Education Union, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank 3006.

Gonski

For decades federal funds for education have been allocated on the broken socioeconomic status (SES) model. This funding model involved linking student residential addresses to obtain a socioeconomic profile of a school community and measure its capacity to support a school. Unfortunately, this model did not take into account that while students whose parents can afford to send them to schools with enormous fees, they may very well live in disadvantaged areas, often rural or regional areas. These students were assessed as though they came from families with low incomes.



The Gonski reforms would do much to address the inequity that the SES model created.

The Gonski reforms would redistribute money to schools which need it the most.

For the first time in decades public schools would look forward to extra funds that would be supplied as recurrent funds. These funds, or loadings, would be provided based on student needs. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with a disability, indigenous students and students with a low proficiency in English would have been funded year after year. This would allow schools to put into place long term programs, employ specialist teachers and provide effectively for those students with a certainty that the funds would not end after a prescribed period of time. This was for all schools – the principle behind the funding was need based.

But all that is at risk. The Gonski Review recommended a sector-blind system of school

funding. It made sense that public schools, which educate the overwhelming majority of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, would be the major beneficiaries of the additional funds recommended by the review. But, it would appear from statements made by the Prime Minister and Federal Education Minister that the much needed funding for Australia's public schools is at grave risk.

The original funding was outlined over six years – the federal government has made it clear that they would only ever fund the Gonski reforms for four years. That would only provide one-third of the full funding model – leaving a \$2.7b shortfall for NSW public schools.

In April, 2013 the Premier of NSW, Barry O'Farrell announced NSW would be the first state to sign up to the Gonski national education reforms. He went on to say, "This is great news for students, teachers and parents. It will mean more resources and a

Additional funding for NSW public schools under the Gonski National Agreement *							
\$ millions	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Public Schools	118	249	382	745	1153	1597	4243
Total funds to all NSW schools	153	307	460	889	1360	1863	5032

* Published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities June 2013

fairer system – and assist our aim of higher standards and a better education system for our children.”

Yet, here we have a federal coalition government which seems determined to rip money out of public schools – breaking a clear and unambiguous promise to the people of NSW. The federal education minister has ignored the evidence, the expert advice and the agreements which are already in place. This cannot be allowed to happen.

We call parents and teachers to continue campaigning to ensure that the federal government provides funding for the full six years as outlined in the original Gonski reforms. Doing so would provide the bulk of the funds promised to NSW public schools to implement the necessary programs to those students who need them.

We are determined to see the agreement honoured and ensure our students do not miss out.

Julie Moon
NSW Teachers Federation



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SHARE YOUR LEFTOVERS TO LUNCHBOX TIPS TO WIN A STYLISH OOTS! LUNCHBOX



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Public education teaching careers

INVESTIGATING THE OPPORTUNITIES

We all know that the Higher School Certificate is no longer quite the career maker-or-breaker that it once may have seemed, with a wide array of pathways now open to students after school. Nonetheless, students in their senior years at high school still have important goals to achieve and career decisions to make.

When parents and carers are speaking with students about these decisions, it is easy to fall into some clichéd patterns of career advice. I've been guilty of one or two of these patterns myself. Good at maths? Then go for accounting, or business. Good at science? Have a look at engineering or perhaps something in the medical field. Or maybe you'd like to work in a lab, or for the CSIRO, or NASA - I'd love to see you fly to Mars. Good at English? Perhaps media and communications will suit you, or maybe law. Good at IT? Try computer science, or something to do with web development.

Not really sure what to do and like kids? How about primary teaching?

These are some of the perceptions that we are working hard to shift here at teach.NSW, the unit of the NSW Department of Education and Communities which promotes public education teaching careers to school students, university students and career changers.

We would argue that the career perceptions above need challenging on a few levels.

First of all, we view teaching as a profession on an equal footing with others, not as a second choice or an afterthought. It is a demanding but fulfilling career in its own right, with high levels of professional reward for those who work hard and have the aptitude for it. Along with a very wide range of career benefits, such as good starting salaries and a wide range of promotional options, teachers work in highly collegial professional environments, and have the opportunity for exceptional job satisfaction, making a significant difference to the lives of others.

However, it isn't for everyone. Aspiring teachers need to be prepared for the intellectual demands, the intense people contact and the consuming nature of the work.

Second, those somewhat clichéd career perceptions above may not take into current and future job markets. Have you and your child done your research? Will a job be waiting on graduation? I've mentioned primary teaching above – let's be frank, there is a queue of primary teaching job seekers at present, especially for those who are choosy about job locations. The same is true for many other popular professions.

This is not to discourage excellent students to join the ranks of our primary teachers – but it is important to check out the facts on career opportunities.

Third, is your child cut out for the careers you are suggesting? Does she really want to crunch numbers every day? Can he really stand the sight of blood? Is she really likely to be interested in going to work in a lab every day? Some careers can sound far more glamorous than the day to day reality.

The answer to each these questions above may be a resounding 'yes'. In which case, those careers may be perfect for your child.

But I would like to propose an outstanding career pathway for those who excel in selected subject areas.

In New South Wales public education, we are always looking for the best and the brightest to teach our students, in every subject area. However, our current needs are more apparent in a limited number of subject areas, in combination with certain locations.

In particular, we are on the lookout for talented students in mathematics, science (in particular, physics), English (particularly in combination with history and/or drama), special education and specific areas of technical and applied studies.

We need teachers in these areas who are also prepared to be a little mobile. Our system is large – over 2,200 schools across a large and diverse state. Employment opportunities may exist in the subject areas cited above and more, but not necessarily in the suburb or town next door.

In general terms, there are better opportunities for job hunters in rural and remote NSW, and in western and south western Sydney. However, even in these areas the needs are not uniform. Flexibility and mobility are the keys for those starting their teaching careers.

The good news is that for students who are talented in the subject areas mentioned above, with a passion for working with people and making a difference, the NSW Department of Education and Communities provides a number of key incentives. Each year we offer Teacher Education Scholarships in subject areas of high need for the Department. And for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, scholarships are available in all teaching areas.

The scholarships typically provide \$5000 per annum of university study and \$3000 on successful completion of studies, along with other benefits.

Most importantly, the scholarships offer a permanent position on successful completion of studies, in an agreed location.

For many students, the certainty of a permanent appointment outshines the other, substantial financial incentives and it can be a deal-clincher where talented students have a number of competing career options beckoning.

In addition to the Teacher Education Scholarships, the Department has introduced teach.Rural scholarships, specifically targeting teaching in rural and remote NSW, and a new range of internships and cadetships.

Public education teaching careers should be in the mix of options for our best and our brightest students. If you know someone who is talented in mathematics or physics, for example, why not provide them the links below and suggest that they investigate teaching as a career in NSW public schools?

For more information on the programs offered by the Department and teach.NSW, including the Teacher Education Scholarship Program, teach.Rural Scholarships, Internships and Cadetships please visit our website at www.teach.nsw.edu.au. For those accessing by mobile device, try www.teach.nsw.edu.au/mobile. Applications typically open in May each year.

You might also consider subscribing to our regular newsletter, teach.NSW News, for videos, student and teacher profiles and all the latest offerings. Subscription details are on our website.

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Local Schools, Local Decisions update P&C Journal TERM 1 2014

Welcome to 2014. I trust you all had a restful break and have returned fresh and energised.

It is nearly two years since we began our reform to place students at the centre of decision-making in every school - Local Schools, Local Decisions.

While a lot has been achieved, considerable work remains. As we have said from the beginning, implementation would be gradual as we endeavour to satisfy both long standing aspirations for more local say with the need to ready our schools for change.

Much of last year was focused on preparing schools for what is arguably the centrepiece of the current reform agenda - the implementation of a new funding model that will over time enable schools to manage more than 70 per cent of the total public school education budget.

The announcement in October last year of the phased implementation of the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) received widespread media coverage and was followed up with a major Departmental effort to educate and inform all our stakeholders of these changes.

Making sure people grasp the overall rationale for the RAM as well as providing sufficient detail of the myriad changes that result from such a large change has been a key communications challenge.

Everyone connected to public education has an interest in the RAM but not everyone's information needs are the same. Our school leaders, for example, must be across all the detail, while our school administration managers will look to quickly master elements that support them do their job.

Understandably, the first question for many parents will be, 'what does this change mean for my child?'

Again, the answer will be different depending on the needs of that child and we will continue to make every effort to ensure that schools have detailed and accessible information to share with their parent communities.



There are, however, two things about the RAM that I believe are relevant to every parent.

A fairer and more accurate funding model

A key objective of the RAM is to ensure that the money identified in the education budget to support students and schools with additional needs is allocated as fairly and accurately as possible.

Consistent with the recommendations in the Gonski Review, schools have now begun to receive funding for students directly through 'loadings' designed to more precisely reflect the individual needs of each school and student.

