“Connecting Together Through Technology” Seminar
At Penrith - May 2009
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telephone number above.

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Annual Conference
27th & 28th August
TEAMWORK...
At Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney

❖ NetLink is the official newsletter of School
Administrative & Support Staff Professional
Association (NSW) Inc. (SASSPA)
❖ Opinions expressed in NetLink are not
necessarily those of SASSPA or the NSW
Department of Education and Training,
unless otherwise specified.
❖ Articles from members for publication in
NetLink welcome.
❖ SASSPA reserves the right to make literary
corrections and to withhold from publication
all or any part of material submitted.
❖ Material for publication should be
typewritten.

SASSPA State Team:

Executive:
Sally Ann Copp, Chairperson (Lucas Heights Community School)
Debra Ward, Treasurer (Cudgen Primary School)
Rozanne Patane, Secretary (Orchard Hills Public School)
Marge Amery, Vice Chairperson (Narrandera East Infants School)

Team Members
Helen Ross (Mullion Creek Public School)
Leesma McKeown (Tharrawal Public School)
Jill Montgomery (Cronulla High School)
Julie-Anne Sando (Penshurst West Public School)
For those who attended, I hope you enjoyed our ‘Connecting through Technology’ seminar held at Penrith Rugby Leagues Club (Penrith Panthers) on Monday, 25 May. From the collation of the evaluation sheets, it seems that despite all the trials and tribulations we had over the ‘technology’ and the evacuation procedures etc, I think most delegates found the presenters very informative. For those who were not able to attend, or who could not see the whole screen due to the auditorium layout, you will find the powerpoint presentations on our website.

I can assure all members that the conference due to be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Sydney on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 August 2009, will be far more professional – we have specialized AV technicians on site so hopefully nothing will go awry this time. We also have an official MC and some excellent speakers attending. There has already been a terrific response to this year’s conference, but unfortunately numbers are limited to the venue, so we are hoping not too many miss out. We are already in the process of finding an even larger venue for next years conference, so that we can accommodate more SASSPA members and others are not disappointed.

By now all members will have been emailed the changes we wish to introduce to our constitution (a copy of this can be found on our website), so we hope you have had a chance to peruse these as we will be voting at the AGM due to be held at 4.30pm on Friday 28 August (also at the Four Seasons Hotel). Please check your letterbox shortly for a hard copy of the AGM notice.

Also on our website you will find a link to our previous issues of Netlink that were sent out by mail to all members prior to this edition. From now each issue will be added to our website just after the latest issue has been emailed to each member as a pdf file to ensure they receive a copy before members of the public. If it is essential that we need to mail you a hard copy, please could you let us know as we have been trying to find ways to reduce the cost of printing and postage, to enable us to keep conference and seminar registration costs to a minimum and this was one suggestion from our auditor.

It also seems that there is a little bit of confusion about when membership is due. Our annual membership is only valid from January to December, but you can join anytime after the latest conference or seminar each year for the following year. If you join in June or July though before our annual conference, this membership is only valid until December of the same year. We will shortly be posting our 2010 membership application forms on the website and we will send our members an email with applications for renewal form attached. Please encourage other SAS staff to visit our website at www.sasspa.org.au to find the latest forms for new membership due to be uploaded in September 2009.

Regards

Sally Ann Copp
Chairperson.
Treasurer’s message…

Membership numbers continue to grow and as at the end of this Term we have:

- 424 Individual Full Members
- 5 Associate Members
- 234 School Affiliate Members

Total 663 which is absolutely wonderful.

The August Conference is filling up very quickly, so send in your registration or you may miss out. It will be a spectacular conference with wonderful speakers.

Following the Conference the Annual General Meeting will be held and all members are invited to attend.

Debra Ward
SASSPA Treasurer
The Presentations from the ‘Connecting through Technology’ Seminar recently held at Penrith Panthers can be viewed as PDFs on the SASSPA website sasspa.org.au

Presentations available:

- **Connected Schools Program** - Presented by Jane Hunter, Senior Education Officer
- **ERN – Year 6-7 Transition Student Groups Reporting** – Presented by Geoff Jones, Project Manager, Finance & Infrastructure
  Introduces you to the new Year 6-7 transition process
- **ERN – 2009 – Term 2 Update**
- **ERN – Tips and Tricks**
- **Learning Management and Business Reform Program** – Presented by Jim Breen, General Manager, LMBR.

Visit our website for:

- **SASSPA Conference**
  Thursday 27 August and Friday 28 August 2009
  Four Seasons Hotel, 199 George Street, Sydney. More details to follow later

- **Coming Events**
  Please find WIEL Conference also advertised

- **Netlink Newsletter**
  From Term 2, the Netlink will be emailed to all members, then downloaded to the website after next edition

- **Constitution**
  View the Constitution as it stands, although amendments have been forwarded to delegates for introduction at the next AGM – Press HOME to find the additions

- **Accreditation Standards**

- **Membership**

- **Contacts**
  Enquiries admin@SASSPA.org.au
  Leesma McKeown
  For SASSPA Committee
A Brief History of SAS Staff in NSW Schools

It is only since 1969 that significant numbers of SAS Staff (previously known as Ancillary Staff) were appointed to schools. The following history is based on Department of School Education file SSD8:TT: HG:1395 85/32744.

