

Australian Association of Special Education

Editorial

national newsletter

I hope everyone enjoys this edition of the newsletter. My thanks go to all those people who have contributed. It would be appreciated if the newsletter is distributed to all members and interested people. AASE is an interesting association in that members join a national association which enables them to participate in Chapter and Branch activities. As a national association we have organisational structures in place which make the organisation of the association efficient and effective. The basis for this organisation is the national Council. Each Chapter has two representatives on the Council. These people are elected by their Chapter members.

Over the years we have had many dedicated people serve on the council. This year we bid farewell to several long serving members. Gen Reynolds has been the immediate past president for six years. Although Gen has been overseas for much of that time her contributions have been appreciated. Sian Ziesing-Clark has been the representative from ACT and the Public Officer of our association. Chris Kilham has also represented the ACT with distinction. From Victoria Lesly Foster has been an outstanding member as has Helen Johnston in more recent times. Our thanks and best wishes go to these people who are leaving the Council. We welcome a number of new councillors whom I am sure, will carry on the work of AASE in the tradition set by their predecessors. To everyone on behalf of AASE we would like to wish you and your family a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Bernard Knight National Executive Officer

From the President

In September AASE members, friends and colleagues met in Adelaide to attend the National Conference *Repertoires of Practice*. Our congratulations and thanks go to the hard working South Australia committee for facilitating a very successful and informative conference. It was very well attended by members and the wider educational community in addition we also welcomed a group of international delegates. The Keynote speakers were certainly very informative and imparted key information that was relevant and valuable.

At the Annual National Council meeting that followed the Adelaide conference there were a number of changes to the executive. After six years of excellent service as president Lynne James resigned from that position. We are delighted that Lynne will continue to participate as a member of the national executive in her new role as immediate past president. Lynne has been an outstanding President and has shown strong leadership in lobbying for the rights of students with disability in the development of an inclusive national curriculum. Lynne has certainly left "big shoes" to fill and I look forward to her support and assistance as I transition into the role.

We said farewell to our treasurer Peter Kirby who has provided sound financial leadership and advice over many years. He has worked on a range of activities to strengthened the constitution and organizational structure of AASE.

We welcome Charmaine Driver from Queensland to the role of national treasurer. She has been a National Councilor for many years and has a strong understanding of the workings of our Association.

Carmel Blake from the Northern Territory was elected as the new National Secretary. Carmel has also made excellent contribution to AASE over some considerable time.

These two new executive members along with Jennifer Stephenson from NSW and Dianne Chambers from WA, Lynne James as Past President and Bernard Knight as the Executive Officer, form a supportive and well informed National Executive. I look forward to meeting the challenges ahead with their support and assistance.

My term as President has started in a productive and busy manner. We revised our strategic plan with the help of the NSW chapter and I invite you all to look at this on the website as it guides our work into the future. We are investigating insurance options for our organization and have been busy lobbying the new Federal Government in regard to the proposed changes to the "Gonski" funding and the disbanding of the Schools Disability Advisory Council of which we were members. We are investigating a range of options for the provision of our journals as we move to meet the needs of our membership.

Colleen Crawford – National President

News from the Chapters

All chapters were given an opportunity to report on interesting events that are happening in their state or territory. Some key aspects from Chapters are included in this section.

Victoria

2013 has been a busy year for the Victorian Chapter. Following on from our Induction program for new and returning teachers held at the start of the year, we established a group called Conversations. Meeting monthly, we facilitate a conversation with new and returning teachers about their experiences.

We have been delighted by the number of teachers who attend these sessions, and impressed by the quality of work being done in each of their classrooms.

We also entered the age of social media; you can find us on Facebook as AASE Victorian Chapter or on Twitter at @AASE_Vic

New South Wales

For AASE NSW Chapter, the main focus of our activity has been the ongoing planning for the National Conference to be held by the sea at Manly in 18th and 19th September 2014.

We have a great line up of keynote speakers and the website and call for papers will be available soon.

We had a very successful professional learning activity in November to the end of the year. We used the Ignite format where six speakers each gave a short presentation – 8 minutes to speak to no more than 20 slides (24 seconds per slide) with 2 minutes for questions. The audience feedback was very positive for this format which kept them engaged.

It also allowed a range of topics to be addressed at the one session.

The NSW Chapter has also been strongly involved in the review and updating of the AASE National Strategic Plan. This can be viewed on the AASE Website.

NSW has updated a pamphlet suitable for new members which outlines many of the key features of AASE. It is suggested that all Chapters could use this as advertising for our association and as a part of a welcome package for all new members. Ctrl click [here](#) for a copy.

Northern Territory

In September “*The Introduction to Special Education NT*” online course was launched by the Minister for Education Peter Chandler. AASE NT co-developed with DoE this online course about Special Education for teachers.