The most significant change for schools in 2014 will be through the loadings for Aboriginal students and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Both loadings are informed by detailed Departmental research that ensures that for the first time we are recognising the needs of these students in every public school.

Overall, more than 90% of schools will have similar or increase funding under the equity loadings for 2014.

As the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli said when announcing the RAM, "the greater accuracy ensures every parent in NSW can be confident that the school their child attends is getting its rightful share of funding".

Resource allocation at the local school level

Making sure each school gets its fair portion of the education budget is, on its own, a necessary reform.

But the equally important development with the RAM is the increased flexibility schools have over how they use that money to meet the needs.

While media discussion has focussed on the amounts of money, it is the strategic allocation of these additional resources locally that will have the larger impact on student outcomes.

This point needs to be emphasised, because our efforts to give schools more say over their budget are feared by some as an attempt to pass the burden of resource management onto schools.

This view fundamentally misunderstands the educational purposes of local resource management: the need to fully integrate school budgeting processes with teaching and learning.

Modern, professional educators are, among many other things, data experts. It is now accepted that one of the ways improvement in student learning outcomes is achieved is through developing the schools capacity to access, analyse and use school data.

In NSW, we have been developing this capability in our public schools for many years. Student achievement data, first through state-wide testing, and then through NAPLAN, has for some time provided a basis for serious conversations between principals and the Department around school performance.

Overtime, the data sources have become richer and the conversations wider. Across our system there are many examples of schools that have built a culture of self-evaluation and reflection; where access to a broad range of student achievement and wellbeing data inform in-depth staff discussions about what can be done to continuously improve student outcomes.

With the introduction of the RAM, financial data begins to become part of this process in a meaningful way. Whether initiating a school program or evaluating its success, an examination of its cost-effectiveness will inform the discussion.

It is a discussion that all public school parent communities must increasingly be a part of.

I wish all NSW public school parents a fantastic 2014 school year and look forward to reporting to you throughout 2014 on the great local decisions schools are making for their students.

Robyn McKerihan
Executive Director,
Local Schools, Local Decisions



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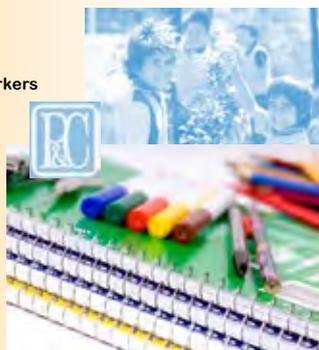
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International Public Speaking

Isabel Crawford, a product of Smiths Hill High School in Wollongong, was the winner of the International Public Speaking Competition, held in the United Kingdom in May. Isabel, who had been a member of her school's team that won the Premier's Debating Challenge in 2011, went on to win the NSW and National finals of the Plain English Speaking Award in 2012. As her prize Isabel had the privilege of speaking at English Speaking Union Head Quarters at Dartmouth House in London, as one of 54 young men and women from around the world.

"Australia was announced the overall winner with Lithuania being named runner up and Malaysia, people's choice. It was a proud moment to be surrounded by so many strong individuals with such powerful ideas. I felt buoyed by the fact that ethnic, religious and cultural differences do not necessarily have to be a source of conflict. These young men and women of the future proved that diversity can be celebrated, and that a common purpose can be found at a much deeper level, in our humanity" Lisa Crawford, Isabel's mother commented.

Congratulations to Isabel, her Public school education has certainly shown its worth in creating a well-rounded, confident and bright young woman.

Lloyd Cameron



Our SMILE is growing!



For those of you that don't know, SMILE is Woolgoolga High's very own peer mentoring program run by our passionate senior students.

SMILE seeks to provide social support for younger students through active listening and promoting positive behaviour. More than 50 enthusiastic year 10 and 11 students have decided to join the SMILE team and have recently participated in a SMILE training day. This training day was based on the Department of Education's mentoring guidelines and addressed the following topics:

- Child protection
- Communication skills
- Roles and responsibilities
- Peer mediation

We have recently said 'farewell' to some fantastic year 12 SMILE mentors. They, along with our current year 11 mentors, have been an absolute asset to our school and have positively impacted on the school climate

and culture. While we are sad to see them go, we know, that the continuing SMILE mentors along with these new SMILE mentors will continue to build friendships, encourage younger students and look out for one another.

Alison Fenton



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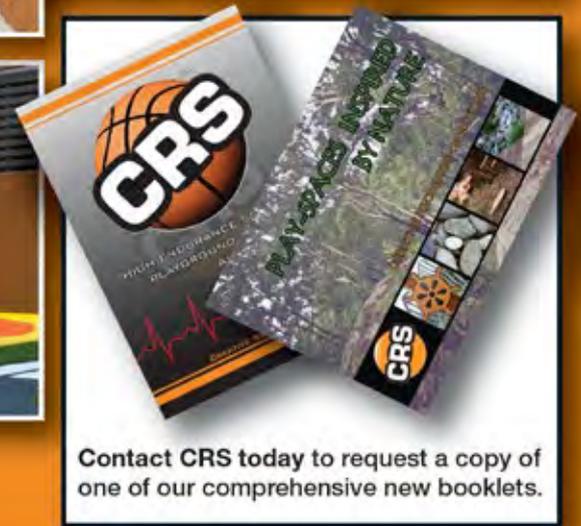
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MUSIC EDUCATION

WHO'S MISSING OUT?

The Music Council of Australia estimates that over 80% of government primary schools in NSW do not offer a classroom music program – that is, the core music program funded by the state.

The second-greatest number of scholarships (after general scholarships) are offered in the area of music. Independent schools use music education to build the overall quality of their programs and their reputations in the community, draw in funds – and attract students, some from the government system.

Research shows that 23% of government schools offer an effective music program. Compare this with 88% of independent schools that offer an effective music education program and there is quite a difference.

One of our colleagues living in Granville wants his child to have a music education in school. To reach the nearest primary school with a music program, he has to drive past four others – only to be told that since his child lives outside the area, the school cannot accept him.

Whilst there are after-hours music programs in some government primary schools – often funded directly by parents, these lessons do not deliver the curriculum and are often not an option open to children in less affluent areas.

In a phone survey of 1,000 Australians, 87% agreed that “Music education should be mandated by the states so that every child has the opportunity to study music in school”. (51% totally agree, 36% mostly agree). 91% agree that “All schools should offer instrumental music instruction as part of their regular curriculum”. NSW is currently the only state system without an instrumental music instruction program.

OK, so the survey speaks to what we want for our children, but apart from our feeling badly done by, does this really matter? It's only music, after all.

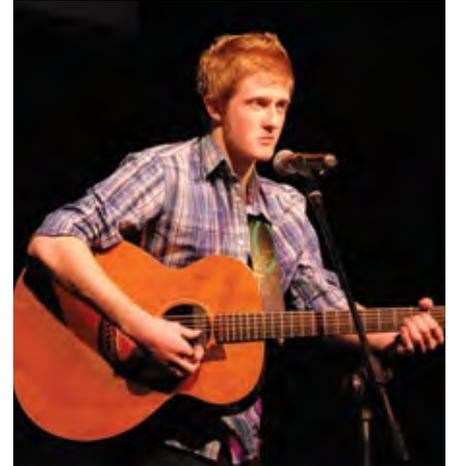
That is a very common assumption. Let's examine it.

The first thing is that music is, according to children, one of the most important things in their lives. They love it and it can be a school subject. It is an activity for which many will cheerfully stay behind after school hours. (Has anyone ever heard of a maths band?!) Troubled schools that have introduced music classes have watched the truancy rate dive and academic results soar - because the kids come for the music and after the music

class is over, they are still there for English and maths.

But it's not just that children love music.

There is something special about the study of music in particular. Associate Professor Jane Wilson from the University of Melbourne writes of “(music's) capacity to integrate multiple brain systems in the unified act of music making. This integrative role may endow music with unique benefits not inherent in other activities...the brain can change in response to music and [there is a] broad range of cognitive processes and behaviours this may affect. Powerful amongst these is the ability of music to prime the brain for future



Research shows that

23%

of government schools offer an effective music program.

Compare this with

88%

of independent schools that offer an effective music education program and there is quite a difference.

learning, while more broadly promoting our individual and social wellbeing.”

Decades of research have produced abundant evidence that music making, while bringing its own direct rewards, also delivers many non-musical benefits. Children become more self-confident, empathetic, socially skilled, self-disciplined, self-regulated, and often do better in other school areas because of music's integrative effect on the brain.

Not all of this happens for every child, of course and a lot depends on the nature and quality of the musical activity.

Music actually is a mandatory subject in the NSW primary school curriculum. It is interesting that it can be a mandatory subject but not taught in our schools. Why then is it not taught in our children's classrooms? Teaching music in primary school is the responsibility of the classroom teacher but there is little training provided unless our teachers specialise in the subject. How many hours of mandatory music education do you think an undergraduate teacher trainee receives? On average it equates to approximately 17hrs. With this training they

are expected to be able to teach music on a weekly basis for a range of age groups between K to 6.