The first non-teaching staff appointed to schools were Cookery Maids in the 1930’s. These positions were later called Kitchen Assistant, hence Home Science Assistants, Schools Assistants (and now School Administrative Officers).

It was not until 1955 that the then Public Service Board appointed the first Clerical Assistants to some high schools as a pilot scheme. In 1960 the scheme was extended to cover over 100 high schools. It was in that year that the first Teachers’ Aides were appointed to special schools for disabled students.

In 1965, 20 Science Attendants were employed and the first Clerical Assistants (Library) were employed in 1967.

The significant breakthrough in ancillary staff provision followed state-wide industrial action in 1969. Clerical Assistants were appointed to 13 Class 1 Central Schools and Stage 1 of a 3 stage program saw 1273 EFT (equivalent full-time) positions established, including the first appointments to Primary schools. Stage 2 provided for an additional 804 EFT in July 1970 and Stage 3 of 952 EFT later that year.

By 1974, there were 5,563 full-time or part-time positions including the first 20 Teachers’ Aide (Aboriginal) positions (later to become Aboriginal Education Assistants). Betterments, mainly to special schools, and overall growth saw the number of ancillary staff employed reach 9,396 in 1981. This total included Home Science Assistants.

In the 1980’s there were three significant developments in Ancillary Staff provision:

General Assistant Cluster Scheme – an additional 85 EFT positions were approved in December, 1983 for distribution to schools on the basis of need. Cluster committees were established to determine allocations, the first example of devolution in resource allocations and a boom to the smaller schools in ground maintenance. By 1988, nearly 300 EFT positions were allocated under this scheme.

Flexible Staffing – in September, 1984, Regional Directors were allocated a total of 120 EFT positions for specific needs. A further 176 positions were allocated in 1988. As well as being another example of devolution, the allocation was flexible in that appointments were not confined to a particular category.

New Staffing formula – Following recommendations in the “Report of Committee” convened to examine the distribution of ancillary staff in school November, 1984, the Primary School Formula was based on bandwidths of 50. This provided a more equitable distribution of staff and for the first time, 420 “small” schools (with enrolments of 50 and less) were allocated ancillary staff other than General Assistants under the Cluster Scheme.

A further report in July 1986 recommended a revised formula to include a flexible component it also recommended 2.7.1:

“The categories of clerical assistant, teachers’ aides, clerical assistants (library), clerical aides, home science assistants and science assistants, be phased out and replaced with the category of School Assistant.”

This recommendation was adopted by the new Government in June, 1988.

The Cookery Maids appointed in the 1930’s were Ministerial employees until 1985 when they were transferred to employment in terms of Section 80 of the Public Service Act, 1979 and along with other ancillary staff were employed as temporary employees. The only ancillary staff who could gain permanent employment were Farm Assistants and General Assistants because they, pre 1986 could work 40 hours per week.

In November 1986 the (then) Public Service Board and the Public Service Association agreed on permanency being offered to ancillary staff. The Education (Ancillary Staff) Act 1987 provides for the permanent employment of all ancillary staff other than Farm Assistants and General Assistants who are employed under the Public Sector Management Act.


(Thanks to SASSPA member for submitting this article)
I can honestly say that this was the worst day I have ever had since starting with the Department more than 20 years ago.

It all started when I arrived at school to find dozens of linesmen working on the power lines in the street that runs down the side of the school. Trucks and men everywhere, something major going on. I unlocked the building and walked inside to be faced with a note from the Cleaner to say half the appliances were not working in the staffroom. A quick check of the meter box and I found 7 circuit breakers tripped, one of which would not turn back on for me. Another 4 in the other two meter boxes….what was going on?

When I walked into my office, one of my lights would not turn on and there was a strong smell of burning electronics and no phone system. I finally got on to our maintenance contractor using my mobile and he sent an electrician to my rescue. Further investigation from the electrician found that the UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply) connected to my fileservr was fried. When we shifted my computer monitor to get to the phone connection box, we found the power supply to an ipod with our message on hold completely blown apart. I even have scorch marks on the wall from where it blew.

I rang the power company and they told me they would fax through a claim form for the damages but a closer look showed me that the fax machine had also been damaged. During the morning we discovered that we had also lost the reverse cycle air conditioner in our new staffroom, our fridge, microwave and zippy water heater. The Kindergarten teacher alerted me to the fact that her Smartboard was shimmering and so we decided to pull the plug, literally, on all electronic equipment for the rest of the day.

