



## AASE NATIONAL President's Report 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014 Sydney

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2014 President's report for the Australian Association of Special Education.

The past year has been a year of change and renewal for our association as we move towards strengthening the association and adjusting to meet the needs of our membership.

### **Website**

We have just recently gone live with our new website. It had been clear for some time that the existing website was no longer able to meet the needs of members and was not robust enough to function securely in our ever changing technological world.

The new website has been built to allow us to build on the Members only area and make this a place where members can access content that is not available to the general public.

All the past editions of AJSE are now available to members who log in. This is a great step forward. I would urge you all to visit the membership section of the website and register to receive the alerts that will notify you of new journal articles and editions.

On behalf of all AASE members I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Keiran O'Leary for his work in building our new website and for his patience with us as we communicated our needs to him.

### **Executive Officer**

This year we have farewelled our Executive Officer Bernard Knight. Bernard has been a member of AASE for many years, he is a Past President and a Life member and was able to provide outstanding support to the executive in the time he served as Executive Officer. Bernard felt that the time had come to move onto new challenges in his life as he fine tunes his bowling skills and spends time with his grandchildren. Bernard continues to provide support to the Tasmanian Chapter and is always available as a sounding board and to provide advice. We are certainly going to miss his presence at National Council Meetings. I extend to Bernard my person thanks and the thanks of the entire national council for his work.

As one door closes another opens and in farewelling Bernard we have welcomed Libby Burns into the role of Executive Officer. Libby is also a very long serving council members and has represented the South Australian chapter for many years. Libby brings to the role her extensive experience, enthusiasm and passion for our association and for work we do to support special educators and young people. I extend to Libby my sincere thanks for her support.

### **Office Management**

At the end of 2013 the national council called for tenders for the role of Office Management as the current contract was at an end. We received a number of applicants for the role and the tender was won by GEMS Event Management. Julie and her team have worked tirelessly to develop new structures and mechanisms to support our membership. We now have a financial year membership structure with memberships falling due at the beginning of July. This process has presented a number of challenges both for our members and for GEMS.

However we now have a sound structure in place and our membership numbers have increased quite considerably. My sincere thanks to Julie and her wonderful team.

### **National Council and Executive**

My sincere thanks must go to all the national councillors for the work they have undertaken on your behalf over the past 12 months. We have continued to meet via Teleconference to restrict the need for travel and I thank those councillors who have been able to give up a Saturday morning to sit in front of a computer screen to progress our work. My special thanks go to those councillors in the Northern Territory and Western Australian who start their Saturday mornings very early to join us online. My special thanks go to the members of the council executive who keep in touch constantly via email and teleconference. I would particularly like to thank Carmel Blake our Secretary, our Vice Presidents Dianne Chambers and Jennifer Stephenson who are both at the end of their two year terms. On Saturday the council will elect two new or returning vice presidents. Thanks also go to our treasurer Charmaine Driver who took on the role of treasurer at very short notice to fill a gap and her work has been greatly appreciated.

Charmaine has tendered her resignation as treasurer and I really want to acknowledge her contribution. I know that Charmaine will support whoever is elected to fill the role of treasurer and she has offered her support to assist the incoming treasurer.

A special thanks also to the councillors who have been called upon to represent us at National meeting and forums. The role of President is made much easier in the knowledge that there is always someone who is prepared to stand in and represent our association when we are invited to attend meetings.

### **National Conference:**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the NSW and ACT chapters for the work undertaken on our association's behalf in their organisation and hosting of the 2014 National Conference. As a peak body in Australian representing the special education community this conference is always a highlight for so many educators and this year we have been both challenged and inspired.

The 2015 conference is to be hosted by the Western Australian Chapter and we are looking forwards to another trip to Perth.

### **National Agenda**

The national agenda in relation to initiatives and programs for the education of students with disability has continued to be extremely busy throughout 2014. This work has kept our Association very busy at national council, executive and chapter level.

Ensuring that our voice is heard as the peak body in the field and advocating for the best possible outcomes for students with disability are key elements of our work.

Areas of involvement have included:

### **Australian Curriculum:**

AASE has had continued input into the development and implementation of the curriculum and support materials through representation on the ACARA Students with Disability Advisory Group. AASE is represented at the ACARA Students with Disability Advisory Group meetings by the national president but a number of other members and councillors are involved as they represent their work places and jurisdictions.

### **Australian Government Department of Education:**

AASE responded to the news that the former SDAG was to be discontinued under the incoming government. While this was extremely disappointing to our association we have

welcomed the opportunities provided by Minister Pyne to be included in several forums that he has facilitated.

The roundtable on Teacher Education held in Perth on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August.

The consultation on the Students with Disability loading held in Melbourne on 13<sup>th</sup> August.

The Joint Schools and Youth and Early Childhood Education and Care stakeholder forum held in the ACT on 27<sup>th</sup> June.

### **AASE Publications:**

The AJSE editor, Michael Arthur-Kelly and Perspectives editor, David Patterson have continued their work in providing leadership and guidance to ensure the production high quality production of both journals. This work and that of the journal working party ensures that the standard and recognition of the quality of these publications continues to grow.

On Saturday at the national Council Meeting we will be joined by Richard Hecker from CUP who will work with us in formulating a way forward for our journals to achieve even greater success.

Reluctantly we have accepted the resignation of our AJSE editor, Michael Arthur-Kelly. Michael is continuing in his role while we advertise for and find a replacement editor. I would like to take Michael for his wonderful work in continuing to grow AJSE and ensuring it is a publication highly regarded for providing quality of articles to the educational community.

The current publishing arrangement with CUP has given the journals the advantage of being with a larger publishing group for AJSE.

### **Membership:**

While we have increased the number of financial members with a more robust membership management system we still struggle, as do all professional associations to attract membership in this ever changing world.

We strive to meet the needs of our members and to this end I invite your feedback in regard to how the association can better serve its membership. National council will be discussing this on Saturday at the face to face meeting.

I would invite all members to consider nominating as a national council representative for their chapter. National Council is invigorated by welcoming new faces and fresh ideas to the table. If you are interested please make contact with a member of your state executive. I know they will be only too happy to discuss this with you.

It has been a privilege to work with AASE national council over the past year as President. I thank everyone for their support and assistance as I have undertaken many new challenges. I would particularly like to thank the national executive the executive officer and Lynne McDougall the Immediate Past President who has been an outstanding mentor to me.

Colleen Crawford  
National President  
AASE