Imagine you yourself facing this task. If you went through a government primary school, you probably missed out on music instruction in your early years when musical brain structures and processes are built. You know music from the radio and internet and love it but really have no music making experience. You are given 17 hours of music instruction and are told to go forth into the world and teach. Imagine sending your child for 17 piano lessons. What would you expect they could do in week 18?

Imagine an illiterate person given 17 hours of literacy instruction and then being told to teach reading.

All governments have agreed to implement the new national curriculum, which includes the arts. But unless there are big changes in NSW, it isn't going to happen in music.

So what is the solution? Could we up skill the 20 000 teachers that don't have the real confidence to teach music or could we place a music specialist in our schools to teach our children a very valuable part of the curriculum, as has been adopted in Queensland and Tasmania. Obviously this would not happen overnight but with the right planning and implementation this could be implemented over a couple of years.

Whilst this idea may seem radical or unrealistic to some, there could be some real benefits to ensuring all of our children have exposure and access to music in our Public Schools.

Our children would reap the rich benefits music education can bring.

Richard Letts

P&C Association Awarded

NORTHMEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL



The Australian School Canteen Association (ASCA) formally presented the Northmead Public School Canteen with the 5 star Accreditation Certificate in September 2013. The School was advised that they were the first canteen in NSW to receive five stars! Congratulations to Kylie Delaney, the Canteen Committee, and all the wonderful canteen volunteers for running the best canteen in the State!

Lucy Brotherton

Canteen Manager, Kylie Delaney (right), being presented with the Canteen 5 Star Accreditation by a representative of ASCA.



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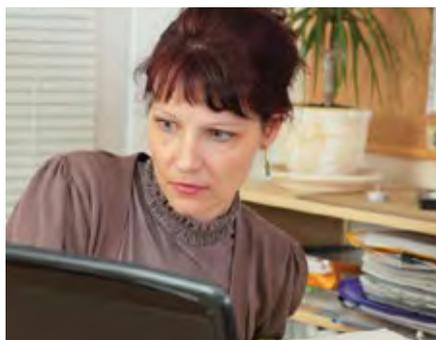
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Specialise in covering large areas using a minimum
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Designed to enhance the aesthetics of the surrounds
while providing high levels of UV protection



Member Services



As New South Wales school communities start up for another year it would be helpful to start the P&C Association year fresh and prepared. There are a couple of quick tips which could make your P&C Association better informed, more focused on their objectives and more likely to strengthen their numbers.

BE ORGANISED.

Each and every P&C Association operates under a set of rules. There is the Constitution which outlines the rules that must be followed by the Organisation. Where your P&C Association has adopted a Prescribed Incorporated Constitution there is absolutely no amendment to the instrument. Where a P&C Association operates under a Standard Constitution and wishes to amend a clause they must request such a change in writing from the Minister for Education. Along with the Constitution

SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE.

Copies of your P&C Association's Constitution and by-laws should be available for members and observers (potential members) at every meeting of the P&C Association. As well it would be good to also provide copies of adopted policies and subcommittee terms of references or rules. A lot of P&C Associations do not have copies of their by-laws, they know they have some because they know how much membership is and how often the meetings are scheduled however they can't seem to track a copy down. If this is the situation at your P&C Association you should make sure that the current P&C Association instigates a review of the by-laws as a task. Information is available in the Constitution that your P&C Association operates under as to what is required to change the by-laws.

EXPLAIN THE STRUCTURE.

Your P&C Association could also provide an Organisational Chart to all of your members and potential members which could include the Office-bearers details and details of the subcommittees the P&C Association operates and a list of the representative groups to which the P&C Association has members attend and participate. This simple overview may make reports tabled to the P&C Association meetings from the representatives easier to relate to and may

encourage members to think about taking on roles. Remember to get approval off members to publish their details to other members prior to releasing information.

DESCRIBE THE ROLES.

Typically members like to know what is actually required of the volunteer role before they put their hand up. As your P&C Association comes to the Annual General Meeting ask each person who has convened a subcommittee, held a representative position on a school committee or been an Officer to table an overview of the duties they have undertaken in the previous 12 months.

Keep focused. It is always good to start each meeting of a P&C Association with welcomes and acknowledgements. Following the opening and the salutations it is always a good idea to revisit the objectives of the P&C Association. This can be done by the Chair and is as simple as reminding all people in attendance that the purpose of meeting is found in the Constitution and reading the clause out aloud; "To promote the interests of the school by bringing parents, citizens, students and teaching staff into close co-operation; and to assist in providing facilities and equipment for the school and in promoting the recreation and welfare of the students at the school." This will help to ensure that the meeting membership stays focused and keeps on track with their debates and their decision making.

FINDING GRANT PROGRAMS

For all incorporated P&C Associations, the New Year often opens up great opportunities for grant applications. Quite often organisations offer grants for volunteer organisations, those involved in education and those that assist children. Keeping on top of and finding out about grant programs can be easy if you know where to look, here is a start for your P&C to make sure you have plenty of time to prepare a submission and make the most of funding offers.

- The Australian Government Department of Social Services offers grants for many purposes, check out their website for full details – <http://www.dss.gov.au/grants-funding/current-funding>
- A great source of information can be your local Member of Parliament - the local Member in our area sends out a newsletter which lists the grants that are currently open or available for submission.
- Many government departments offer grant programs targeted specifically to areas they specialise in visit their websites and subscribe to updates so that you don't miss out. The department of Environment and Heritage offer some great grants for promoting sustainability and education programs for our youth.
- Local Government often have grant programs that are used to boost community involvement, participation and engagement.
- business.gov.au has a tool for searching out grants on their website have a look and see if there is anything that may suit your P&C's ambitions for the new year.
- There are also Club Grants aimed at associations and volunteer organisations.
- Volunteering NSW sometimes put out info on the grants available to volunteer organisations.
- National companies and businesses often offer grant programs in specific areas of for specific purposes, keep an ear open for these programs in your area.

It is worth subscribing to e-news or newsletters to make sure you don't miss any opportunity to make a submission to grant programs.

Make sure you subscribe to the P&C Federation e-bulletin; we include information on grants that are available from time to time as well.

It is a good idea to nominate a grant finder within your P&C who might keep the P&C up to date with the grants that may be suitable and available. This person may also be nominated to facilitate research and writing of submissions and reporting back to the membership on outcomes.

Don't be discouraged if you have never applied for a grant before, the organisations that offer grants publish their guidelines and offer assistance if you need help in writing your submission. P&C Federation are happy to read through any submission you have and help out if needed.

PROMOTE YOUR P&C ASSOCIATION

Our office often receives great feedback from P&C Associations in regards to the ways they promote themselves. We have many schools with very small P&C membership that ask us for more issues of the Parent and Citizen Journal as they use them to promote their P&C and the great things P&C Associations do for school communities. Just some of the ways they distribute the journal in their communities include:

- Placing a copy in the new parent packs for the beginning of the year.
- Distributing copies of the journal to the parents who are not P&C members (as there is some great information for all parents)
- Leaving them in local business waiting rooms, doctors, mechanics etc.
- Sending packs to local retirement homes, aged care facilities.

Being a P&C is all about building community engagement and support for your school and students, these tools we provide to your P&C and can aid in building your community and or membership.



STUDENT INJURY INSURANCE RENEW OR APPLY NOW!

AFFORDABLE COST

- \$4.85* per student for school enrolment between 1-499
- \$4.40* per student for school enrolment between 500-999
- \$3.95* per student for school enrolment between 1000-1499
- \$3.50* per student for school enrolment between 1500+

WHAT BENEFITS DOES THE POLICY PROVIDE?

- 24 hours 7 day week affordable cover
- Cover for accidents where injury occurs whilst at school or at home
- Simple application process
- Cover provided straight away, once payment received
- All common incidents are covered not just broken bones and ambulance trips. Covers dental and non -Medicare medical expenses.

Do you want insurance to cover your students for injury 24 hours 7 days week?

We all know accidents can happen, when you least expect them especially with active adventurous children. Wouldn't it be reassuring to think you could have some protection from the unexpected expenses of unplanned out of pocket medical costs incurred by our children's injuries?

P&C Federation's student Injury Insurance policy can give you cover for just that, for all students at your school.