So what had happened? Apparently our school was between the power supply and where the men needed to work, so instead of leaving us without power for the day, they decided to put us onto a generator and deliver our power that way. It is believed that at least two power surges have gone through which has taken out our equipment. By the time we went home the zippy and the fridge had come back on but we have lost: fax machine, reverse cycle air conditioner, ipod, UPS, microwave, one telephone, one computer, 3 evaporative air conditioners and our whole security system.

This is not going to be resolved in the short term. I can see this dragging on for weeks, if not months. Oh joy!! I am thinking of starting a campaign to bring back chalk, blackboards and carrier pigeons.

Marge Amery
Narrandera East Infants School.
I have had quite a varied career working for the Department of Education and Training. First I had 10 years at Corrimal High School in a SAO role, then 12 months at Wollongong West PS as a SAO, working in the office with one day a week in the Library. In 1996 I was successful obtaining a SAM position at Primbee PS working with a teaching principal. After five years at Primbee I applied for SAM at Balgownie PS which was much closer to home. Then after 5 great years at Balgownie PS, I decided to apply for the SAM position at Illawarra Hospital School – it was a part-time position and therefore like semi-retirement.

I have now been at the Illawarra Hospital School for two years and am enjoying it very much. I still do the same work as I did at a normal school only on a much smaller scale. I work five days a fortnight, and love my days off!

We cater for children from K-12 and don’t actually enrol children as they are only with us for a limited time. Each child we help has to be accounted for so their details are kept on an Excel Spreadsheet. Some children are unable to come up to the schoolroom so they are given work or craft activities in their room. If they are not up to that, they can have one of our TVs and a DVD to help pass the time of day. Others come up to the school room and do schoolwork for the morning and can then do craft or play games after lunch. Even children in traction are wheeled up in their beds. We have had as many as 6 beds in the schoolroom at once!

We contact the home school for children who are with us for more than a couple of days. As we are still a DET school, at the end of each fortnight a letter is faxed to their school stating the days these children were in attendance, so that they are marked present on their class roll.

We don’t have excursions, scripture or sport so I don’t have to organise buses or collect money. The phone doesn’t ring as often as a normal school, and I don’t have to deal with the parents. There is no ‘first aid’; we just call for a nurse.

The schoolroom is a bright and happy place and a welcome distraction especially for those who are in hospital for more than a few days. Once or twice a week we have children who are in for ‘day only’ surgery. These children can come to schoolroom and do some activities whilst waiting for surgery, which keeps them occupied until it is their turn.

Twice a term Captain Starlight from the Starlight Foundation visits our school. These days are fun for the children as they are entertained, play games, have a party lunch and often ‘dress up’ depending on the theme of the day. We also have visits from the Police, Firemen and Ambulance Officers from time to time.

I feel privileged to work at the Illawarra Hospital School. Watching children cope with illness is a very levelling experience. It certainly puts life back into perspective!

Patricia Bye
School Administrative Manager
Illawarra Hospital School
Working in a small school, where do I start with all the advantages?

I have been employed by the Department of Education and Training for 20 years and spent most of this time working in schools in Sydney. These schools ranged in size from 275 children up to 450 children. About 18 months ago my husband and I made the decision to move out of Sydney. I transferred to Port Stephens at the beginning of 2007.

I was getting a bit disillusioned with my job and felt it may have been time to try something new. Instead of that I found Bobs Farm Public School, a small school (35 students) in the Port Stephens area. A SAM position became available late in 2007 so I applied and was successful at interview. It is the perfect place for me. I know all the children and the children all know me. I feel very much a part of the school and even though there is only a small staff we achieve so much.

The children experience many different aspects of school life here at Bobs Farm, like Pet Week. The children can bring their pets to school, a different kind of pet each day, as we don’t want the dogs chasing the cats. Last year we had dogs, mice, birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens and horses. Yes, one day two children brought their horses to school, showed us what they could do and all the children got to have a ride. That just doesn’t happen in the big smoke.

We have many and varied visitors too. Currently there are four chooks and a rooster that have made the school their home. We don’t know where they came from but they are enjoying scratching around in the gardens. The peacocks who live on the farm across the road often wander in to say hello and once we had a visit from an alpaca. A grandfather of some of the children came to visit us all the way from Tasmania and brought his alpaca named Manuel with him.

My skills have also increased with many days starting with us either having no water to flush the toilets or no water to drink. I now know how the pumps work and which tank the various types of water comes from (we have bore water as well as rain water).

My fitness is greatly improved as it is a bit of a walk to the toilets which are situated at the rear of the grounds. A quick check of the toilet area is often needed to see that no strange creatures have taken up residence, like huntsman spiders.

I certainly would recommend to anyone that working in a small school is a great experience. You still have to do all the mundane jobs but the happy looks on the children’s faces make your days special.

