



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education



## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SMALL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Term 4—December 2018—Edition 4

**Service Professionalism Trust Respect Sustainability**  
**Collaboration and engagement**  
**Honesty and integrity Courage and tenacity**

### President's News—Wade Branford—Koonibba Primary School

I hope you are all good and taking care of you wellbeing, I know it's hard, but doing even little things to help your physical and mental state is a step in the right direction. We are rapidly approaching the end of the year and I know how busy you are. You are all champions of education and a critical part of your communities. I applaud your commitment and dedication and remember SSASA is always here to support you in any way we can.

This year we ran another successful conference with Brenton Wilson presenting on 'Creativity and Innovation'. We had 24 attendees who found the day and a half insightful and helpful for their sites. Our visit to Upper Sturt Bush School was amazing. They are a very hard working school and the fact they have a line-up of people wanting to attend shows just how cool the school is! Thanks to all involved in the days and we look forward to next year's conference which will be in week 5 of term 2 – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> / Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May.

This year we have been working hard on issues that impact small schools. A major one has been around school facilities and maintenance. Small schools seem to have to beg and plead to get classrooms, toilets and other facilities upgraded/fixed. Whilst we watch larger schools get millions to set up a STEM room. Where is the balance? As an association we have been meeting with representatives from the Department on these issues and asking tough questions - Why? We are hoping for some answers and we are inviting more representatives from the Department to attend our executive meetings so we can get some action in this area. Our students have rights too!

Another major issue has been the integration of preschools into schools. We appreciate there is little information and support around this issue and we have been meeting with representatives to get some clarity and direction around this. We intend to have a summit on this early next year and will be inviting small school leaders who are facing this issue to join us to make sense of what is required. It is my understanding that few, if any, small schools were approached on this and given the opportunity to discuss the issues related integrating preschools. The primary association was included in the consultation process, however most of these schools are large sites and didn't affect their sites and communities. Yet the small schools that it does affect were not consulted. We have put this across to the department and we are looking forward to further discussions.

I was quiet sad the other day when I read a letter written by a small school leader who is resigning due to excessive and extreme work load pressure. At our executive meeting we all could relate to what was said. We could also relate to the fact that more work in big schools can be delegated, in small schools it's more work for the principal. Just recently I received 85 pages to read for the new SIP plan and about 200 for the NAPLAN online. Term 4 is busy enough, but the Department feels we need to and can do more. Unfortunately, we may yet see more leaving. I believe staff see what we have to do and have no desire to become a leader. This is worrying. Small school leaders know all aspects of how schools run (not just their own). Yet when we want to go for a position in a larger site we are faced with the attitude "Oh they are from a small school headset they couldn't deal with a big school". I find this statement laughable. Big schools could do themselves a favour and employ us as we know all the little to big things in a school and we are incredibly hard workers. It is not nice being stereotyped.

I think I might get off my soapbox now! All small school leaders deserve more support and better treatment. I would like to assure SSASA is here for you and we are lifting our voice up to a more audible level in the Department. That is our commitment to you. If you would like to attend our AGM next year on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, you are more than welcome. We are still looking for executive members to join us next year. All accommodation and travel is covered. Please contact Karen Murray (Penong PS) for all information regarding becoming a member or a member of the executive.

To go to a more positive light, we would love to receive some good news stories from your site. We know you are busy and we are not asking for separate articles. Sending your newsletter to us, in a format where we can access articles would be great. We want to put all the good news about small schools into the newsletter. We have some of the best data and student outcomes.

## Yahl Primary School celebrates 150 years

Yahl Primary School, located in the Blue Lake Partnership, has spent a year celebrating 150 years of existence. The school decided to have a yearlong celebration holding a number of events for the children attending, past students and the wider Yahl community.

The first event was a school tour for past students and a birthday party. The Year 6/7 students as part of their HASS project, researched the school's history and planned a presentation for the tour. The tours were enjoyed by around 100 past students. One of the oldest visitors who attended the school was 89. She cut the cake along with her two sisters who had also attended the school.

Later in the term we had Yahl Under the Stars which was a dinner and dance in the school grounds. We had a photo booth, memorabilia display and another cake to cut. 270 people attended the evening and it was a night to remember.

In Term 2 we had another school tour which we combined with a book launch of book that one of the Yahl staff wrote called "Dulcie's First Day" based on a little girl attending Yahl Primary School in the late 1800's. The children and attendees had a grazing table that stretched the length of the covered area.

Term 3 gave the children at Yahl a chance to dress up and spend time over at the Yahl Hall in a classroom set up as it was in the 1800's. Every child dressed up for the 3 days and attended classes at the hall. We had all a Victorian era display set up and the children had their meals prepared for them at the hall. Hot scones, home baked bread, vegetable soup, corned beef sandwiches and hot apple pie was enjoyed by all. The girls helped with the cooking and also learnt to polish silver and set a table. The boys were taught woodwork and made a pencil case. One family came to school in a horse and cart which created great excitement.

Our final two events to celebrate our 150 years of Yahl Primary Scholl were held this term. Yahl Primary School had a winning entry in the Mount Gambier Christmas parade. Lynette Frische kindly offered her two Clydsdayles and a cart to be a part of our entry. We also had the Cowley steam engine which had worked the paddocks in the Yahl area for many years when it was owned by the Gregory family. The engine was kindly loaned to us by the Melbourne Museum . Seeing it steaming down the main street of Mount Gambier again bought back a lot of memories for many people. We had around 50 children and families dressed up in Victorian era costumes to walk alongside the engine and the cart.