The filming of a variety of schools was undertaken in May and June 2012. This course will be offered to all government and non-government schools. It focuses on a range of disabilities, including Intellectual Impairment, Down Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy. This course will provide reinforcement of learning, procedures and best practice for all school staff.

AAAE Meeting

In November the National Education Forum met to consider the change of name to the group to AAAE (Australian Alliance of Associations in Education). At the meeting AASE was represented by NSW Chapter member Ying Sng who completed a detailed account of the meeting for the Executive.

A decision was made to continue our support for this group and it was decided that as often as possible AASE would be represented at the meetings by someone in the local Chapter where the meeting is being conducted.

AASE and other member associations were assured that the group would make no pronouncements on behalf of member associations without consultation. It is hoped that the group will continue to give unity to all professional associations and be a strong voice in advocating for educators and students.

IOOF Scholarship

Recently our Association was approached by the IOOF Centre for Educational and Medical Research.

Some of the aims of this group are to provide scholarships, bursaries and prizes, promote educational research and to provide grants and other financial assistance to schools, universities and like institutions.

In discussions with IOOF we have requested that scholarships be provided to make it possible for people in rural or regional areas to attend AASE National Conference. At the moment AASE NSW Chapter are completing some negotiations. It would be great to see the collaboration of AASE and IOOF continuing into the future.

Lobbying and Advocacy

As a peak national organisation for special education, AASE is actively increasing its advocating and lobbying role focusing on key areas of concern. AASE President, Colleen Crawford recently wrote to the Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne and distributed a media release to national media organisations, following the recent announcement in relation to the Schools Fairer Funding (Gonski) model.

AASE requested that the Minister ensure that in making any changes to the reforms the needs of students with disabilities are a priority. As a peak body in the area AASE believes quality educational reforms and support for students with disability should be a major factor in the future development of any funding models.

Disappointingly the Minister failed to acknowledge or respond to the letter, however it is understood pressure from interest groups and concerned educators effected the subsequent decision to continue with the Gonski recommendations.

During our involvement with this process we sought input from people with expertise in the media. This advice supported the AASE President in preparing and distributing the media release and AASE has prepared a media strategy for any future situations in which we need to make an urgent response.

AASE's President also wrote to Minister Pyne outlined our disappointment at the discontinuation of the Schools Disability Advisory Council. AASE valued the opportunity to have input into discussions with key stakeholder on important and wide-ranging issues. We requested that a structure be developed that would allow the Minister access to those who like AASE advocate on behalf of people with special education needs in order to ensure the provision of and access to quality educational services.

AASE LIFE MEMBERS

At the recent National Conference Life Membership was awarded to three long serving members.

Lesley Foster was awarded Life Membership for her outstanding contribution over the past 31 years to the education of students with disabilities here in Victoria. Lesley has been a Victorian Chapter office bearer for many years and, since 2000, has led the Victorian Chapter with skill and energy. She has also represented the Victorian Chapter as an AASE National Councilor since 1998 including as National Secretary from 1999 to 2002.

A major achievement of this time was to develop a more cohesive approach to state and territories for AASE as a single force. She has convened a number of National Conferences and PD opportunities, and has been a strong driving force in curriculum debate.

Over many years, she has proved herself to be a passionate, dedicated and very hard working member at both the Chapter and National, and her ongoing contribution as a Chapter member will be greatly valued.

Tony Thomas has been a member of AASE for 37 years. During this time he has served as an executive officer from 2001-12 and was Vice-president of the Victorian Chapter from 2003-2013.

In 1997, he was awarded the annual T.L.W. Emerson Memorial Award for 'Leadership in Special Education' by the Australian Association of Special Education, Victorian Chapter.

Tony made an extensive contribution to knowledge in the field of special education, through the delivery of professional development to teachers, conference and keynote presentations, induction programs, and his extensive list of publications.

Tony has convened many conferences and was the editorial assistant and desk top publisher of Australasian Journal of Special Education in 2006. He is a highly respected leader in the field of special education who continues to influence a broad spectrum of professionals.

Lynne James has been an active member of the Tasmanian Chapter for over twenty years. During that time she has undertaken a number of executive roles.

It is due to Lynne's ability and enthusiasm that the Tasmanian Chapter flourishes.

During her career she has played a major role as Tasmanian education has moved from segregated settings for students with disabilities to a more inclusive model. In her present role as Director of Disability Programs she influences policy making at both state and national levels.

Lynne has been a long time member of AASE National Council. This has included being Secretary and more recently President. In these roles she has represented AASE on a number of national committees. Her ability to share her exceptional knowledge to influence decision making has resulted in AASE being recognised as a peak body in the areas of our interests and concerns.

Lynne James has made an immense impact on the support for students with special needs at a local, state and national level.

We wish out new life members all the best for the future and look forward to them continuing to take an active interest in our association.

On behalf of the AASE Executive—we would like to wish everyone a wonderful festive season and a safe, happy and successful New Year