Susan Sams
School Administration Manager
Bobs Farm Public School
Learning Management & Business Reform
Jim Breen – General Manager – LMBR
The department is continually seeking to improve its business and systems to meet new demands and the changing expectations of students, parents, teachers, employees and industry. The LMBR program is a vital part of that improvement process.

The program covers three core areas of the department’s business:

• Finance management across DET, corporate areas, schools and TAFE, including e-commerce
• Human resources/ payroll management across corporate areas, schools and TAFE; and
• Student administration for both schools and TAFE

LMBR consists of four projects to be implemented at various stages throughout the life of the program. The LMBR Portfolio of Programs are:

• SALM
• SAP Solution
• Shared Services Organisation
• Legacy Systems

The current focus of LMBR is the SAP implementation which has been divided into manageable stages to enable efficient control of resources and regular process monitoring.

The first stage of the SAP implementation project is the release of the SAP solution to corporate finance areas. This release is referred to as Release 1.1 and will ‘Go-Live’ on 2 November 2009.

This will be followed by the TAFE finance implementation in 2010 and schools finance implementation in 2011.

The program is also looking to transform the way the department communicates and delivers its services by providing greater access to online information and transactions and efficient call centre services, while preserving the existing face-to-face contact in schools, TAFE and regional offices.

The LMBR Program vision has three underlying themes:

• Standardise and Integrate – Standardise and integrate processes, information & applications across DET
• Simplify and Automate – Elimination & automation of repetitive, manual, and non-added value tasks
• Value Focus – Target areas of highest value, and capitalise on opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness

Connected Classrooms
Jane Hunter – Senior Education Officer
ConnectedClassroomsProgram is a NSW State Government initiative to provide Department of Education and Training (DET) staff and students with new opportunities to connect with each other across enhanced technology facilities for sharing resources and data collaboration.

Commitment to the program was made by the NSW State Government on 16 March 2007, when the Premier announced a $158 million investment over 4 years to enhance the Department’s ICT capacity for teaching and learning.

The Connected Classrooms Program is bringing to DET a capability to deliver and sustain a standard set of technology learning capabilities across the State.

The Connected Classrooms Program has three projects:
1. Interactive Classrooms
2. Learning Tools
3. Next Generation Education Network (NGEN).

Teachers, students, parents, and the business community will benefit from the Program in the following ways:

• teachers use of interactive whiteboards and video conferencing in teaching increases student engagement and motivation in learning, students access to a personalised online workspace ‘where and when they require’ means greater opportunity to access appropriate resources

Procurement
Sharon Jones-Baldwin - Commercial Director of Operations, Procurement Directorate
DET is one of the biggest buying organisations in the southern hemisphere. With a
budget of around $10 billion, the scale of its purchasing power is enormous. Through procuring strategically, we are able to harness this power to create millions of dollars in savings which can be returned to better meet the needs of students in schools and institutes throughout NSW.

The Procurement Savings Reform Program aims to streamline DET’s buying to secure these savings. DET Procurement is working together with schools, TAFEs, adult learning centres and corporate staff to identify opportunities to reduce costs through developing:

- a standard product range
- a common supplier base
- centralised spending
- more effective buying processes

The Procurement Directorate provides a range of services to staff throughout DET including:

- Advice about which suppliers to use
- Support for buying and purchasing enquiries
- Dedicated support for purchasing imaging devices and Interactive Classroom equipment

They also offer:

- Training in smartbuy® and e-procurement tools
- Support with developing and managing supply contracts
- Innovative procurement strategies and solutions

Westpac Banking Corporation

Garry Key – Manager, DET School & Regional Financial Operations
Sharon Probert – Westpac Banking Corporation
Damian Henry – Westpac Banking Corporation

NSW Schools contacts

For bank statement enquiries, including the identification of deposits and debits, trace requests, voucher retrievals and dishonours, contact:

Transactional Solutions Team
Ph: 1800 150 140
Fax: 1800 150 121
Email: transactionalsolutions@westpac.com.au

For technical assistance and trouble shooting on Corporate Online, contact:

Corporate Online Support HelpDesk
Ph: 1300 134 291

For enquiries and issues regarding existing Merchant facilities (inc. EFTPOS), contact:

Merchant Helpdesk
Ph: 1800 029 749

For general enquiries on operational banking issues (new accounts opening and updated signatories, electronic banking solutions and fees and merchant enquiries), contact:

Paul Anderson
Client Enquiry Manager, Client Services
Ph: (02) 8254 5622 (between 8.30am and 5.00pm)
Fax: (02) 8254 6918
Email: NSW_Government_Schools@westpac.com.au

Escalation point for any service or operational issues, contact:

Avalon Bristow
Client Service Manager
Ph: (02) 8254 1558
Fax: (02) 8254 6918
Email: abristow@westpac.com.au

For any new transactional product requirements, contact:

Francis Hegerty
Client Manager, Global Transactional Banking
Ph: (02) 8254 1455
Fax: (02) 8254 6940
Email: fhegerty@westpac.com.au

ERN

Geoff Jones – Project Manager, Finance & Infrastructure

Geoff Jones gave a comprehensive overview of E RN, the projects development to date and enhancements planned for the future. A copy of the powerpoint presentation, delivered by Geoff, can be found sassa.org.au

Mr Greg Prior, Regional Director, Western Sydney Region, closed this year’s Connecting Through Technology Seminar.