COVERAGE

The student injury policy has provided cover for a range of different circumstances including;

Types of Injury	Pay Out	Payment Type
Broken front tooth	\$2,793.25	Dental expenses, cash benefit
Broken leg	\$509.28	Broken bone benefit, non-Medicare medical expenses, cash benefit
Broken nose	\$435.71	Broken Bone Benefit, non-Medicare medical expenses, cash benefit
Girl is fatally injured in a car accident	\$12,500	Death benefit
Girl is fatally injured in a car accident	\$12,500	Death benefit

To date, the Student Injury Policy has made the following payments in response to Student Injuries;

- Broken Bones: \$117,160
- Dental Expenses: \$86,842
- Muscular Injuries: \$56,378
- Fatality Payouts: \$50,000
- Head Injuries: \$6,295

Visit our website and read more about the benefits of taking out student injury insurance for your school's students www.pandc.org.au/insurance. seo or contact P&C Federation on 1300 885 982.



School Spectacular 30th Year!

The Schools Spectacular well and truly lived up to its reputation of being the world's largest variety show this year with over 3,600 students involved in the production from all corners of the state. The 2013 Schools Spectacular delighted crowds with extraordinary singing, dancing, acting and playing from some of the most outstanding talent the show has seen in its 30 year history.



Creative Director, Sonja Sjolander, said "this show was electrifying. Every item produced something special and the crowd just could not believe it. By the time the finale came around, the audience could not contain themselves any longer and the standing ovation they gave was well and truly appreciated by every one of the young performers."

Highlights included the violin virtuoso, Harry Ward, who at just 17 years of age, performed the cadenza from Bizet's famous opera, *Carmen*. Harry was supported by the incredible Schools Spectacular Symphony Orchestra, the Ballet Ensemble and new operatic talent, 16 year old Katherine Allen, who sang the *Habanera* reminiscent of a young Dame Joan Sutherland. Harry has

been spotted internationally and will spend next year training with some of the world's best in Vienna.

Benny Nelson, originally from Warialda near Tamworth, was also a hit with the performance of his own song, *Mother*. Benny wrote the original song for his mother who passed away from breast cancer and never got the chance to see him perform on the Schools Spectacular stage. There was hardly a dry eye in the audience as he played his guitar and sang alone in the spotlight with such emotional drive.

Stephanie Wall delighted audience members with her powerful rendition of *The Flame*, written for the Sydney 2000 Olympics by John Foreman. John was, once again, the host of the show and he accompanied



Stephanie on the grand piano as 550 dancers circled around her in one of the largest segments of stunning visual display. Both Stephanie and Benny performed at the P&C Federation Annual Conference earlier in the year.

The Aboriginal Dance Ensemble was inspirational with a brilliantly choreographed routine by Bangarra Dance Theatre's Sidney Saltner and Patrick Thaiday. Over 230 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancers told the story of belonging and connection to the earth through Gurrumul and Blue King brown's song, *Gathu Mawula*. Dancers represented the land and the water with Karwin Knox from Ashfield Boys High School playing the lead role, supported in the centre of the arena by the other 27 members of the NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Company. Karwin also delivered the Acknowledgment to Country at the start of the show, stating that he was a very proud Gomerioi boy and a very proud Indigenous performer in this year's Schools Spec. Karwin, like many students in the company, has aspirations of performing with Bangarra's professional company one day and even moved from Tamworth to Sydney to specifically chase his dream and that is, to dance. The other elite students also come from many regional areas including Ballina, Port Macquarie, Cowra, Dubbo, Grafton, South Grafton, Hunter, Junee, Melville, Mount Austin, Peel, Wade and Winmalee.

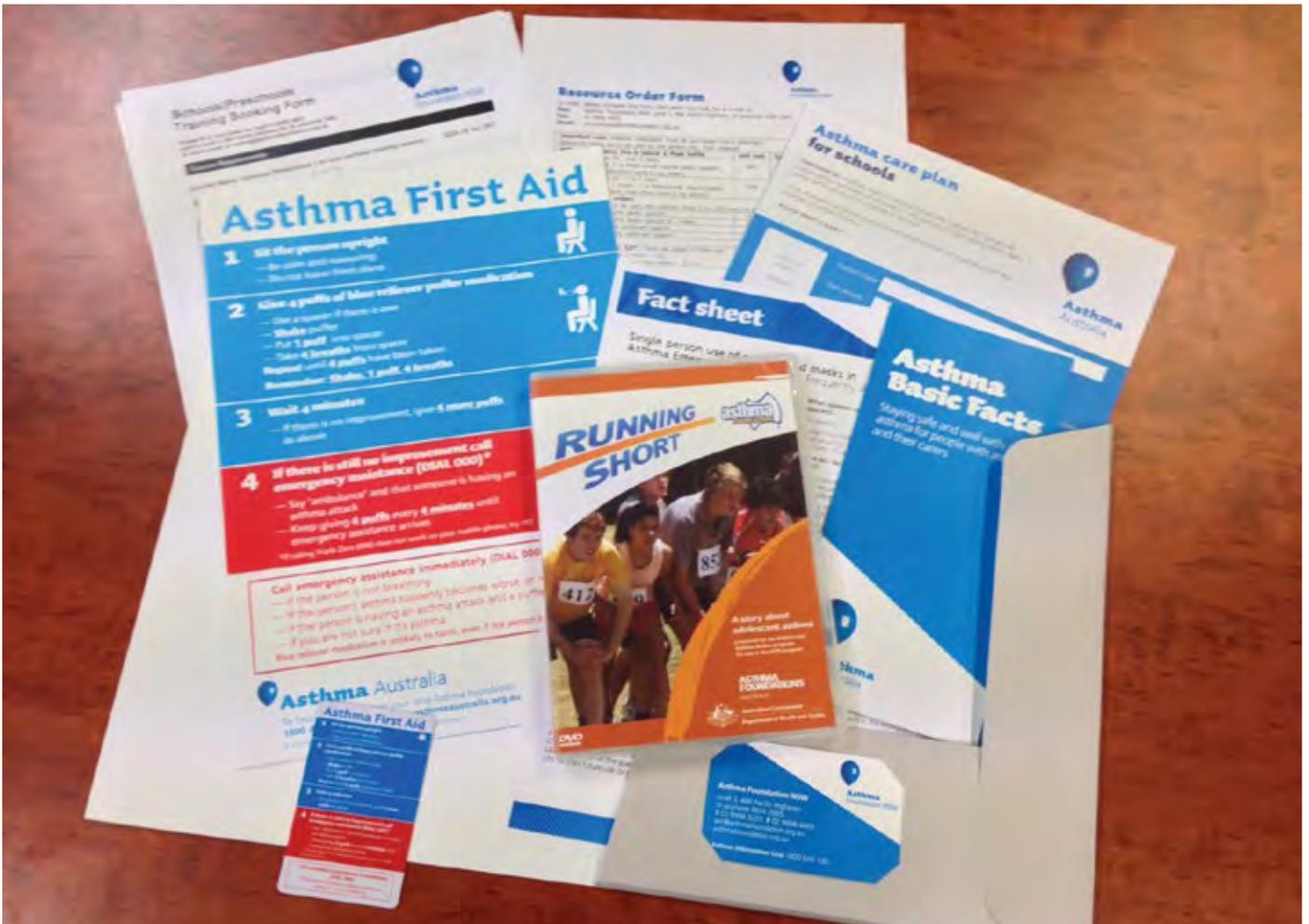
The Public Education Foundation provided

financial support to enable students from the NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Company to perform in this year's Schools Spec and pursue their dreams. The company has been highly sought after this year, performing at a range of events from the Minister's and Premier's Awards to the Corroboree festival, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Buunji Conference, the launch of Education Week and the Public Education Foundation awards ceremony. This incredible training and performance experience has been so beneficial that some of the students have recently been accepted into NAISDA to further pursue their dancing career. The dancers, their families, schools and communities are very grateful for the support of the Public Education Foundation which has enabled students to gain valuable performance experience from the Schools Spectacular and exposure through the Channel 9 broadcast. Over 25,000 people watched the Schools Spectacular as part of the live audience and over 1 million people saw the show through the Channel 9 TV broadcast.

For more highlights and the full photo gallery visit the Schools Spectacular website www.schoolsspectacular.com.au. The whole show can be viewed on the jump-in app which is available to download free from the app store. www.jump-in.com.au

Sonja Sjolander

Register today for your FREE School Sports Pack for 2014



We all know the beginning of the school year is a busy time for sports carnivals – there’s the swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals! Unfortunately, **asthma emergencies are more likely to occur at school sporting events** because students are exercising harder than usual or there may be new triggers in the sporting environment... or even just the weather on the day may have an impact on a child’s asthma.

To help your school staff prepare for these events, Asthma Foundation NSW has developed a School Sports Pack which includes lots of useful information and advice such as:

- asthma fact sheets,
- asthma care plans,
- sports event checklist,
- posters,
- brochures, and more....

The Schools Sports Pack has plenty of useful resources to help ensure your school and staff know what to do in the event of an asthma emergency!

