



In this edition...



from the President...

Dear Parents

Recently we held our Annual Conference in Devonport and celebrated 60 years of the state body of Parents and Friends in Tasmania. It was a great day and I extend my appreciation to all those involved in making it such a success, with special thanks to the vibrant community at the host school - Nixon Street Primary.

Each time I attend a conference it reinforces my belief in how vital it is to have a strong parent voice in the development of government education in this state. Education is a fast moving domain and parents need to be involved in decisions that will inevitably change how our children access education and are educated in the future.

Developing strong partnerships between schools and parents is a major focus of our organisation at present. We are committed to ensuring that school associations are providing a proper forum for parents to be active in their school so they can develop deeper family/school relationships and explore the many avenues available for involvement in school life.

Our public schools have a diverse range of families in their communities and have a policy of 'inclusion' of all children. We understand that parents are still concerned that this system is not providing all students with enough support, especially those with high needs. We believe that next year will see more discussion in this area.



At conference concerns were raised about Teacher Aides and the role they play in educating our high needs students. In particular, we noted the need to make sure Teacher Aides had opportunities to train and be remunerated appropriately.

As discussed in the media we are committed to working towards the re-introduction of School Health Nurses. With children coming to school with many issues that teachers do not have the time to deal with but which are vital to the well being of the child, such as drugs, nutrition, obesity, social and emotional issues and with early childhood milestones that need checking, we see it as vital that these positions are reinstated in state schools.

The next twelve months will see the executive working hard to represent the views of parents. I will be continuing as President and look forward to working hard on your behalf.

Regards,

Jenny

Jennifer Branch
President
TASSP&F, ACSSO



ACSSO National Education Conference 2007

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), Australia's peak public school parents' body, will hold its annual conference for all key stakeholders in education in Darwin on October 22nd and 23rd, 2007. Participants include teachers, parents, principals, administrators, support staff, guidance officers, teacher unions, academics and researchers from all sectors of education and from all parts of the country.

For general conference information, including how to register, go to the ACSSO website: www.acsso.org.au

Parent Contact



Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Inc. eNewsletter

TASSP&F Executive update...

Following our recent state conference, we are now delighted to welcome three new TASSP&F members to our Executive Committee: **Liz Chick** in the South; **Jenny Eddington** in the North; and **Lindie Read** in the North-West.



Jenny Eddington



Liz Chick

It is wonderful to have new members around the table for our statewide meetings and strengthens our commitment to provide genuine representation for state school parents across Tasmania.

Jenny Branch was re-elected unopposed as TASSP&F President and Jenny Grossmith now takes over from Libby Bailey as our state Vice President. Jenny Grossmith was also re-elected as the Tasmanian ACSSO Vice President. Robert Kitchell is our new Southern Regional Coordinator and Lisa Gillard is the new North West Regional Coordinator. Congratulations to all!

A full list of our Executive members and their email contact details can be found on our [website](#).



MEMORANDUM

Attention: Secretary

Subject: Email distribution lists

Please ask all parents at your school who have email addresses to pass their details on to you, so you can forward this newsletter to as many parents as possible.

URGENT

Well done to those groups who are already doing this!

Student Accommodation



TASSP&F welcomes the recent announcement by the Minister for Education that an extra \$4.5 million will be spent on improving access to student accommodation.

This is an issue that we have been lobbying for improvement on for several years. New facilities will be built at Newnham in Launceston and a significant upgrade to Springvale Hostel in Hobart will occur. Additional places will be provided at the Clarence TAFE residences on Hobart's Eastern shore and at a combination of Hellyer and TAFE residences in Burnie.

We are happy with the level of consultation that occurred and relieved that the Department has finally listened to what parents want and has acted accordingly. We believe that the new arrangements will provide the flexibility of access and level of care that parents have been asking for.

Now we will have to wait and see how the trial of additional Homestay places unfolds...

Parent Contact



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Report on TASSP&F Conference 2007

August 18th, Nixon St Primary School

by Jane Kovacs, TASSP&F Secretary

Students from Nixon Street Primary began our day with some musical numbers. One item was especially enjoyable as it was sung in honour of our 60th Anniversary, with the words and music being cleverly written for TASSP&F's birthday.