The Annual conference will be held on Thursday 27th and Friday 28th August, at the Four Seasons Hotel, George Street. Check our website.

(from Leesma McKeown)
I’m coming over to Australia in early October of this year to Sydney for the World Master Games that are from Oct. 9th to 19th. They are held mostly at the Sydney Olympic Park. I’m really looking forward to these games and counting down the days until I go.

I’ve been thinking about what I can write about what I do as a Teacher Assistant. We recently had our job title changed from Teacher Assistant to Educational Assistant at the beginning of this year along with a pay increase. I work for the Catholic School System here in Saskatoon.(Saskatoon’s population 280,000) and there are 37 Elementary schools with 8 High schools.

To be hired as an Educational Assistant you do not require secondary education but it is beneficial if you have your Diploma in Educational Assistant. It is a two year course that provides the knowledge and skill development needed to assist the classroom teacher. You will study social, emotional, and cognitive development, communication skills, classroom management techniques and crisis prevention, awareness of cultures, help individuals with challenging needs/disabling conditions to reach their optimal level of functioning in society.

Once you are hired on, you start on the sub list and can be called every morning to work at random schools within the city. There are full time contracts that are offered and each person has to apply for the position. Once you have a full time contract with the Catholic School System you are guaranteed work every year because Educational Assistants are Unionized. We are under the CUPE union and have great benefits. Such as 100% dental, 100% eye, 100% chiro, physio and massage, 100% extended health care, 80% prescription drug, life insurance and long term disability.

We work a six hour day, five days a week from Sept. to June. (10 months) with the summer months off (July and Aug.). We are payed by the hour. A person that is subbing will make approx. $15 / hour and a full time employee will make $21.00 / hour. The high school that I work at (Holy Cross High School) has an enrolment of over 1300 students and 180 staff . I work in the Functionally Intergrated Program that has 3 Special Needs Teachers and 22 Educational Assistants. In the F.I. program there are 33 students. The students that are in this program have had their I.Q. tested and if their I.Q. falls below 55 they are placed in F.I. program. Some of our students special needs range from Down Syndrome, Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, Pryder Willy Syndrome, OCD, Williams Syndrome, Rubenstein Tabi Syndrome........With some of our students we do personal care ( feeding, toileting, administer medications, personal hygiene).

Within the F.I. program we teach Life Skills, Social Skills, AAC (Augmentative Alternative Communication....a sign language program), Work Ed. within the community, Career Ed. and we also do Occupational Therapy with some of our students. Our students are involved in elective classes such as P.Ed., General Fine Arts, General Practical Arts, Band, Drama, Home Ec., Choir, etc. They are involved with the Cross Country team, being team managers for the volleyball, basketball and wrestling teams, involvement in drama productions and musicals, taking part in variety night and the schools fashion shows, picking up attendance folders, paper recycling, bottle and can recycling, assembling the schools newsletter, janitorial duties, participating in intramurals sports. We invite classes to join us with our special activities such as our dances, outings and sometimes going to the movies.

The students start their grade nine year here at Holy Cross High School when they are 14 years of age. They graduate with their peers at 17 in their grade 12 year then are able to stay in the F.I. program until they turn 22. The latter years of the program are centered on transition planning which focuses on work experience and community-based training that can be used after graduating from the F.I. program. Several graduates of the F.I. program have gone on to obtaining part time or full time jobs within the business community and we are all very proud of them.

Being an Educational Assistant for the past 11 years I have seen a lot of change. Being from that of the classroom setting, where when I started there were 10 students and 7 staff, to where we now have 33 students and 22 staff. Special needs are being more accepted in the community and I’m a very big advocate for this. I see how the smallest thing brings a smile to a students face. It really is the smallest things that bring the biggest pleasures and that anything is possible. (Like when after everyday teaching a student to tie his shoes, he finally was able to do it at the end of the school year, ten months later.) So I tell people to take time to stop and smell the roses and not to take life too seriously.

I hope this is something that you can use Sally Ann. I truly love my job and thought that I might be able to find some work over in Australia. Hopefully in Sydney, but if not, I’ll definitely do some volunteer work and make contacts so that I may be able to obtain a work visa and come back to your beautiful country.