To receive your **FREE** Schools Sports Pack please enter your schools details at the following website:
www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/sportspack/



Asthma
Foundation NSW

Ryda Program

PUTTING STUDENTS ON THE ROAD TO A SAFER FUTURE

Getting behind the wheel of a motor vehicle as a young driver or being a passenger with a novice driver is said to be among the most dangerous things that our children will do in their life. The statistics are staggering but the enormity of the loss is often only realised when it hits close to home, impacting family, friends and a school community. Giving students the very best road safety education should be a high priority of every school.

Realising young people needed better preparation when starting to drive or becoming passengers in vehicles driven by friends was the inspiration to establish RYDA - a road safety program designed to deliver practical information for young drivers and passengers.

Co-ordinated by Road Safety Education Limited (RSE), a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to reducing youth road trauma, the award-winning and evidence-based RYDA Program provides life-saving road safety education for all young people - whether they are driving now, planning to drive in the future or will be the passenger of a young P plate driver.

The RYDA Program was established in 2001 and has grown to be the largest road safety education program for senior high school students in Australia with around 50,000 students each year now receiving the potentially life-saving RYDA message. With support from community partner Rotary and a range of generous corporate sponsors, the cost to attend RYDA is maintained at an affordable level for all young people in our community.

PUTTING THE BRAKES ON TEEN ROAD TRAUMA

Last year over 100 young people died in road crashes in New South Wales and close to 2,000 were seriously injured – cold statistics that fail to reflect the loss, grief and long-term impact on family, friends and school communities or the staggering economic cost to our society.

Young people 17 to 25 years of age represent less than 15 per cent of our population, but account for approximately 25 per cent of the deaths and injuries on our roads - too often simply because they got their P plate; their licence to freedom and tragically, for too many, their licence to die. Many such deaths could hopefully be averted if all senior high school students had access to the one-day RYDA Program.



THE POWER OF THE RYDA PROGRAM

To ensure it powerfully addresses critical road safety issues, RYDA adheres to government guidelines on what constitutes a quality education program including the use of interactive learning, age appropriate evidence based content, a focus on the crucial role of the passenger including passenger empowerment and supply of on-going teaching resources for schools. RYDA does not contain graphic fear tactics and unlike some other programs, RYDA is facilitated with classroom sized groups that enables student discussions to meet individual student needs.

Developed as a best practice program and overseen by an Advisory Council of leading road safety experts, the RYDA Program is presented by road safety professionals including well trained facilitators, police and driving instructors who deliver a high quality course that rotates students through six workshops during the one day program.

Targeting risk factors for teenagers including speed, distraction, alcohol, fatigue, poor hazard perception and unsafe vehicles, RYDA's educational workshops range from a practical demonstration of braking times and distances at different speeds, through examination of risk-taking behaviour to a hands-on session on choosing a safe vehicle and maintaining it.

Perhaps the most impact comes from the personal stories of loss and survival. In one workshop, students watch a powerful and emotional video on the life and tragic death of an 18 year old P plate driver and her best friend, while in another they sit with a crash survivor and hear first-hand how one poor choice can change a life forever.



HELP YOUR HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM RYDA

P&C groups and parents are encouraged to ask their school to organise for Year 11 students to attend the RYDA Program. Knowing schools are tight for time but that road trauma is too important a topic to ignore, RSE makes attendance easy for schools to organise by providing permission slips, excursion risk management guides and promotional material for students and their parents.

RSE also provides parent workshops for those supervising, or about to supervise, learner drivers. By utilising the resources of RSE and the RYDA Program, you can help protect the teenagers you care for and everyone who shares the roads with young drivers.

For further information, please contact Road Safety Education Limited by telephone on 1300 127 642, by email at info@rse.org.au or by visiting visit the website at www.rse.org.au

Discrimination affecting thousands of students on buses

As reported in the last 2013 P&C Journal, the NSW Government announced their response to recommendations in the *School Bus Safety Community Advisory Committee (SBSCAC)* report in July. Unfortunately the joy of the Government adopting the long awaited policy to fit seat belts and high backed seats to school buses on rural routes was devastating news for some, because the new seat belt policy excludes contract B bus routes – even where the bus travels on high speed roads.

Contract B is an internal Transport for NSW category, for buses that carry both students and fare paying adult passengers, although many buses only carry students – especially on non-urban routes.

Contract A are dedicated school buses.

Apart from contract B routes having no seat belt safety, the government's decision also means that students who have to stand or sit in the aisle of a bus will continue to 'run the gauntlet' and be exposed to the highest risk of injury – and possible death. The wait for seated, safe bus travel could be longer than 10 years, unless the NSW Government has a change of heart and provides money to fund seat belts for these students.

In rural NSW, evidence shows that a student's risk of injury is three times greater inside the bus than outside; with the risk inside the bus almost double that of their metropolitan counterparts.

Although the recent \$208 million/10 year commitment by the NSW Government is a great step forward, **you could help by writing a letter or sending an email to all Cabinet ministers, the Premier and the Deputy Premier**, asking them to provide funding and give equal safety for all students travelling on high speed, non-urban roads. Individual P&C groups along with school principals can also help by writing and **meeting with your local MP**, to explain the current discrimination against some students.

The National Road Safety Strategy Action Plan for 2011–2020 urges governments to do all they can to decrease the death and injury toll on our roads and the NSW Government is responsible for the safety of students on



transport they provide. Action may ensue if enough letters are written. If your child's school bus is on the list to receive seat belts, then please write on behalf of the unfortunate children traveling on contract B buses.

Two of the four core SBSCAC report recommendations are only partially being implemented and it is essential that all routes where students travel on roads with speeds in excess of 80km/hr have seat belts fitted and standing banned as recommended.

No-one wants to see innocent children hurt or killed unnecessarily, so your help is needed to ensure children are not disadvantaged because of a Transport for NSW classification. Children facing the same risk should be given the same protection, as who can predict where or when the next bus crash will be?

Glenda Staniford,
Belt Up for Safety Action Group (BUSAG)



Let's give our kids a brighter future

Jeans for Genes®
Friday 1 August



SAVE THE DATE Friday 1 August 2014

**Your school can help cure childhood genetic diseases
affecting 1 in 20 Aussie kids.**

Register your school's interest in **Jeans for Genes Day** now
and help the Children's Medical Research Institute create a
brighter future for all kids.

Sign up now ▶

jeansforgenes.org.au/Pre-Register-School



Proudly supporting Children's Medical Research Institute
Celebrating 21 years of Jeans for Genes



150 at Bombala

The 150th anniversary of the Bombala Public School proved a powerful celebration of community spirit and identity, as hundreds of people came together to mark the milestone.

The formal launch of the sesquicentenary events took place at the Bombala Public School itself, where a large crowd gathered for a series of performances and presentations.

Among the special guests speaking on the day were Public Schools Director, Marian Grant, Bombala Mayor and former student, Bob Stewart, P&C President, Cheryl Cotterill and Bombala Public School Principal, Adam Zanco.

Along with some wonderful recollections of school life from past student and current staff member, Margot Ingram, there was also a commemorative cake cut by the oldest former student, 94 year old Marjorie Taylor (nee Dent) and youngest student, Ariella Moro.

The remainder of the day was given over to student activities, with all immersing themselves in the memorabilia room, old style games and square dancing.

Meanwhile many of the school's guests stayed on to reminisce on their years with the

Bombala Public School, delightedly catching up as they reflected on what the Bombala Public School had meant to them and the district as a whole.

"The whole philosophy behind the day was celebrating the community support that the school receives, and has received for so many long years, and I think we really achieved that," Principal, Adam Zanco said.

"It is important to realise that the school has always been a public school, and in order to establish it 150 years ago, the community had to raise half of the money to pass onto the government. The figure raised was £300, an immense amount of money, and that's the level of support that we're talking about.

"Even our P&C is over 100 years old, being an officially formed parents group in 1910; that's incredible in itself. And the sense of community that all of this shows was well clearly felt throughout our celebrations."

These continued into the next day of course, with Saturday welcoming an even larger crowd to the school as a colonial theme was embraced, and a series of old fashioned family activities were enjoyed.

This included everything from displays of

old engines and cars to demonstrations of spinning and weaving, old fashioned games and of course perusing the memorabilia on show.

The tours of the old school site were an important highlight and proved immensely popular, with tales of old school days being happily shared as all enjoyed the chance to return to the beautiful old school.

Back at the current site, hand shearing displays, face painting, open classrooms and especially the lengthened opportunity to reflect and reminisce with old friends all ensured a memorable time was shared.

The formal component of the day saw the current Bombala Public School staff placing the capstone on the time capsule prepared for the occasion, with this set to be re-opened in 50 years' time.

The monument itself was very generously donated by Kathryn and Allen of Allen's Funerals, and will be affixed with plaques representing various groups, businesses and individuals from throughout the district.

And how do you cap off such a whirlwind of special anniversary events? With a Dinner Dance of course!



