FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

Welcome back

I trust that all families had time over the summer school holidays to spend time together and enjoy a break from the regular daily routine. A special welcome to all new students and their families, particularly those students beginning school for the first time. Already the school calendar for the term is filling up with many of our traditional sporting events scheduled for the coming weeks. House Captains were selected at House Meetings early on Wednesday morning and swimming practice has begun. Please refer to the Term Calendar for all planned events.


HOUSE VICE CAPTAINS are: Albert – Megan Herrmann & Justin Smart. Bonney – Amy Bland & Adam Barnes. Coorong – Gemma Armour & Keith Rigney. Congratulations to these students.

Students and teachers quickly settled in to class Wednesday morning with Home group sessions taking up the first part of the day. During this time teachers worked with students organising books, timetables and of course expectations of students as learners within school environment. Across the school Program Achieve will once again be a focus. The aim of this program is to develop in all students thinking and strategies to manage their daily lives. This semester the two key areas that all students will work on are 1. Getting Along 2. Resilience.

The school community was saddened to hear of the death of Mrs Iris Brumby, on the 28th December, 2009. Iris taught at Meningie Area School for so many years that she almost became an institution. After retiring from teaching in 1994, Iris continued working, individually tutoring a number of students. Many past students and teachers attended her funeral which was held here in Meningie, Tuesday 5th January. Iris will be remembered as a dedicated and committed teacher, who had a passion for learning.

Congratulations and best wishes to our 2009 Year 12 students. All of the students got their SACE, and those who made application for University courses got into their first choice. This is quite a remarkable achievement. For further details please refer to the article on SACE results within this edition.

Student Attendance

It is an expectation that all students attend school every day unless ill or for a very good reason. The Government expects this to be so, and has made it law. As a school we take attendance very seriously. Last year we implemented an SMS system that tracks student attendance. If your child/children have not arrived to school in the morning an automatic message is sent to you unless you have notified the school beforehand.

The school day begins at 8.45 am with Home group time for all classes. This is a really important beginning to the day when the class teacher goes through the daily routines of student attendance, morning notices in the bulletin, lunches, and other issues that students need to know about for the day. For these reasons it is important that students are here...
on time. A teacher is on duty from 8.30 am daily. We ask for your support in having students arrive to school no earlier than 8.30 am but before 8.45 am. The school day concludes at 3.20 pm with buses leaving at 3.30 pm.

**School Pride**

Throughout the holidays both the Tech Studies and Home Ec buildings, including the Senior School Computer Room, were painted. As you can appreciate, this was a mammoth task and required the coordination of a number of contractors to get the job done. Whilst work is still being completed on the floor in Tech Studies, and will not be ready for lessons until next week all other spaces are now being used. We appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in completing the work when it was most convenient to do so.

**Australia Day Award**

Meningie Area School is the recipient of the Coorong District Council Australia Day School Project of the Year with our Health Pathways Program. Congratulations to all involved with this very worthwhile project. See article in this week’s The Lakelander for a detailed article on the Health Pathways Program.

Monica Williams

**MY SCHOOL WEBSITE**

A commitment by all Australian education ministers to provide detailed school information to the public has resulted in the creation of the *My School* website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au).

The website, launched on 28 January 2010, profiles almost 10,000 schools across Australia, providing parents and the communities with access to information about the relative performance of individual schools.

The *My School* website does not rank schools; rather it provides information about each school’s performance, as compared to all schools in Australia and to statistically similar schools across the country.

The *My School* website includes descriptive information about each school, and a link to the school’s website, along with other information including the performance of students as measured by the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

This new website has attracted considerable media coverage but it is important to remember that the *My School* website is only one of a number of sources of information available to parents. As such, information from the website should be considered along with the other information sources, such as our annual reports, newsletters and the individual report card issues for your child.

When you go on to the *My School* website and look at Meningie Area School data you can see that by comparing the NAPLAN results from 2009 it is very apparent that, when compared with similar schools from across the country, students from Meningie Area School performed well across the areas tested. It is also quite apparent that as students move through the school from Years 3, 5 and 7 to 9 their performance improves in relation to similar schools. This supports the data that we published last year showing that students generally improved from one test to the next at a faster rate than their peers across the country.

When compared to all schools our students are on average below the national average but this is to be expected when the school’s index of social/educational disadvantage is considered. This data also shows that the gap narrows as students progress through the school. The data supports our own information which shows that the programs we have put into place are having a positive impact on student learning, but there is also still more work that needs to be done.

The SACE results data on the website is from 2008 and does not show the very good results achieved in 2009. There are also some discrepancies in the data about VET programs and the number of school based apprenticeships undertaken by our students.

While the *My School* website provides a new level of transparency across Australia’s entire schooling system, the most important information for any parent is how their child is succeeding.

I urge you to focus on the individual learning outcomes for your child and remember that this school is committed to providing the best outcomes possible for each and every student attending our school.

We often report on our successes that are not reflected on the *My School* website. Information can be found in our Newsletters which are sent home with students fortnightly, and on our website [www.meningieas.sa.edu.au](http://www.meningieas.sa.edu.au).

**MISSING READERS**

Could all families please have a search for Junior Primary readers. They are easily identified by a white sticker in the top left hand corner with a symbol and, for example, the word ‘Box 3’ on it. The numbers change and go from 1-4. The symbols range from different colours and shapes i.e. smiley faces, stars, etc. We would be really grateful for the return of any books as we are getting short of some readers.

Junior School Staff

**SCHOLASTICS ORDERS**

Brochures will be sent home with students early next week. Orders with payment can be made at the bookroom until the end of Tuesday 9th February.
GREAT RESULTS FOR 2009

The Year 12 students of 2009 were rewarded for their hard work, self discipline and persistence with some excellent results. Congratulations go to all of the students who achieved their best.

Below is a graph that highlights how well they did in comparison with the rest of the state's Year 12's. This shows that the school averaged 50% more "A"s and almost twice as many "B"s as the state, with less than half the number of "C"s and no "D"s or "E"s. For those students who wished to achieve a Tertiary Entrance Rank, the school averaged above both schools of a similar type as well as the state.

We wish the whole class all the very best for their future whichever pathways they choose to follow and know that they will be able to look back on their education at Meningie Area School with pride.

GERMAN NEWS

So that we can all support our students in their learning, there will be a regular German entry in the Newsletter this year. You can practise the fortnightly words as part of your daily routines.

Be prepared, your children might quiz you on commonly used German phrases like saying ‘Hello’ to each other, asking how you are and many more.

Have fun!

Words to learn: greetings (1)

Hallo! = Hi!
Tag = G’day
Guten Morgen = Good morning
Guten Tag = Good afternoon
Guten Abend = good evening
Gute Nacht = good night

There'll be more in the next newsletter...

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON PARENTING

Share your thoughts and ideas about your concerns as a parent. Tell us what you think are the most important issues for parents today.

This research will help in the development of new parenting programs to help parents with specific topics and concerns. The project is conducted by the Parenting and Family Support Clinic (PFSC) at the University of Queensland.

We are looking for parents of a 0-15 year old child to complete a brief survey. The study is available online at: https://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/parenting.

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