On behalf of the staff I welcome to the new school year all students and families to Meningie Area School. In particular a warm welcome to our new students and those returning to the district and from other schools, including our new Reception students who have just commenced their schooling at Meningie Area School: Chloe Lawrence, Justin Brooks, Sana Anderson, Gylan Gibbs and Jemima Reid.

We hope that your first few days have been settled and look forward to you contributing to school life in many and varied ways at Meningie Area School.

I am delighted to report that student numbers are up on what was predicted at the end of last year. We have begun the school with an enrolment of 217, up 10 on what we predicted. We are resourced on the number of students that we have and they are critical when it comes to the programs that we can run and the number of staff that we can employ. In view of the current situation this is really positive. It is important that the community be made aware of the facts about enrolment, so that rumour about the recent loss of 200 students can be dispelled. Meningie, like many rural communities, has experienced a decline in student enrolment over a number of years. This has also been the case within suburban areas in Adelaide, and hence the move towards an amalgamation of several schools to create large metropolitan schools to make better use of resources. In the case of Meningie, there has been a steady decline over the past 25 years, the most significant being in the past 5-7 years with the decline of the Dairy Industry, particularly the Irrigation sector, which this district is particularly aware of.

Mr Rasi is currently not well and has sick leave until the end of Week 4. At this stage we believe he will be returning to Meningie Area School after this. To ensure the continuity of learning for our students, the teachers who are currently working in the classes that he has been assigned to will continue to work with Mr Rasi in those classes after he returns to work.

Two teaching places currently remain unfilled. We are working with DECS to resolve this situation as quickly as possible. In the meantime students at Senior School have been enrolled in Open Access where appropriate, and other staff have increased time temporarily to maintain support in programs.

Congratulations to the Year 12 class of 2007. Recent results show that all those students who aimed to complete their SACE did so. In most cases the students who applied for university entrance have got into a course of choice. Indeed, some students have been presented with a range of options relating to their career future. We are proud of their success and look forward to tracking their progress in the future.

At this time of year it is timely to remind parents and caregivers of organisation arrangements that enable us to carry out routines easily. The Front Office is open from 8.30 am for both parents and students to deal with issues around payment of accounts, purchase of items from the Bookroom and to make general enquiries. The office will close daily at 4.00pm.

The school day begins at 8.45 a.m. It is important that students are here by this time and in class. At the start of the school day all classes have Home Group. This is a time when the teacher and students go through the
daily routines. When students are late it makes it difficult for them to be ready and well prepared. Both lateness and absenteeism are issues that we are really focusing on this year. There is no doubt that poor attendance and lateness impact on both individual and group learning. We all need to work hard on this, so that all students have access to positive learning outcomes.

Just a reminder that students should not be on school grounds before 8.30 a.m. A teacher is rostered on duty from this time until the bell sounds to begin the school day at 8.45 a.m. The school day finishes at 3.20 p.m. and buses leave at 3.30 p.m. Students who do not travel by bus should be picked up or make their way home promptly at the completion of the school day, unless they are participating in an arranged after-school activity, as there is no teacher on duty after the buses leave.

The school crossing is on North Tce and we remind the Meningie School community to use this at all times when crossing the road. Parents and caregivers, please note the parking signage along North Tce. Some parking is quite temporary, and needs to be observed as indicated.

At the end of the 2007 school year, our Year 10 Art Class, together with their Art teacher Louise Ramsay, designed and began a large mural on the Community Library wall. During the holidays more progress was made on this mural, with more development for this whole outside area between the Library, Junior School and staff room being designed, developed and then created by this year’s and beyond Art/Tech students within our school.

GOVERNING COUNCIL

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all staff, students and their families to Meningie Area School and its community. A special welcome to our two new staff members – Gill Newby and Martin Samuel, both Junior Primary teachers.

During the Christmas break, our Junior School Shelter Area was paved. We would like to take this opportunity too thank all clubs, businesses and families who sponsored pavers. Also, a huge thankyou to a small group of mums from the Parents & Friends who have helped and supported this project. A special thankyou to Lisa Eastwood who has overseen the whole project.

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A reminder to all parents of our AGM of Governing Council will be held on 25th February. All parents are welcome to attend and we would appreciate if parents consider sitting on this committee.

Wishing you all a great year for 2008.
Judy Appelkamp
Governing Council Chairperson

MUSIC LESSONS

Due to Swimming Carnivals in the next few weeks, Music lessons with Mr Hickey and Mr Longden will commence in Week 4.

SCHOLASTIC ORDERS

Scholastic Book brochures were sent home with students yesterday. Orders with payment can be placed at the book room. Orders will close on Friday 15th February.

SAILING ON LAKE ALBERT

It is with regret that we have made the decision to stop sailing at Lake Albert. This affects Year 8 HPE and Year 10 Outdoor Education in Term 1.