The Minister for Education, the Honourable David Bartlett, MHA opened the conference with the announcement that the three student free days (originally intended to help teachers become familiar with the Essential Learnings and the reporting process for the ELs), were to be withdrawn. The announcement was met with unanimous delight.



The Minister then joined Sue Napier (Tasmanian Liberals) and Nick McKim (Tasmanian Greens) on the "Pollies Panel", for some interesting questions from the floor. The topics covered included the possible extension of the school day to encompass a very full curriculum; extending the "Flying Start" program up to grade 6; and a request on the details of how the new polytechnic/academies proposal will be implemented and whether or not it should be, or if some streamlining of current courses offered at TAFEs and Colleges would not

be a better way to spend education department money.

We were kept active and interested with a number of welcome "Exercise Breaks". These were led by two very energetic ladies (one being the Principal) who brought us back to the business at hand when our butts became numb and our minds started to wander.

As this was our 60th Anniversary celebration conference, an Honour Board of Life Members was unveiled by Life Members, Ray Duncombe and Audrey Mitchelson. Libby Bailey, senior vice-president of TASSP&F, was inducted as our newest Life Member and Audrey, with the assistance of another Life Member, Mavis Beattie, cut the birthday cake.



Then came the real business of the day when items on the agenda were discussed, debated and voted upon.

These will be itemised and summarised in the official report, so I won't go into details here. Suffice to say some were lost and some were carried and there was much debate on some of the items. A list of motions as carried is available on our website.

I think that those who stayed for the dinner would agree we had a wonderful night reminiscing and enjoying each other's company and we're all now ready to work towards Conference 2008!

Jane Kovacs

Parent Contact



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**Australian
Sustainable Schools Initiative**
A Partnership of the Australian Government, the States & Territories

The **Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative** (AuSSI) is a partnership of the Australian Government, the States and Territories that seeks to support schools and their communities to become sustainable.

The AuSSI involves participants in a whole-of-school approach, to explore through real-life learning experiences, improvements in a school's management of resources and facilities including energy, waste, water, biodiversity, landscape design, products and materials. It also addresses associated social and financial issues. The Initiative's vision is for all Australian schools and their communities to be sustainable.

The Tasmanian AuSSI pilot project has now commenced. Tasmanian schools were invited to apply to take part and 12 schools have been selected. They are: Blackman's Bay Primary School, Deloraine High School, King Island District

High School, Lansdowne Crescent Primary School, Ogilvie High School, Rosetta High School, Mount Faulkner Primary School, Rokeby High School, Rosetta High School, South Georgetown Primary School, The Hutchins School and Woodbridge School.

Lenah Valley Primary School has been chosen to be the lead school and the project officer, Jenny Dudgeon, will facilitate and manage the project.

Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends is represented on the Steering Committee which has been established to provide strategic advice and identify project priority issues and needs. Please let us know if you have any issues you would like represented.

For further information about AuSSI, please contact the project officer, jenny.dudgeon@education.tas.gov.au



Planet Ark recently co-published a handy, pocket-sized, easy to read book titled *The Little Green Guide: simple ways to save the planet*. They are currently offering copies to school groups at a substantial discount from the RRP of \$7.95 to help them raise money for their schools.

To order your copies or for more information, contact Craig Avery: Mob. 0405 327 832 Ph. 02 4757 8989 Fax. 02 4757 8979 www.planetark.com

Parent Meetings



Around Tasmania

Our statewide executive meets every six to eight weeks to discuss matters that have been raised locally and nationally and make decisions at state level. Our next executive meeting will be held on **Saturday, December 1st**. Parents are most welcome to attend these meetings as observers. Please contact our office for details.

Regional meetings are held at least once each school term. They offer a good opportunity for all parents to share local information and meet other parents in their region.