A crowd of over 200 gathered in the high school hall that night for a high spirited evening of further celebration, with students from the Bombala High School, many who attended Bombala Public School themselves, catering a tremendous meal to raise funds towards their coming Pompeii excursion.

With the severe hail storm of Saturday evening certainly adding its own drama to proceedings, Frock n Troll then had the hall up on its feet gleefully joining together for a night of bush dancing and socialising.

And this concluded what was a magic two days of celebrations, with the feedback for the Bombala Public School's Sesquicentenary being overwhelmingly positive.

The 150th anniversary of Bombala Public School was not only a wonderful opportunity to reflect on its history and reminisce over our own school days with old friends, but also to acknowledge what the school has meant, and still means to the community which supports it so fervently.

Katrina Brownlie



Recognising valuable contributions



Dale Rands on the left and Ruythe Dufty (School Education Director for New England) and Karen Psarakis (THS P&C President) on the right.



Jeff Budden, Leanne Courtney, Margaret Davis and Annette Seagrave - (as positioned)

Tamworth High School's P&C Association recently presented life memberships to some very deserving recipients. Jeff Budden, Leanne Courtney, Margaret Davis and Annette Seagrave received the awards in recognition of many years of service to the school, community and P&C Association. The contribution by Jeff, Leanne, Margaret and Annette has improved the learning environment for the children enrolled at Tamworth High School. Tamworth High School P&C Association is proud to have presented this honour to these members.

Helen Owen



World Teachers Day



Friday 25 October 2013 was World Teachers' Day, the day recognises and celebrates our teachers and the teaching profession.

World Teachers' Day is an important acknowledgement of the professionalism of teachers and their invaluable contribution to the future of our society.

The first World Teachers' Day was declared in 1994. Since that time communities around the world have been honouring their teachers on this day.

"World Teachers Day is a great opportunity for students, parents and the school community to acknowledge the vital and challenging work that all teachers do" Jo Miller, Secretary of the Merimbula Public School P&C

The Merimbula Public School P&C showed their appreciation for the fantastic teaching team at Merimbula Public School by baking them a cake for World Teacher's Day 2013. Thank you to all our teachers.

Jo Miller

P&C Federation CONGRATULATES public education

Your **2223**
schools
reflect true parent
engagement &
community spirit.

You are an
investment
in the future
of Australia.

Each day
you educate
760,000
children.

You are
inclusive.

You are the
people's
choice!



Public education
- you have a right to be proud.



Howlong Public School FETE

In October Howlong Public School held a very successful fete. This is the first school fete we have held in some years. Howlong has a population of approx 2300 people and a school population of around 180 students.

Each class was asked to run an event, we had many fun and interesting things to do including; a haunted house, cupcake decorating, face painting, knock-em-down cans, mystery jars, mini golf, a slosh-em, temporary tattoos and colored hairspray.

Our very enthusiastic group of fete committee members helped organise a white elephant store, a bake sale, show bags, a craft stall, fresh produce, plant sale, jumping castle, goat races, a petting zoo and lots of food and drinks.

With generous donations from our local community we were able to hold a chocolate wheel; over 50 prizes were given away on the afternoon with special help from our local Lions Club who helped sell tickets and gave out prizes and man our BBQ.

Our fantastic community members from the local Rural Fire Service and the Local Area

Command Police also came for the kids to have a look over their vehicles and have a try of the fire hoses.

We also held an art auction, something that we do every year, each class presented a large canvas of art that the students helped produce, with fierce bidding from many mums and dads some of our canvases sold for more than \$500!!

The highlight of the night for the students was watching their principal Ms Amanda Smith kiss a Pig! Money tins were placed around businesses with teachers faces on

them. In the end Ms Smith had raised the most money and therefore had to kiss the pig.

Overall a Fun and exciting afternoon was had by everyone, thank you to the teachers, students, parents and caregivers, our P&C, and many community members. Our fete committee members were wonderful, without their amazing help we would have not been able to raise more than \$9000 for our P&C to put to good use for our students.

Aimee Erickson
P&C Secretary



Outdoor Learning



Outdoor Education Week in 2013 year was held 1 – 7 September. It was the perfect time to reflect on how outdoor education plays a major role in children’s learning, problem solving, health and wellbeing. There’s never been a more important time for children to turn off technology, get off the sofa and take a break in the great outdoors.

When it comes to education, it’s not just what children learn but how and where they learn that is critical to their overall development. Outdoor education improves children’s understanding of what they are learning and why they are learning. It also improves their problem solving skills, helps with their personal and social development and inspires them to reach their true potential. Essentially, it can act as a driver of children’s capacity and motivation to learn and re-motivates children who would not necessarily thrive in a traditional classroom setting.

The recent generation of technology kids, better known as Gen Y or Gen Z, have been brought up on TV, DVD, gaming, computers, IPADs and smart phones. Instead of discovering their outdoor environment when friends come over, it’s increasingly likely for children to play on technology.

Rosemary Davis, a teacher and Director at NSW Sport and Recreation, is a passionate advocate for encouraging children to become more physically active outdoors. There are a number of ways Sport and Recreation helps children do this, either through a school outdoor education program a Sport and Recreation kids’ holiday camp or offering the Duke of Edinburgh Award to schools, which has an adventurous journey component that challenges students in the outdoors.

“Outdoor education takes a holistic approach to the overall aspects of a person’s needs, including psychological, physical and social impacts and this involves not only education, but leadership skills, risk management, how to problem solve and an individual’s personal development,” says Ms Davis.

“When children are outdoors exercising, research has shown a direct positive link with their attitude and self-esteem. That’s because exercise and outdoor activity bathes the brain with endorphins which provides them with a natural high. Participating in an outdoor challenge or experience can make a child proud of what they can do and also improve their self-esteem. It allows children to step outside their comfort zone, find their courage and develop and acquire new skills in the process.

“Many students attend a camp at a Sport and Recreation Centre as part of their school experience. This provides children with a shared outdoor adventure with their peers, helps them to develop deep bonds centered around support, helping one another, shared hardship and overcoming the set challenges. Children feel part of a group, and learn how to interact with others in the same situation, which leads to new friendships and an increased self-esteem.”

Real-life learning in the outdoors brings the benefits of formal and informal education together and provides meaningful education for 21st century kids. By acquiring knowledge and skills through real-life, practical or hands-on activities children can learn consequences, develop resilience, and how to take risks in a safe environment so that when the need arises they can be effective risk takers in real life events.

For children, taking risks in a controlled environment is a beneficial rite of passage.

Dr Ian Boyle, Lecturer in Physical, Health and Outdoor Education, from the Universities of Sydney and Wollongong says that it’s important to know positive risk activities can have major learnings and benefits to children.

Dr Ian Boyle says, “There has been a blurring of the difference between positive and negative risk in society. Positive risk activities can have major learning and benefits to children; climbing a tree, riding a bike to school, exploring the local bush-land around their home area are all worthy past-times that have been performed for generations”.

He believes parents today tend to see these as “real” risk situations where their child may get hurt, and as a result their kids are not able to explore the world through activities that really have minimal real risk, but major health benefits.

Scaling back on technology and spending time in the outdoors is healthy for kids because it provides them with an environment which can be less frenetic and more calming. Research from the University of Illinois (2010)

Dr Boyle said other research has shown that the lack of outdoor activity is a key driver in depression and anxiety in our children. He says the antidote or remedy for mental health issues involves a need to be moving and exercising regularly, eating well, and tapping into the benefits that nature can provide. Researchers are recognising that interaction with nature, play in the outdoors, and time reflecting in a peaceful green setting provide many benefits to those who participate regularly.

So how can we improve the lives and health of our children? Parents, carers and educators can work together to encourage and support children’s involvement in sport and recreation, and nature-based outdoor activities.

Parents and carers can motivate kids by encouraging time outdoors, getting involved in team sport, or participating in holiday activities where kids can be active with bike riding or beach cricket. Finding your child’s fitness personality and choosing the right activities for your child’s age and keeping the focus on fun improves their abilities and helps them to feel accomplished.

Lee Holmes



Planning a Playground

Creating a new playground at your School can be one of the most rewarding experiences for any P&C. It produces something tangible and interactive that helps your child's enjoyment and development. A well designed playground will not only create a place for exercise but also a place for exploration where lessons are learned, social skills developed and memories are forged.

Returning to a completed playground and watching the children engaged in something you have helped to create is an extremely rewarding experience. This step-by-step approach should help get you there, and ensure you cover everyone's needs on the way....

STEP 1: FORM A 'PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE'

The playground committee will be responsible for driving the project and making things happen, so find a group of like-minded and passionate people at your School. This group should include parents, teachers and

management and limit membership to about 10 to 15 people (If there are too many people and personalities involved, the decision making capability of the team may become ineffective).