The following weekend we combined with the Yahl Hall committee and held another street parade and twilight picnic at the school. The street parade started at the Yahl Hall and ended at the school. There were several old tractors, a vintage car owned by John Hill, the Hood's truck, miniature steam engines driven by the Mil Le Steamers and of course the Cowley got to steam down the Yahl Hall Road again blowing it's whistle to the delight of the onlookers who lined the road. Many children participated in the decorated bike competition and they were a sight to see. The Yahl CFS looked after the safety aspects of the parade.

We had a BBQ and old fashioned desserts along with fairy floss. There were old fashioned games, spinning prize wheel, visit from Father Christmas and entertainment by several musicians and the Yahl Primary School band. A very special performance was from Mr. Hill a past student of YPS who played the accordion and the bones. It was a wonderful evening and a very special way to end the 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations at Yahl Primary School.

It has been a very busy Year but a rewarding one.

Chris Morrison

Principal



# A step back into the past



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## BLANCHETOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blanchetown Primary School celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> year of public education on Saturday October 27th. About two hundred people attended the day, travelling from far and wide.

There were displays of photos, mementos, a video and samples of students' work from time gone by, and classrooms were open. A roll call had people assemble in groups by decades with the 1950s and 60s being the biggest contingent.

There was a big lead up to the day's festivities with a time buried by the oldest student (Joan Wilkinson), youngest student (Jobe Johnson), oldest principal (Rib Harkin) and present principal (Sue Billett). Items included in the capsule were photos, newspaper clippings, letters written to future students and memorabilia.

Students, dressed in period clothes, did the 'Salute to the Flag', and sang both 'God Save the Queen' and 'Advance Australia Fair', and they performed folk dances.

Plaques were unveiled at the old school building, one with tourist information by Dave Burgess (Mid Murray Council mayor), and a small commemorative plaque by Stan Hagias (Education Director).

Once the formalities were over people were able to reminisce over afternoon tea, listening to a live band, Blue Bush, who were well known in the 60s.

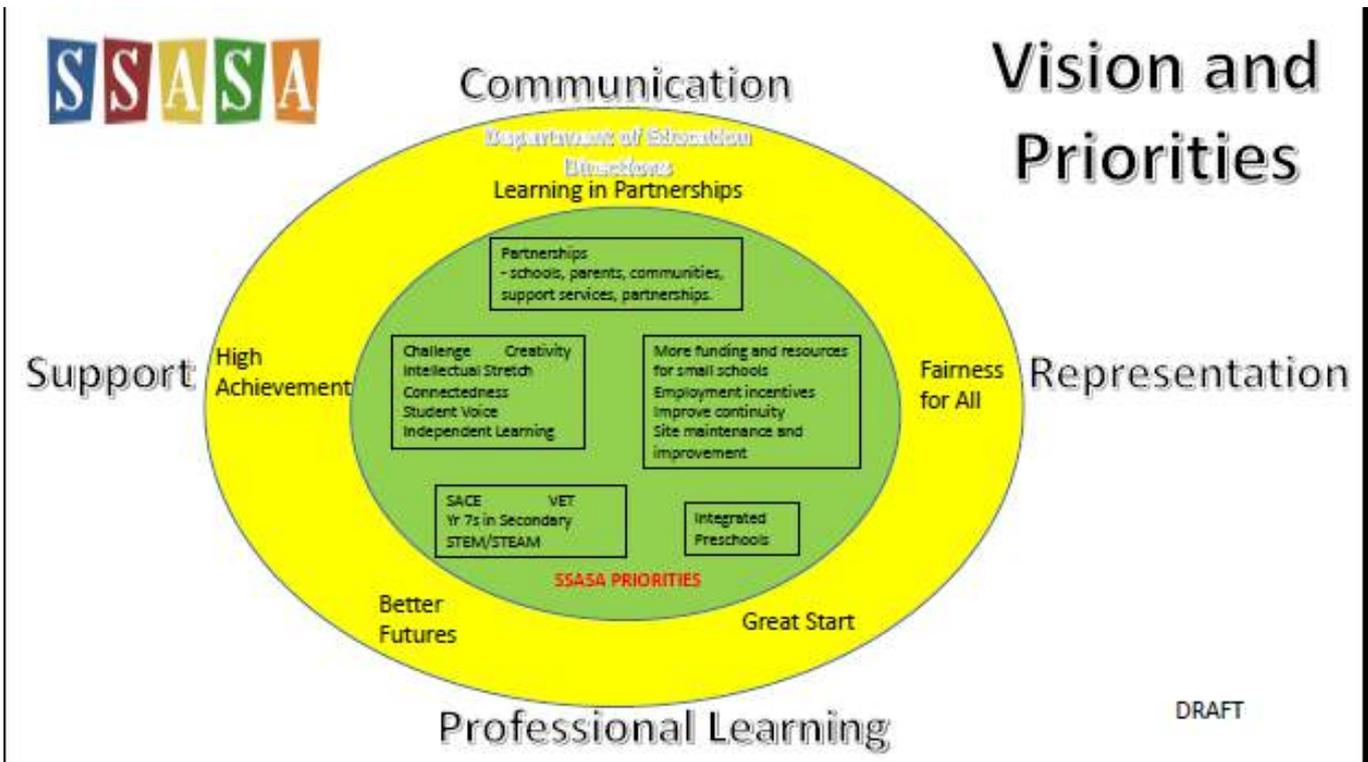
A great day was had by all and is still talked about by the community and students.



# School celebrates 150 years



**Work in progress—2018/19 Vision and Priorities**  
**Please send an email to a member of executive to have input and help us set directions for our future.**



**Do you have a PROUD SMALL SCHOOL story to share?**

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