Regional meeting dates are as follows:

North: Friday, October 5th
Adult Education Building, York St., Launceston
Contact Libby Bailey, 0408 139 601

North-West: Tuesday, November 6th
Moriarty Primary School, Moriarty
Contact Lisa Gillard, 6425 4080

South: Monday, October 8th, 7.50pm.
Margate Primary School, Margate
Contact Rob Kitchell, 0400 074 003

Parent Contact



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DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE FLU?

By Dr Roscoe Taylor, Director of Public Health

Tragically, three previously healthy young children have died in Western Australia after developing complications from the flu. The children were

infected with a strain of Influenza A, complicated by a secondary bacterial infection.

There is evidence that Influenza A is now widespread in Tasmania – the flu season is still upon us.

Deaths from influenza are not uncommon. Every year the flu kills around 1500 Australians and causes 15,000 people to be hospitalised. Those particularly at risk are the very young, people aged 65 and over and people who have underlying chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma or kidney, heart or lung disease.

If you're worried about the flu, it's not too late to be vaccinated or to have your children vaccinated. The vaccine is free for a number of high-risk groups. Have the vaccine as soon as possible as it takes two weeks to be effective and it won't protect you if you've already been exposed to the virus.

What should you do if you think your child might have flu?

1. Check their symptoms

Influenza comes on quickly and generally affects the whole body rather than being focussed on the head and throat. The three key symptoms are fever, cough and fatigue. Other symptoms which may or may not be present include muscle pains, weakness, sore throat and runny nose. Children may also suffer nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

2. See a doctor

If your child suddenly develops a fever, cough and fatigue, consider seeing a doctor as soon as possible, especially if the child is getting worse or becoming lethargic.

Your child doesn't need urgent medical attention if he or she has a common cold or sniffles, especially if they have been unwell for a few days and do not have a fever.

3. Check your child regularly

Most people with influenza are able to stay at home. If your child has influenza but does not need to be admitted to hospital, check on them regularly and seek further medical help if they get worse.

4. Treat the symptoms

Encourage your child to rest, keep up the fluids and provide paracetamol as directed to ease the fever, aches and pains.

Sometimes your doctor may prescribe anti-virals, which can reduce the severity of symptoms if they are taken within the first two days of the illness.

5. Stop the illness from spreading

Influenza is highly contagious. If your child has influenza, keep them at home as much as possible, encourage siblings to keep a metre apart from the sick child and teach them to cough into tissues. This is better than coughing into your hands, as hands can easily spread the germs to others. Keep a supply of clean tissues in your child's pocket, but teach them to throw used tissues in the rubbish straight away. If your child doesn't have a tissue handy when they need to cough, teach them to cough into the crook of their elbow instead.

One of the most effective ways to slow the spread of flu is to make sure all household members wash their hands frequently with soap and water, especially before touching their mouth, nose, eyes or anything that goes in their mouth.

Flu viruses can survive on surfaces for a number of hours. Keep personal items – like towels, toothbrushes and pillows – separate and avoid sharing eating or drinking utensils.

Influenza can be spread a whole day before a person shows any signs of being unwell, and after they start to get better. It's wise to take general precautions – like frequent hand washing – all the time as you never know who's carrying the virus.

Parent Contact



Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Inc. eNewsletter

National Drug Free Schools Competition



Taylor Diprose, a student at Prospect High School, and the Tasmanian State Winner in Drug Free Australia's National Schools competition "Let's Keep Drug Free", receives her prize from Mrs Betty Roberts

On August 17th the Tasmanian Director of Drug Free Australia, Mrs Betty Roberts OAM, presented Prospect High School student, Taylor Diprose and Prospect High School Principal, Mr. Steve Walley, with prizes at the school assembly. The Principal on behalf of the school received a silver tray, a framed certificate signed by Mrs. Margaret Court, DFA Patron and tennis champion, and a \$250 gift voucher, courtesy of the NRL and Rebel Sport. Taylor received a framed certificate and a racquet signed by Margaret Court.