Now you have selected the committee members, the next step is to elect the management team. A good management team is crucial to controlling the day to day operations required to keep the project on track. Positions considered for most

Committees include:

- Chairperson**
- Treasurer**
- Secretary**
- Committee members**

STEP 2: DEFINE YOUR NEEDS

What type of space do you wish to create? Start by thinking of all user groups that will be sharing the space. Challenge yourself to think of the different age groups, interests, personalities and genders, and try to visualise how they would interact within the space.

A successful playground should be divided into zones that cater for all types of play; passive play, creative play, social play and imaginative play. All of these play zones must

be easily supervised, inter-connected and yet operate independent of each other. The boisterous play in the active play zone must not impede the exploration in the nature zone or the social skills being developed in the seating area. Creating a successful playground means looking beyond the pages of glossy playground equipment brochures and thinking of the many types of play.

STEP 3: CHOOSE AN AREA

Pick a spot that is easy to supervise and easy to access. Keep in mind the clearance zones that need to be kept around all playground equipment and the need for a soft fall surface for anything over 500mm in height. Bad access can increase the construction costs of your new playground, so (if possible) picking a spot that can be easily accessed by truck or car from the street can mean more money to invest in more items with play value.

Get the Playground committee members to meet and think about any limitations of the space- Is the site too steep? Does it have enough shade? Is the area prone to flooding or inundation? Is the area prone to weekend vandalism?

STEP 4: MAKE A LIST

Take your findings from step Two and Three and think about the physical elements you would like to include in your new play space. This is a great time to include the children! Get them involved with drawing the playground they would like, or make a list of the most popular items. This list responds to both usability and site constraints and may include things like Shade, Climbing equipment, seating, etc.

STEP 7: ENGAGE A PROFESSIONAL

Designing a playground is a very specialised area of design so now is a good time to seek some expertise.

Often detailed information is required to apply for a grant, or a vision is needed to help with the fundraising effort.

There are a variety of different elements you need to get right- from site levels and sub surface works to drainage, shade requirements and planning for supervision. There are also a number of important guidelines that need to be met above and beyond a usual landscape development- from BCA, DECS and the Australian Playground Standards.

Challenge yourself to think beyond glossy brochures with playground equipment. Engaging a play-scape designer will provide a holistic play experience specifically tailored to your site and needs. A functional plan ensures that nothing is overlooked that may incur an expense or mistake during construction and often people are surprised to find the end price for this approach is comparable and the result much better.

STEP 10: MANAGE THE BUILD

Nominate a Committee member to liaise directly with the nominated Project Manager. Having scheduled meetings lets you pick up mistakes as they happen and ensures the compliance and integrity of the build. Project management can be provided by your design professional, or a design and construct package can often streamline the process.

Set a realistic expectation for the construction phase. You can ask your subcontractor, designer or project manager for an expected time line to complete the works.

STEP 5: ALLOCATE A BUDGET

By starting with a good, realistic budget you can save any surprises or heartache down the track. Speak with other organisations that have recently had works completed, or contact a specialist for advice. You may choose to stage the works to suit your fundraising or budget constraint or timeline, but often it is worthwhile getting a 'master plan' designed to provide a goal and undertake in smaller stages.

STEP 8: FUND RAISE

If the funds are not readily available then grant applications and/or fundraising are the next phase. There are a number of fundraising initiatives beyond the School fete, multi day or sausages sizzle. Ask around at the School or search the web for what's available.

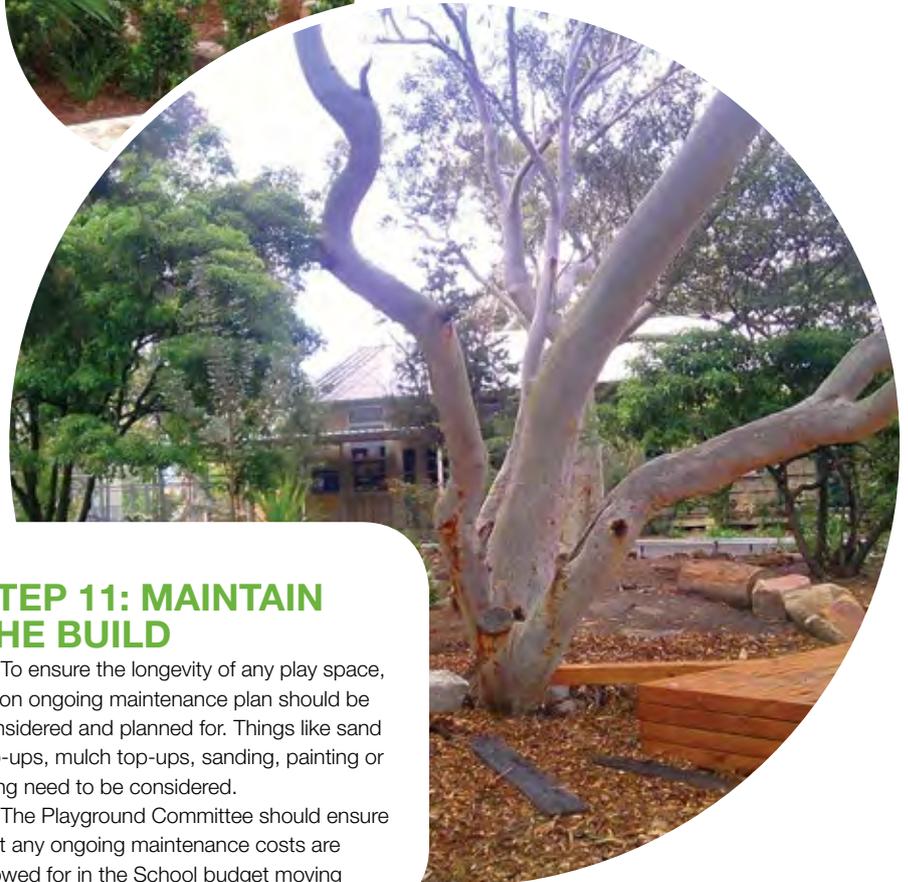
STEP 6: PREPARE A BRIEF

A brief is a great way to finalise everyone's ideas. It becomes a defined wish list and charter for the next stage of the project that has the authorisation and backing of the Playground Committee, Staff and Children.

The brief should aim to include any problems that are known about the site, the needs, nominate a point of contact, define the budget and state any time restrictions that may impact the project delivery

STEP 9: FINALISE LANDSCAPE PLAN AND BUDGET ESTIMATE

Organise a meeting with the designer, the playground committee and other concerned stakeholders in attendance. This will allow time for the designer to present and explain the concept design. The designer should include a detailed 'estimate of probable costs' with the design, and this should be in keeping with your budget constraints. Allocate a particular P&C/ P&F meeting to approve the design.



STEP 11: MAINTAIN THE BUILD

To ensure the longevity of any play space, an on ongoing maintenance plan should be considered and planned for. Things like sand top-ups, mulch top-ups, sanding, painting or oiling need to be considered.

The Playground Committee should ensure that any ongoing maintenance costs are allowed for in the School budget moving forward.

George Adams
thenaturalplayground.com.au

ENERGY \$AVING

as easy as a flick of the switch



Cool idea – Rita Connell (L), Minister for Environment Robyn Parker (centre) and Member for Menai, Melanie Gibbons (R) talk about the Home Power Savings Program and how it's helping families reduce their power bills by living more sustainably.

Turning off appliances at the wall, having shorter shower and switching off lights not in use are just some of the actions the Connell household is taking to reduce their power bills and live more sustainably.

Rita Connell and her two children, aged three and six, have been making these small changes to their everyday routines in an effort to reduce their power usage and ultimately save more money on power bills.

"I have made it a habit in our family that we need to switch off our appliances at the power point when they're not in use," Ms Connell said.

"When we leave the house each morning before going to school, the kids switch off the TV and then down at the power point – even my three year old does it."

"We also make sure that lights are turned off as soon as they're not being used – even though I need to help my three year old reach the light switch, she is still conscious about the need to turn lights off when we're not using them."

"While the kids may not know exactly why it's beneficial to live sustainably, they like the added responsibility of doing something good."

Ms Connell said their energy use behaviour changes are a result of their participation in the NSW Government's Home Power Savings Program – a scheme that assists eligible households tackle the impact of energy costs by providing the tools and education to reduce power and live a more sustainable lifestyle.

"As part of this State Government program, we received a free assessment by an energy assessor who visited our home to look at our energy use and then tell us ways we could reduce it," Ms Connell said.

"I was surprised to learn how much energy is used to supply hot water – we are now

having much shorter showers."

"The energy assessor also provided tips on how to keep the place warm in the winter and cool in the summer – I found it extremely interesting to know that door snakes can help keep the house cool rather than using the air conditioner or a fan."

"We're lucky we live in a relatively cool home, but I know that by doing something as simple as that will help a lot of people who may not be able to afford to run the air conditioner all summer."