My mailing address is: Charlene Nemeth 303 - 222 Lenore Drive Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7K 6S2

Take Care and if any other questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. [charky14@yahoo.ca]

Sincerely,
Charlene Nemeth
In 2009 the Quiz Show Tournament for Stage 3 students based on the TV game show called Jeopardy was introduced. The educational and motivational value is extremely high and the students really enjoy it. For the tournament, the school utilises the Video Conferencing and shared Interactive Whiteboard ability of the interactive classroom to Connect Classrooms across New South Wales. The quiz content is a mix of Stage 3 level and General Knowledge. All schools participating needed to provide:

- A finalised Interactive Classroom with all components in working order
- The nomination of a coordinating teacher for this Tournament (all activities will be in-school)
- Attendance by the coordinating teacher at a briefing video conference held for all participating schools where all questions were answered
- The selection of a maximum of five (5) Stage 3 students to represent the school’s team in the tournament (other students and teachers can participate as an audience)
- The Interactive Classroom and the school’s representative Team must be available for their selected heat - heats were held at 2:00pm on Thursdays or 9:30am on Fridays from Week 4 to Week 7
- Teams that win or come second in their heat, will need to make their Interactive Classroom and Team available for the Finals series held throughout Week 10 of Term 1.

The 2009 tournament is fully subscribed, to register your school for 2010 please Contact Stuart.Hasic@det.nsw.edu.au
This was the theme of the very successful two-day Conference held in Orange on 21/22 May by the Western NSW Regional SASS Reference Group. The program was jam-packed with interesting speakers and topics, covering many aspects of our work in schools. SASS and Principals from 117 schools from across the Region attended and it was great to see a SAM from Broken Hill attending. A total of 311 SASS and 6 Principals attended over the two days with 187 SASS attending both days – this represents an increase of 11% on last year.

Day 1 opened with our keynote speaker, Lyn Sykes, Communication Specialist, and what a great way to start. She was funny, serious, story teller but always with a message about communicating with each other. There were practical suggestions about our skills at getting the job done, getting along with others, and negotiating with people as well as analysing our character traits and pointing out that we all have a variety of preferred and habitual ways of behaving and responding to various situations.

A Forum of representatives from LMBR / Procurement / Finance / Audit gave SASS and principals the opportunity to listen to presentations by Mr Jim Breen, General Manager, Learning Management & Business Reform (LMBR) Program, Mr Garry Key, Manager, School & Regional Financial Operations, Mr Keith Eldridge, Principal Business Risk Analyst, Audit & Risk Management Directorate and Mr Paul Hopkins, Chief Procurement Officer. The second part of the forum was a Q&A session when written questions were submitted through the Chairperson, Mr Garry Brown. Questions were wide ranging and answered in detail and evaluations were positive for this session with SASS welcoming the opportunity to receive answers in person.

Alternate workshops included:

**Information Technology:** Connecting to the 21st Century: which was an opportunity to see the range of professional development courses being offered by iTeach21 including a demonstration of Bridget and how technology can be used for training purposes.

**Supporting Students with Autism** with demonstrations of practical strategies and interventions for accommodating students with Autism and how to put together useful tools for maintaining routines, accessing the curriculum, managing behaviour and alleviating stress and anxiety.

**Health in the Workplace – Managing Stress:** offered suggestions to participants for looking after their health and managing stressful situations in the workplace.

**Communication and Conflict** – how to respond to complaints, aggression, harassment: was extremely well received by the participants who found it informative for communication skills, how to create a better work environment, managing change, conflicts complaints, aggression, bullying and harassment.

**Valued Aboriginal Staff “Involved Aboriginal Communities “Successful Aboriginal Students:** SASS from schools with Aboriginal populations appreciated this session giving information and discussion on the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Plan 2009-2011, SASS Aboriginal recruitment initiative and how to access Winanggaay – the HR Aboriginal website.

Day 2: **Skills to be a SASS Superstar:** This whole-day workshop presented by SkillPath received “rave” evaluations with practical techniques on how to master the many critical responsibilities of being a SASS with practical skills like: How to maintain your calm … Strategies to count on when it comes to handling difficult people and situations …. Phone skills to help handle multiple calls … things to do to project an image that commands respect … tactics for maintaining safety and security …. How to achieve the job satisfaction and enjoyment and make the day fly by … and much more!
Tricky Kids – What can I do? This popular workshop helped LSOs work effectively with “Tricky Kids”. Included in the sessions were strategies, identifying the common challenges presented by children behavioural or emotional support. There was a focus on practical strategies for working in a team with teachers helping students to engage in learning and appropriate social, emotional and behavioural responses as well as challenges facing LSOs.

smartbuy®: The smartbuy team demonstrated and explained how to navigate DET sites and how to become more efficient and familiar using smartbuy and the new e-catalogue as well as answering questions from the participants.