The National School competition came up with some great solutions. Taylor's entry read :

*"I am 13 and in year 8 and feel that future generations are still going to suffer from this drug problem. We need to think of children seeing their parents (so called role models) abusing drugs and this being a repetitive cycle generation to generation.
As a society we need to grow up and take control!
I am aware of such problems as needle exchange to keep down disease such as HIV and Hepatitis – however this is NOT controlling the drug problem. To see beaches, parks and streets needle free would make Australia a safer and nicer place".*

Mrs. Roberts praised Taylor and the teachers who encouraged their students to enter. She invited the students to join DFA's leadership program "Youth for a Drug Free Australia" and learn to be drug prevention advocates.

Runner up Cameron Brown of Rosetta High was awarded his prize at assembly on the 5th September where Mrs Roberts encouraged Principal, Mr. Graham Speight and the students to join in Drug Free Australia's drug prevention program.

Australia's future depends on the optimism of youth, their courage to say no to drugs and their ability to influence others to do likewise. Website: www.drugfree.org.au

Article submitted by Mrs Mavis Beattie

Reading Assistance Voucher Program

If your child was eligible for assistance under this program (i.e. didn't meet the grade 3 benchmark for literacy in 2006) you should have received a letter at the start of the year informing you about how to apply.

It's not too late to apply!

If you believe that your child is eligible, please contact your school and ask for a Tuition Consent Form. Schools that have registered to be administration agents for this program have a record of all eligible students and will be able to provide you with the necessary forms.

If your school has not registered and you believe that your child is eligible for assistance under the Reading Voucher Assistance Scheme, you will need to contact the Contact Liaison Officer for the program in Tasmania, Elizabeth Bourke, on 03-62496953.

Parent Contact



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Reconnecting Parents and Their Teenage Children

Sarah lay in bed unable to sleep. Tracey hadn't returned home after school and Sarah could only guess where she might be. No text message. No phone call. It was as if Tracey had turned into a complete stranger the last few months.

Sarah could feel the resentment rising through her body. She tossed from side to side as angry scenarios played through her mind like a familiar script. Lately it seemed that she'd stopped noticing anything good about Tracey. Instead Sarah felt that she was always pulling her daughter up about something: Wet towels on the bathroom floor, dirty dishes in her bedroom, uncompleted school work, swearing and abusive language... Sarah didn't know what to do. She'd tried grounding Tracey but that hadn't worked. Tracey had developed a streak of stubborn independence which left Sarah feeling frustrated and helpless when it came to guiding her actions.



Just then, Sarah heard the front door open softly. Pulling on her dressing gown Sarah raced down the stairs. Tracey stood guiltily in the hallway.

"It's eleven o'clock. Where the hell have you been?!" said Sarah in a raised voice.

"Mum, I told you, I was down at Joe's place – REMEMBER!"

Sarah felt the sharp edge of her words. "Don't speak to me like that young lady. You know the rules. Back by 8pm and no later!". Tracey's eyes hardened as she shouted back. "For God's sake Mum, I'm not a baby anymore. I'm nearly an adult!"

Although this scene is fictional, it does unfortunately, resemble arguments that occur in many families throughout our community. In some instances, conflicts like these can snowball, occurring with a frequency and intensity that pushes young people to leave home before they are really ready for independence. Parents are often left feeling worried, anxious and even guilty; fearful for their child's future and wondering what went wrong.

Colony 47 Reconnect is a program which supports parents/carer's and young people aged 12 – 18 to work on relationship issues that may lead to the young person leaving home early.

Family Workers at Colony 47 Reconnect believe that all families possess strengths and resources which are their greatest asset when it comes to working things out and building a family environment based on trust, cooperation and respectful communication. Family Workers believe that families should remain in the 'driver's seat' when it comes to bringing about these changes.

Family Workers at Colony 47 Reconnect support families as they travel towards their goals by offering individual and/or family meetings through which issues, hopes, strategies and achievements can be identified and explored.

Colony 47 Reconnect is a free service offering:

- outreach to all of southern Tasmania
- after hours meetings (8am – 8pm)
- one worker for the parent/carer and a separate worker for the young person
- phone counselling and support between 9am and 5pm



Colony 47 is a non-government organisation based in Southern Tasmania. We are people working together to create a fair community where everyone has access to housing, employment, training and family support.