"We also had some energy efficient products installed such as a low flow showerhead and energy efficient light bulbs which are surely helping in reducing our bills."

Ms Connell would recommend all families check their eligibility and join the Home Power Savings Program.

"I have seen a big change in my power bills – last year I was faced with bills of up to \$600, but now they are much much less," Ms Connell said.

"I now no longer dread going to the mailbox to open my bills – I actually look forward to it and get excited about seeing how much lower I can get them."

Ms Connell said living sustainably didn't need to be an overwhelming, dramatic change of lifestyle and encouraged people to make small changes.

"The little things do add up – even if it's just having shorter showers or not charging an iPad when you don't have to," Ms Connell said.

"It's easy to make small changes – and if my three year old can do it, anyone can."

Rita is one of the more than 200,000 NSW households that have already taken advantage of the program and as a result, are using up to 20 per cent per year less power and water, and spending less money on their bills.

This program is available to NSW residents

who have a Centrelink Pensioner Concession or Low Income Health Care card, a Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession or Repatriation Health (Gold or White) card, or who are on a hardship assistance plan with their energy retailer or who rent government or community housing.

Eligible households receive a:

- FREE In-home Power Assessment by an energy expert
 - FREE Power Savings Kit of energy efficient products
 - FREE personalised Power Savings Action Plan to help save money on power bills.
- For families looking to check their eligibility, they can phone 1300 662 416.

Kirsten Maier

With Summer on our doorstep, there are some small steps families can take to reduce their power usage while still staying comfortable during summer.

- Where possible, use ceiling fans instead of air conditioners.
- Only turn the air conditioning on in rooms that you are using and set the temperature between 23 to 26C. Every degree warmer can save you an extra 10 per cent on cooling costs.
- When possible, hang your washing to dry in the sun rather than using your electric dryer
- Keep your seals around your fridge and freezer clean and in good condition so that they don't let cold air escape.
- Draw curtains or blinds during the day to keep the heat out during the day.



Don't let your child miss out.

This year children in NSW schools will start to benefit from the extra funding delivered through the six year, \$5 billion Gonski agreement.

More resources means more individual support and attention in the classroom.

But so far Tony Abbott has committed **less than one third** of the money needed to ensure the right resources are in every school.

Register your support for the full Gonski funding
www.igiveagonski.com.au



LOVE FOOD hate waste

The start of the school year can bring with it some brand new routines, whether it is your child attending school for the first time or trying out a new after school activity. During these hectic times knowing what you are going to cook for dinner ahead of time can be a lifesaver.

By planning your meals and writing a list you can go shopping and already know what you need to buy.

The Environment Protection Authority's Love Food Hate Waste program has an easy guide which you can use to help you plan your meals and write a shopping list. Grab your copy from the Resources Section of the Love Food Hate Waste website today.

When writing a shopping list, have a look at what ingredients you have in your cupboards, fridge and freezer first. This way you won't buy ingredients you already have at home – which could save you money.

Also the same ingredients can be used in many meals. If you have tomatoes, lemons, red or spring onions or parsley you could make tabouleh, salsa or a chickpea and couscous salad just by adding a few extra ingredients. Here are some recipes for you to enjoy.



Tabouleh

Ingredients

- 1 cup cracked wheat (Bulgar)
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 small cucumber, diced
- 3 spring onions, finely sliced
- 1 cup parsley, chopped
- 1 cup mint, chopped
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Method

Cover the cracked wheat with cold water and soak for 15 minutes. Strain through a sieve and squeeze out extra moisture. Mix with remaining ingredients and serve chilled.

Serves 4.



Salsa

Ingredients

- 2 ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, chopped
- ½ red onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon parsley, chopped

Method

Combine all ingredients and mix well.

Makes 2 cups.

Chickpea and couscous salad

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin or curry powder
- 1 ½ cups couscous, uncooked
- 425 gram can chickpeas, drained
- 3 medium tomatoes, finely diced
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped
- 2 spring onions, sliced (including green tops)
- Rind of 1 lemon or orange, grated
- Juice of 2 oranges (150ml)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Method

Bring stock to the boil and add cumin or curry powder. Remove from heat and mix in couscous. Cover and allow to stand for 5 minutes until stock is absorbed. Mix in remaining ingredients. Serve warm or cold. **Serves 8.**



If you have leftovers from any of these recipes, store them in an air tight container and use them for another meal or as part of a delicious lunchbox snack. Visit lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au for more recipes and tips that could help you reduce your food waste and save money.

Households in NSW throw out more than 800,000 tonnes of edible food each year Love Food Hate Waste aims to raise awareness of food waste and provide tips, tools and recipes to help you waste less food, save money and our environment. Love Food Hate Waste is NSW Government project managed by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as part of the EPA's Waste Less, Recycle More Initiative.

Recipes have been provided by Go for 2&5. © State of Western Australia 2012. Reproduced with permission.



Does your school have a story to tell? The search is on!

The Wakakirri Challenge is a Search for Australia's Best Story. It's the Ultimate Performing Arts Challenge for Schools providing opportunities for students all over Australia to learn through the creating and sharing of their stories.

Participating in Wakakirri also connects your School and wider community. Parent Groups, local business and organisations are becoming more and more involved in the Wakakirri experience. Through fundraising, support and sponsorship, the success is felt not only on stage but throughout the entire community.

Wakakirri Story-Dance is a 3-7 minute story performed on stage to pre-recorded music, using a blend of dance, creative movement and acting. Schools can choose any story, music and creative movement style they wish.



Schools perform their Story-Dance in professional theatres to an audience of industry professionals, family, friends and other schools. Your school could be awarded The Most Outstanding Story, schools can also share their story with Australia and feature on Wakakirri TV.

Wakakirri will once again host the Secondary School Challenge in 2014 so now every school in Australia can take part. If you're a Secondary School and would like to take part in this Dance-Theatre Story Sharing Challenge, you can register online now at www.wakakirri.com

Country and Outback schools also have the option of entering the Regional Screen Challenge, where they film and send in their entry. You can find more information about the Regional Challenge on our website.



How Much Does it Cost? If we consider the more essential expenses covering a bus, Insurance Fee and Costume item, a group of 60 students will have an expense of about just under \$1000. Schools should budget on about \$17 per student.

The Cross Curriculum element to Wakakirri, particularly with the Sustainability priority, is one of many ideal links to the National Curriculum. Encompassing the Learning Areas of The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Technologies, Civics and Citizenship, History and more, Wakakirri Story Dance offers an applicable and engaging learning tool to today's Education.

Taking part in Wakakirri promotes respect between students and schools through the sharing of stories. It builds communities by fostering tolerance and understanding, encouraging parents to actively participate and support their children's participation. Students are on their feet, being active, thinking and creating.

Wakakirri online tutorials will be the new addition to our website in early 2014 giving teachers, students and parents a valuable resource to use at their convenience. Whether it be teachers needing to complete PD hours, students learning about the Wakakirri process or parents who may need more information, the Wakakirri tutorials on our website will have the answers to all your questions.

If you would like to register your school for the 2014 Challenge or would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact us at wakakirri@wakakirri.com or phone 1800 650 979 or Angela on 0414 532 201.

wakakirri.com





SCHOOL SPIRIT

$E=MC^2$

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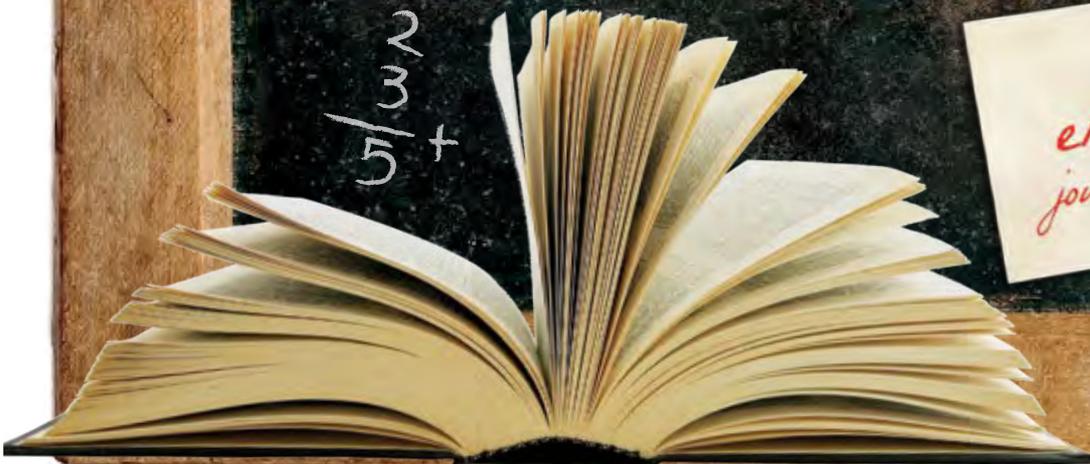


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