This decision has been made given the reduced water depth affecting the use of centreboards and the manoeuvrability of the rescue boat. There are additional safety issues at the water’s edge with deep, soft mud.
We will review the decision in September for Term 4 sailing. Team sailors will be using other venues for practice prior to the Regional championships.

Vic Woolston
Outdoor Education Teacher

PARENTS AS CAREER PARTNERS

The Parents & Friends Association, in conjunction with School and Beyond Inc. is offering parents the opportunity to participate in an interactive workshop “Parents as Career Partners”.

This is a program tailored for parents with students in Years 9 to 12 which covers topics such as “How the world of work has changed”, “Assisting your teenager manage their career”. It will also give you an opportunity to learn how to use the Internet to explore career options. Further information will be sent out in the next few weeks, but if you would like to reserve a space on this course please ring the front office on 85 751106.

OPEN ACCESS

We have a significant number of students studying through the Open Access College this year. Normally staff from the college visit schools to run an induction program for students. However, I have negotiated with the college to take our students there on Thursday 14th February.

This will give the students the chance to meet their teachers face to face and to see what resources are available for them to use. There may also be a few spaces for parents to visit and see how the college works. Ring me if you are interested.

Mal Jurgs
Deputy Principal

AFTER SCHOOL SWIMMING PROGRAM

Well it is almost that time of year again when we are all back in the swim of things! In term 4, Meningie Area School and SwimmingSA will be running the After School Swimming Program once again. This will be the 7th term that the program has run and it has been a great success with young swimmers improving their technique, skills and confidence. The program is for children who can already swim (at least one lap of our pool) and would like to develop their skills.

The program will run two ½ hour sessions per day from Monday to Thursday. These sessions will be at 3:25pm and 3:55pm and will begin in Week 3 of next term and run for 6 weeks. There will be two assessment sessions on Wednesday 6/2/08 and Thursday 7/2/08 at 3:30 pm so that swimmers can be put into the correct session for their skill level. The cost for the program remains at $5, making the 12 lesson block $60, which is to be paid within the first two weeks, and it is recommended that swimmers attend two sessions per week, as this will help them to acquire and put into practice their newly learned skills. School swimming instructor and Murray Bridge Amateur Swimming Club Head Coach, Michelle Rowe, will run the program. Michelle is a qualified AUSTSWIM Teacher and accredited Bronze Licence Swim Coach.

Please fill out the registration of interest form sent home with your child and return it to the front office as soon as possible. If you think that this programme would be suitable for your child or you would like more information and you did not receive a registration of interest form, please collect one from the front office at the school or contact Michelle on 0403 535 680, if there is no answer please leave a message and she will get back to you. You can email also at northspots@optusnet.com.au

You are invited to attend
The launch of
The Coorong and Lower lakes Students Environmental Visualization Project
Guest Speaker Pippa Cattanach
(SA Murray Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board)

To be held at
Meningie Area School Hall
Friday 8th February 2008 at 12.15 pm
Followed by
Coorong Mullet tasting

PIPPA CATTANACH – GUEST SPEAKER

Pippa Cattanach is passionate about educating and inspiring others to care for the environment. She currently works for the SA Murray Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board as the Lower Murray Catchment Care coordinator which involves supporting 30 schools and 15 community groups in monitoring their waterways.

However, Pippe believes there is a need to do more than just monitor the state of our environment and has sought to extend her duties to encouraging and supporting young people to take action on environmental issues. She is actively involved in a number of “ground-breaking initiatives” such as the River Murray Youth Council and the Lower Murray Junior Youth Environment Group.

Due to her innovative work, Pippa was a finalist in the 2005 SA Young Achiever Awards. Pippa has also recently returned from overseas where she was volunteering with AusAID helping develop Ecotourism for a regional community in Vanuatu.
School Terms 2008

Term One
Tuesday 29th January – Friday 11th April

Term Two
Monday 28th April – Friday 4th July

Term Three
Monday 21st July – Friday 26th September

Term Four
Monday 13th October – Friday 12th December

Alcheringa Shindig Weekend

Day 1 – Saturday 9th February 2008
Dave’s Place Jervois Road, Wellington
Look for signs and flashing lights!
Enterance fee $10 head Starts 11am – 8pm

Great Music
*Craig Giles * Slim Connor & Jasmine * Limestone Balladeers * David Croser * Sarge & Darren Warner * Nathaniel O’Brien * Guido Davis * Bill Bedford * Tiffany Stroh * Len & Jean Connor * Chooka Williams * JJ Shannon * Ian Kowald * Krystal Collins * Cross Country * DV8s * Bernie & the Bandits

Best Country Outfit Competition
Fully catered
No dogs