Colony 47 Reconnect is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

For more information, please call 1800 265 669 or 6212 1481.

*Article supplied by Ben Nahmani, Family Worker, **Colony 47 Reconnect***

Parent Contact



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What's happening with

Wicked Vegies

Wicked Vegies is continuing to do wonderful things with vegetables and fruit in Tasmanian secondary schools. The project, funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund and supported by the Cancer Council Tasmania and partners* has initiated many creative healthy eating activities in schools this year. This initiative encourages students to: enjoy vegetables and fruit; investigate, design and produce snacks or meals using fresh local produce; and promote healthy eating and wellbeing in the school and community.

Secondary schools throughout Tasmania are involved in **Wicked Vegies** which encourages the building of partnerships within the school and the broader community. Examples include school canteens, parents, local growers, supermarkets, community gardens, and health services. **Wicked Vegies** schools are eligible to be part of an exciting competition in which schools will be judged according to how they best promote and support healthy eating and wellbeing in the community. The competition is sponsored by the Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association.



"Please try my fresh strawberry treat!"

Year 10 Oatlands School student designed and produced her own recipe using fresh fruit and tried out some taste-testing at the local supermarket to promote fresh produce and healthy eating.

* Eat Well Tasmania, Home Economics Institute of Australia (Tasmania), Department of Education, Department of Health & Human Services (Community Nutrition Unit) and the Heart Foundation (Tasmania).

Healthy Start

Start@TAFE (Alanvale), has also joined **Wicked Vegies**. This program encourages early school leavers in further education and training. Leaders and students hosted a **Wicked Vegies BBQ** during a local community BBQ event, and plan to incorporate healthy ideas such as this at future regular community events.



Wicked Vegie Kebabs sizzle at the Start@TAFE community BBQ event.

Wicked Vegies Cross Country Day Lunch

Ogilvie High School has been eating and moving well at their Cross Country Day recently. Grade 8 Food and Nutrition students planned, prepared and sold fresh soup and jacket potatoes with healthy veggie toppings to students and staff. Although the day was chilly, it was perfect for selling the **Wicked Vegies** goodies. The venture was a huge success, not only as a fundraising activity but also because it showcased how delicious fresh vegetables can be. Ogilvie High School is keen to venture into further healthy fundraising alternatives.

For more information contact:

Glen Paley

Wicked Vegies Project Officer

The Cancer Council Tasmania

PO Box 1624, HOBART TAS 7001

Phone: 6233 2030

Fax: 6233 2123

Email: gpaley@cancertas.org.au

Article submitted by Glen Paley

Parent Contact



Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Inc. eNewsletter

School Bus Safety Brochure

With the assistance of the Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources, Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends is producing a flyer outlining important safety messages for parents and student users of school buses. Thank you to all the schools who have let us know how many of their families use school buses. The flyers will be printed and distributed to schools shortly.



Our website calendar is updated regularly with events of interest to parents as we hear about them. Please [email us](#) details of your event and we will include them in our calendar.

You are invited to step back in time and enjoy a **Family Fun Day** at Gagebrook Park on **Thursday, November 22nd from 11am - 2pm.** There will be a free BBQ and a host of activities based on Early Settlers. Everyone is welcome.



Supported by Communities for Children, Good Beginnings, Mission Australia, Launching into Learning and Brighton Council

Please contact John Klugg, Brighton Council, on 6268 7035 for more information

HOBART COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING CLINIC



Hobart Community Nursing Service has long provided service to children in schools as the need has arisen e.g. wound care and catheter changes. Their new nursing clinic offers you another avenue for meeting your children's needs within the community, which could also be useful during school holidays.

The Hobart Community Health Nursing Clinic was established in September 2006 through co-operation between state and federal Government. The clinic is run by the Department of Health and Human Services, and is situated at the Repat Centre, 90 Davey Street in Hobart.

The clinic's operational hours are 8am to 4.30pm, with the last available appointment at 4pm. Appointments can take into account work, school and social commitments and so is convenient for those parents and students who may wish to fit their appointments

around their daily schedules rather than wait at home for a visit by the Community Nurse. The clinic service includes assessments, wound care and continence support as well as health promotion and education.

