I was indeed fortunate enough this week, along with Ally Mead (Director of Meningie Kindy) and Sue Sifa, (Principal of Raukkan School) to attend the ACER (Australian Council For Educational Research) Conference in Melbourne this week. The theme of the 2013 conference was - How the Brain Learns. Led by Assistant Regional Director, Brian Featherstone, we were part of a group of seven Principals and Kindy Directors from the Murray Mallee to do so, and just a few of the almost 700 participants from across Australia.

Understanding the brain is, and has been for some time, a really hot topic. If you have been following this Newsletter over the past two years, you may recall some of the articles written have been about the brain, what we currently know from research and the relationship to children and learning, so you can imagine how excited I was to be in attendance and hearing from experts in the field.

Current research in brain research is called neuroscience. It is really interesting and exciting and the research conference made links between this new knowledge as well as that of psychology and classroom teaching practice and how people of any age can learn more effectively.

International and well known Australian researchers, teachers, psychologists and other professionals addressed a range of issues and ideas in their various fields, at times raising more questions than answers, about how the emerging knowledge of the brain can contribute to better learning outcomes for children and young people at any age.

Some of the topics explored at the conference included:

1. The brain early development and learning.
2. Learning and fearing Mathematics.
3. How to build working memory and the part it plays in planning, instruction and teaching.
5. How can we help people with dyslexia, ADHD, and other identified learning difficulties?
6. What is neuroplasticity and what does it mean for teaching and learning?

Recognition of the importance of brain research and links to learning has seen the recent establishment of the new Science of Learning Research Centre here in Australia, led by a group of researchers at the University of Queensland, the University of Melbourne and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The centre is and will continue to work within education to enhance our understanding of learning into the future.

In the next few weeks my colleagues who attended the conference, along with the Assistant Regional
Director Brian Featherstone, are going to look at how we can share what we have learnt and the application that it has within the schools in which we work.

NATIONALLY CONSISTENT COLLECTION OF DATA - SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

Within the newsletter this week please find an important information sheet for parents and caregivers about the collection of data relating to students with disability. This is a Federal initiative and we were advised quite recently that we have been selected as a site to be in the first round of the national data collection that will occur over the next three years. For this to happen effectively, all teaching staff need to participate in several hours of online training, and then collect data according to a set of criteria that will be entered into a data system.

I hope that you find the information provided effectively explains why this is happening, and what it means for you and your child. At this stage I have no further information. I will however provide such as it becomes available. In the meantime I encourage you to access the website as advertised in the news sheet for further detail. The Community Library has free internet access available if required.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

From the beginning of the year we have been trialling the distribution of the MAS Newsletter to parents/carers via the email system.

As an update, could you please advise the following:

- If you have been receiving newsletter by email and no longer wish to do so
- If you have not been receiving email by newsletter and would like to (please provide your email address).
- If you have any feedback

Thankyou
Sharon Gibbs
Newsletter Coordinator

BOATING LICENCE

Congratulations to these students who were successful in gaining qualifications for operating a boat at last Thursdays evening session run by a Marine Safety Officer:

Boating permit (under 16)
Jake Marles, Lachlan Brown, Hank Trevorrow, Ashley Reid, Lachan Waser, Jiye Hoad

Full Licence (16 and over)
Jamie Thompson, Zac VandenBrink, Marni Hood

Mr.Woolston

GENES FOR JEANS

Thank you all staff members and students who supported the House Captains Genes for Jeans fundraising efforts last week. As a school we raised over two hundred dollars, which was a great effort.

The day is a national day when people wear their jeans to raise much-needed funds for research into birth defects and diseases such as cancer, epilepsy, and a range of genetic disorders. Every dollar raised will help scientists at the Children’s Medical Research Institute discover treatment and cures to give every child the opportunity to live a long and healthy life.

SOUTHERN CROSS CULTURAL EXCHANGE

TAKE HOME A BIG BROTHER OR BIG SISTER
Give your children the wonderful opportunity to have an international big brother or big sister by hosting one of our exceptional international students arriving in Australia in February 2014 for their 3, 5 or 10 month programs. Our international students from France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the U.S.A, South America and Japan will live as a local, attend a local secondary school, arrive with their own spending money and comprehensive insurance cover – all arranged by Southern Cross Cultural Exchange. Visit us at www.scce.com.au, email scceaust@scce.com.au or call us toll free on 1800 500 501, request our international student profiles, and capture the spirit of family and friendship!
You’re invited to the

MURRAYLANDS CONCERT BAND Concert

The Meningie Area School Junior Band and the Meningie Area School Intermediate Band will be performing with students from Tailem Bend Primary School, Murray Bridge North Primary School, Murray Bridge South Primary School and Mypolonga Primary School.