ERN – These 3 sessions were very well received and covered a wide range of ERN topics including tips and tricks, how to access ERN information, Help screens, on-line materials, and a sneak peak at the future. Reporting within ERN – Years 6-7 Transition – Family Manager – Setting up Roll Classes and managing subjects at high schools and Support Class administration. Chris was happy to answer questions during the sessions.

Role Statements / Terms & Conditions of Employment / Transfers: discussed role statements, what is involved in your job, where to get information, terms and conditions of employment and how to transfer within the DET.

Tour of Anna’s Cuisina Factory: the proprietor gave a guided tour of Anna’s Cuisina, seeing production and enjoying opportunity for a cup of coffee and tasting their delicious fresh homemade products at the end of the tour.

Promoting Your School: presented information on how to promote schools using the school newsletter, brochures, photographs and how to make the most of school profiles.

How to Save the World (Behaviour Management): offered practical strategies for the classroom when dealing with and managing difficult behaviour and establishing positive behaviour for learning.

Sustainability for your School and the Playground: A practical workshop at Bunnings Warehouse – waterwise gardens and grounds, plumbing, insulation, recycling – eg worm farms. Suggestions on how to keep schools “green”.

School Websites – be the first to know!!: presented information on the new DET School Website Service which is still being developed and will give schools the ability to create their own websites incorporating department of education content and local relevant information.

DET Intranet - Using Your Portal – emails: This practical workshop is always popular giving SASS information on using the DET Portal, logging onto the portal, how to navigate DET intranet, using email, searching and navigating DET intranet and SASS web page as well as some useful websites.

Casual SASS in country areas is difficult to source and the Committee was very pleased that the number attending this year increased by 11%, as schools organise skeletal staff to allow their SASS to attend. This indicates that quality presenters and workshops are recognised by Principals and SASS as being important for their professional learning and they are endeavouring to make alternate arrangements to network and learn. The evaluations for the Orange Conference were very positive.

Because of the size of the Western NSW Region and long distances to be travelled to attend conferences, training and seminars, some of these sessions will be repeated for SASS in the far west at the Broken Hill Conference to be held on 21/22 September.

Helen Ross
Secretary RSRG Committee
Schools recently received a copy of ‘The Intelligent Food Guide’, a directory to help their canteens purchase healthy foods for students.

The guide is an easy to navigate tool that offers canteen managers access to a certified range of healthy food options available to be stocked in their canteen.

By purchasing foods listed in the Guide, canteens can save an average of 15%, and up to 35% on food costs in some categories. At the same time they can be sure of maintaining the nutritional value of the foods on offer.

The Guide is a collaborative effort between the Department of Commerce, DET and a range of education and canteen organisations.

Nearly 4,000 healthy food items have been included in the Guide, with every item individually appraised by the Healthy Kids School Canteen Association.
The keynote speaker for Sydney Region professional development day on 28 April was Khoa Do, recipient of the 2005 Young Australian of the Year. Khoa is a film director, screenwriter and teacher and, above all, an amazing young man who has risen above considerable adversity to help the most disadvantaged in the community.

The story of his life – coming to Australia on a fishing boat crammed with other Vietnamese refugees - to his current fame as an award-winning film-maker, was in itself inspirational. His recollections of growing up in western suburbs of Sydney, wearing sticky-taped shoes to school, having the electricity cut off at home, his money-making scheme of breeding gold fish and bartering clothes for food were heart-rending. However, Khoa’s intelligence, sense of humour and strong family relationships empowered him to succeed despite his humble beginnings.

Khoa received a scholarship to St Aloysius and went on to study Arts-Law at the University of Sydney. His love of theatre and film, however, saw him working as an English teacher and volunteer amongst youths living in Cabramatta. Despite his lack of formal education as a film-maker, Khoa taught film-making to these ‘at risk’ youths, ultimately producing the internationally acclaimed film, The Finished People. The script was partially based on the experiences of these youths who became the major cast members – all first time actors. Their journey from being homeless, sleeping in refuges and having criminal records, to the red carpet at Montreal for the premiere of the film was an amazing story.

Khoa has been nominated for 3 AFI Awards, 3 Film Critics’ Circle Awards, 2 Australian Writers Guild Awards and an Australian Screen Directors Award along with a number of awards for his work in the community and with young people. He has produced a number of films, including Footy Legends, Delivery Day and his latest release Missing Water.

Khoa’s presentation was greatly inspiring. His humble, genuine character combined with a wonderful sense of humour and a strong sense of belief in himself and the goodness of others left a lasting impression. He is a testament to his philosophy of “In every obstacle lies an extraordinary opportunity”. He is an outstanding young man and his presentation was inspiring to us all.

Jill Montgomery, SAM
Cronulla High School

In November, Team Bio-Hazard from Menai High won the National Apprentice Division title at the F1 in Schools Challenge.