This is a nurse run clinic, and although there is no medical support on site, nurses liaise with clients' GPs and other health professionals to provide clients with a fully supported service.

Many referrals to the clinic are sent by hospitals and GPs but clients can self refer. Family members and friends can refer, with parental/student consent for that referral to be made.

HACC fees apply i.e. For those with a Health Care Card, the fee is capped at \$10.00/week. For non-pensioned clients, the fee is capped at \$30.00/week.

Contact can be made by phone (62-227602), fax (62-227600) or e-mail hchnclinic@dhhs.tas.gov.au There is parking available on site outside the Hobart Community Health Nursing service.

Parent Contact



Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Inc. eNewsletter

from your ACSSO representative...



In a perfect world state schools would: receive adequate funding to provide better programs that deliver optimal educational outcomes for **all** students; have sufficient numbers of staff who were remunerated adequately, these staff members would be highly skilled and motivated to engage **all** students in their learning; have their facilities and equipment maintained and

upgraded regularly and appropriately; know that prior consultation and communication with parents and the community would be a critical component of any decisions made by State or Federal Governments. This ideology is what TASSP&F and ACSSO fight for.

As members of their school's community parents volunteer their time supporting the school in many ways: performing governance duties (eg developing and upgrading policies, reviewing the school budget), fundraising, providing services (i.e. canteens, uniform shops), engaging in parent help in classrooms or sporting and social events. But more importantly parents give valuable input to their Principal about parental views and concerns on the many facets of education and its delivery in their school. As you are aware, the capacity of the Principal and staff to use this knowledge to improve your school and the education it provides is often restricted by many issues that are out of their control – funding, DOE policy and rules, Government legislation etc.

As an individual school the impact that your views about education have on the decision-makers is minimal; it is through your membership with TASSP&F and consequentially ACSSO, that unity and strength of numbers is achieved and the parental voice is actually heard. This has been confirmed by both the Federal and State Education Ministers acknowledging both ACSSO and TASSP&F as the peak parent bodies of Australia and Tasmania respectively, and through their regular consultation with our executive committees on a diverse range of issues that affect education.

When taking these facts into account one wonders why school parent groups do not affiliate, or even more

disturbing when they are members, do not take advantage of the opportunity to voice their opinion on current topics or even to raise their own issues. I implore you to embrace the opportunities that TASSP&F/ACSSO membership gives you and to allow us to truly represent the majority opinion of grass root parents. You can do this in a number of ways – send a representative to regional meetings – forward an email or letter to your regional co-ordinator, state office or to myself, your ACSSO VP, or call our Hobart office on 62349488.

Jenny Branch, Libby Bailey and I will be heading off to the ACSSO national conference later this month to discuss issues at a national level. I will report back to you after the conference on the outcomes of the main debates.

The Federal Government is becoming more involved in the delivery of education in Australian state schools. We need to be diligent in our observations; their power to change things should not be under-estimated. Over the last few years they have manipulated the State and Territory Education Ministers into accepting their initiatives by using the threat of withholding funding if they do not comply. The A-E report card is a perfect example, the benefits to parents are still to be confirmed; and national unity was not achieved, as the State and Territory Ministers negotiated individual contracts of delivery. A reminder may be timely here that you are still able to opt out of receiving the A-E report card for your child by sending a letter requesting an exemption to: The Manager, Educational Performance Services, 99 Bathurst St, Hobart, 7000. Make sure that you include details of your child's name, school and grade.

In closing I congratulate the schools that were successful with their application for funding through the "Investing In Our Schools" grant program. Some wonderful projects will be implemented and extremely overdue facility maintenance will be carried out in our schools. ACSSO lobbied diligently to ensure that parents were involved in the process and it was a great pleasure for me to be a parent representative on the Assessment Panel that rated the Tasmanian applications

Jenny Grossmith

TASSP&F Vice-President
ACSSO Vice-President

COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF PARENT CONTACT:

November 26th

All contributions welcome!