Tuesday 27th August (week 6)  
Tailem Bend Town Hall  
1:30-2:00pm

Consistent student attendance is vital at school for allowing all students to access the curriculum successfully and reach their learning goals. This year the DECD target for all schools across South Australia is 90% attendance rates. Next year, 2014, this will increase to 94%.

A reminder to parents and caregivers that if your child is unable to attend school for any reason it is really important that you contact the school, preferably before 9.30am, to inform the school and teaching staff of any student absences and give an explanation for the absence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Week 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nationally Consistent Collection of Data
School Students with Disability

Information for Parents/Carers

All Australian governments have agreed to work together to implement a new annual national data collection on school students with disability. This data collection process is being phased in over a three year period in 2013-2015.

The first two years will be a transition period. This means that all schools will begin preparing for participating in the collection from 2013.

In 2015, the first full national collection of data on school students with disability will take place in all Australian schools. From then on, this data collection will occur in every school every year, along with other school data collections.

WHY INTRODUCE A NATIONAL COLLECTION OF DATA ON SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY?

All Australian governments agree that every child in an Australian school, regardless of his or her circumstances, has the right to a high quality and inclusive education that meets his or her needs.

Better information about school students with disability will assist teachers, principals and education authorities to support their participation in schooling on the same basis as students without disability.

HOW WILL IT BENEFIT MY CHILD?

There are students with disability in every school in Australia at some point. This means that every school needs to be ready and able to support students with disability to ensure that any obstacles to participation and achievement in their school education are identified and minimised.

This new national data collection will reinforce the actions required of schools under the national Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. These laws mean that schools and education systems are required to make, where needed, reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments can be made across the whole school setting, in the classroom and at the individual level.

Determining the level and type of support needed for an individual student is not a new activity for Australian schools.

Currently there is only limited and inconsistent information available at a national level about school students with disability, their educational needs and the support provided to them.

The information provided by this new national data collection will enable all Australian governments to better target support and resources. That will assist students with disability in government and non-government schools across Australia to complete school and go on to further education or find employment.
WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?
The following information will be collected annually at the school level:

- the level of adjustment provided;
- the number of students receiving each level of adjustment to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students; and
- where known, the student’s type of disability.

WHO WILL COLLECT MY CHILD’S INFORMATION AND HOW WILL THEY DO IT?
School teams will collect evidence based on:

- consultation with parents/carers;
- their observations and professional judgements; and
- any medical diagnosis.

The evidence will be collected over at least a 10 week period. This evidence will help the school teams to determine:

- which students to include in the data collection;
- the levels of adjustment that are provided, both within and outside the classroom; and
- the broad category of disability.

In line with good teaching practice and the requirements of the Disability Standards for Education 2005, you will continue to be provided with opportunities to discuss ways to assist your child overcome barriers and the adjustments that could be made to support your child.

Principals and school teams will be supported with training to assist them to make accurate judgements.

School principals will assure the accuracy of information collected about each student.

WHICH SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS WILL BE INCLUDED?
Your child’s school principal will be advised about their school’s involvement and when the school will be participating in recording information for the data collection.

A student will only be included in the data collection if he/she meets the definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the school has evidence of this.

CAN I WITHDRAW MY CHILD’S INFORMATION FROM BEING INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTING ACTIVITY?
You decide whether you want your child’s information to be included or not in the national reporting activity. Your school principal will forward information to you once they are participating so you can make an informed choice.

HOW WILL MY CHILD’S PRIVACY BE PROTECTED?
Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all children and their families is a key priority.

Authorised staff in each school will manage the information to ensure that personal or confidential information is not disclosed.

Transmission of data by the school will be done in such a way that the privacy and confidentiality of all students is protected.

When data are reported it will be at the school level only and no individual student will be able to be identified in the data collection.

WHAT WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED FOR?
It is intended that the data collected about students with disability will be published on the My School website and in other national reports on schooling from 2016 onwards.

Public reporting of these data will mean more is known about how all Australian schools and education authorities support students with disability.

Australian schools and education authorities will use these data as evidence to improve their support for students with disability.

FURTHER INFORMATION
For further information about the national collection of data on Australian school students with disability and how you can support it, please visit www.deewr.gov.au/students-disability.