The competition was held in Canberra and is orchestrated by the Re-Engineering Australia Forum for teams of between 3 and 6 school students. Just like real F1 designers, teams use start-of-the-art industry software to design and manufacture miniature racing cars powered by small CO2 gas canisters and then race them at regional, national and international levels.

Not only do contestants of the challenge get a taste of the engineering process, they also learn how to successfully market a product, acquire sponsorship and, most importantly, learn how to utilize their strengths to fulfil team roles. The competition creates business leaders of the future to give Australia the competitive edge in innovative design and technology.

Congratulations to Menai High School, the 2008 Australian Champions. This June, the Bio-Hazard Team will represent Australia at the International F1 in Schools Competition which will be held in London. The winners will receive scholarships to the prestigious London School of Engineering.

Article reproduced courtesy of The Danna Vale Report Autumn 2009
Notice of 15th Annual General Meeting

Date: Friday, 28th August 2009
Time: 4.30pm to 6.00pm
Venue: Winten Room
Four Seasons Hotel
199 George Street, Sydney

4.15pm Registration and Afternoon Tea
4.30pm Annual General Meeting
5.00pm Close of Annual General Meeting

Nomination Forms for 2009/2010 election of State Team are attached
Only Full Members or SASSPA are eligible to cast a vote

Agenda

• Welcome
• Minutes from the 2008 Annual General Meeting
• Business arising from the minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting
• Secretary’s Report
• Treasurer’s Report
• Chairperson’s Report
• General Business
• 2008/2009 State Team Stand Down
• Election of the 2009/2010 State Team
• Announcement of the 2009/2010 State Team
• Meeting Concluded
LEADERS Dealers in Hope

Key Note Speakers:

Ella James

“There is currently no scientific evidence to support the notion that life should be taken seriously!” – Ella James

Ella is the ultimate performer having done stand up comedy and being one of Australia’s top voice over artists. She combines this well with her extensive journalist background, to give her a unique ability to think on her feet and hold an audience’s attention. Ella is a communicator who entertains and an entertainer who communicates.

Rachel Robertson

Extreme Leadership at the End of the World! Rachel is only the second woman to lead a team at the Australian Antarctic Research Expedition to Davis Station and is one of the youngest ever team leaders. This was no ordinary leadership role. Rachel will inspire!

Sheree Marris

SHEREE MARRIS – Aquatic Scientist and Environmental Communicator – Young Australian of the Year (Victoria) 2002 – Sheree is one of Australia’s youngest environmental ambassadors. She makes the environment fun, engaging and entertaining.

Ann-Marie Furney

is currently on secondment as the School Education Director supporting the Interactive Classrooms Project across NSW. She has had a varied and exciting career. Ann-Marie is an amusing and thought-provoking speaker.

Amora Hotel Jamison Sydney
Friday 14 Aug. 2009 | 8.30am – 4.30pm
The Retirement Cruise

About two years ago my friend and I were on a cruise through the western Mediterranean aboard a Princess liner. At dinner we noticed an elderly lady sitting alone along the rail of the grand stairway in the main dining room.

I also noticed that all the staff, ships officers, waiters, busboys, etc., all seemed very familiar with this lady. I asked our waiter who the lady was, expecting to be told she owned the line, but he said he only knew that she had been on board for the last four cruises ... back to back.

As we left the dining room one evening I caught her eye and stopped to say hello. We chatted and I said, “I understand you’ve been on this ship for the last four cruises”. She replied, “Yes, that’s true”. I stated, “I don’t understand” and she replied, without a pause, “It’s cheaper than a nursing home”.

So, there will be no nursing home in my future. When I get old and feeble, I am going to get on a Princess Cruise Ship. The average cost for a nursing home is $200 per day. I have checked on reservations at Princess and I can get a long term discount and senior discount price of $135 per day. That leaves $65 a day for...

1. Gratuities, which will only be $10 per day. And the rest can be put into the slot machines.

2. I will have as many as 10 meals a day if I can waddle to the restaurant, or I can have room service (which means I can have breakfast in bed every day of the week).

3. Princess has as many as three swimming pools, a workout room, free washers and dryers, and shows every night.

4. They have free toothpaste and razors, and free soap and shampoo.

5. They will even treat you like a customer, not a patient. An extra $5 worth of tips and your casino winnings will have the entire staff scrambling to help you.

6. I will get to meet new people every 7 to 14 days.

7. TV broken? Light bulb needs changing? Need to have the mattress replaced? No problem! They will fix everything and apologise for your inconvenience.

8. Clean sheets and towels every day, and you don’t even have to ask for them.

9. If you fall in the nursing home and break a hip you are on Medicare; if you fall and break a hip on the Princess ship they will upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life.

Now hold on for the best! Do you want to see South American, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, New Zealand, Asia, or name where you want to go? Princess will have a ship ready to go. So don’t look for me in a nursing home, just call shore to ship.

ps: And don’t forget, when you die, they just dump you over the side .... at no charge.

(Author Unknown)