It is with pleasure that I present the 09/10 Annual Report outlining another year of significant achievements across the whole school community. 

The school’s vision statement was reviewed during 09/10 by all teaching and support staff and we continue to aspire to the following common beliefs:

- to further develop a supportive, inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students who access programs or are enrolled full-time or part-time
- to further develop relationships with neighbourhood schools through shared programming that is targeted to provide unique student-centred curriculum
- to model positive teaching and learning practices and to use the community as a resource that provides experiences and opportunities for transition in a real world where students can continue on a pathway to being productive learners
- to welcome parents/carers and personnel employed in related agencies and services to participate and share ideas and knowledge within the school’s support framework.

Staffing and Enrolments

The role of Teacher-in-Charge was re-advertised as an expression of interest for 12 months in December ’09 and Ms Cathy Bester was the successful applicant. This year Cathy is responsible for the Links program across the both campuses. The Burnie Campus whole day program occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are 5 students enrolled in the Tuesday program and 9 students participating in the Thursday program. Cathy manages the Teacher in Charge responsibilities on Mondays and Fridays.

At the present time, there are 18 full-time students and 7 dual enrolments accessing the school. To date, there are 38 families who have a child accessing the SOSE Burnie campus. Sean Lo whose family has relocated from Strathfield NSW is the latest full-time enrolment in the Wattle Room.

Ms Patsy Cairns is responsible for the early childhood class in the Banksia Room. The numbers of students accessing the early childhood class varies from day to day. There are two students with irregular attendance – one student is currently experiencing acute health issues and the other student is one who is accompanied by her mother and at this stage we are working on a slow inclusion by building a trust relationship with the parents.

Mrs Bronwyn West is employed on Tuesdays as the Transition teacher and is responsible for liaising with parents/carers and other service agencies e.g. Gateway Services, Centrelink, Multicap and Ability Employment to organise work experience placements and transition pathways for senior students. Bronwyn’s transition role has become increasingly successful due to the building of a network between the above mentioned agencies, parents/carers, class teachers and TA’s together with alternative support advocates e.g. Di Ewington. Bronwyn has acquired significant knowledge and understandings over the last 12 months which allows her to share her expertise with fellow teachers.
Bronwyn also teaches .4 in the Primary/Lower Secondary class in the Wattle Room and shares the responsibility with Mrs Wendy Bennell (.6). Ms Darlene Kumar teaches full-time on the Senior Class in the Gumtree Room.

Mrs Jacqui Astley is employed on Tuesdays as the music teacher and due to the increase in teacher FTE received from the beginning of 2010, the school is able to employ a physical education teacher for one day per week on Wednesdays. Already we are noting the positive benefits of Miss Rebecca Clarke’s role. She has taken some time to observe and note each student’s strengths and weaknesses in order to develop gross motor and Learn to Swim programs for students to successfully acquire new skills and intensively practice either individually or within a small group situation accompanied by 1 to 1 support.

Mrs Laurie White has been employed from Easter until 15th December on Wednesdays and Thursdays per week to provide short 1 on 1 intensive learning sessions with individual students and small groups of students with similar learning delays. This initiative is driven by the class teachers who identify particular students and direct Laurie to structure intensive teaching sequences with written feedback at the end of each session which ensures that learning sequences can be rehearsed and repeated again within the class setting. TA’s are selected to accompany students to support the students in the intensive learning sessions.

**Links program**

This program which is offered to students enrolled in regular schools with SDR eligibility has been in greater demand this year with students of greatest need taken as first priority. This initiative continues to be a full day’s program which includes circuit work in the gym supervised by DHHS Paediatric Physios together PODD communication strategies planned by Mrs Felicity Lovatt, music therapy and also ongoing ICT support by Ms Lynne Ryan one day per fortnight. Hydrotherapy is also offered to the students attending on Thursdays.

**PODD**

Whilst the funding package ($20 000) received from LSNW to support the PODD program was reduced this year, the overall re-assessment of students undertaken in December 2009 by Mrs Felicity Lovatt who continues to work ‘hands-on’ with individual students and the support team clearly displays the overall improvement in student communicative intent. Please note the attachment. It is gratifying to highlight the positive efforts of continuous and strategic professional learning, the need to meet the demand to create and actively design resources for individual students combined with the dedication and enthusiasm of class teachers and teacher aides who are actively utilising PODD, Makaton signing and direct speech demonstration. The acquisition of further skills, knowledge and understanding has formed the basis of all student IEP reviews and dialogue centred on realistic goal setting as well as curriculum development, planning and delivery across both campuses.
Professional Learning for Staff

Professional Learning Days held on specified student free days have again been applied for and all staff from both campuses are able to meet, share best practice, discuss ongoing issues and strengthen collegial trust and support.

The morning’s program on Monday 20th July entitled ‘Mind Matters’ was planned and led by Mrs Sharon Rush, Senior Social Worker and Mr Bruce Cameron, Manager of School Support NW. Staff members from both campuses were divided into small working groups to review and reflect on the school’s vision statement that was formulated in 2006/7. The groups rotated and individual staff members identified and wrote down the values in order of importance that currently underpin the daily practices currently in place across both school settings. This activity clearly identified the values according to specific strengths and weaknesses.

The afternoon session was led by Mr Peter Symonds from Ability Employment who outlined the latest research and work experience placement models that he noted during a study tour in the US. Peter’s input prompted SOSE NW and Ability Employment to apply for a Schools First Funding Award and whilst our application was unsuccessful, our intention is to reapply again this year.

The final Professional Learning Day for 2009 was held on Friday, 30th October. The morning session was led by Felicity Lovatt with a focus on further building an AAC Community of Learners by utilising practical PODD skills to ultimately develop the school’s communication policy.

Bruce Cameron and Sharon Rush were again our leaders for the remainder of the day. The specific strengths and weaknesses identified at the earlier PL day were revisited and utilised in the context of gaining a broader understanding of the 2009 Organisational Health Data with increased feedback to inform future discussions and planning at both campuses.

- Helpful aspects that became learnings i.e. My personal vision for the school involving all staff working on positive intentions, future collaborative planning for students
- What we could do better e.g. create more time to focus on planning in greater depth, involve all staff in the dialogue
- From here on in – approach situation with positive intentions, input into whole school planning to be facilitated by a team approach – Principal & Teachers in Charge working together with teaching and support staff.

‘Leading for High Performance’ conversations

Interviews were planned according to the L4 framework and held during Terms 2 & 3 ‘09 between senior staff members, teachers and TA’s on an individual basis with the Principal at both campuses. This process utilises a question/answer format and is essentially a performance feedback process that generates information gathering and sharing. It allows the participant to give opinions that are recorded against agreed performance expectations. The process became a genuine exchange that focused on shared understandings and will continue this year as a means of reflection and further individual goal setting.
Physical Environment

The BER project across both campuses will be officially celebrated this Wednesday, 21st April. There is no doubt that the release of Federal Govt funding of $300 000 was of great benefit across both campuses. The Pride monies amounting to $50 000 was specifically spent on making improvements to the current disabled toilet facility as well as providing purchase of reverse cycle air conditioners in foyer area and all classrooms at the Burnie campus. The works included the strengthening of the roof area, further additional ceiling tracking with the fitting of a second ceiling hoist (yet to be installed). Sincere thanks to Mr Lyle Catlin, Senior DoE Project Officer who supervised the project. Mr Phil Dingemanse from Birrelli Architects together Mr Andrew Gurr from Fairbrother Pty Ltd who planned and prioritised the works at both school sites and at all times considered the needs of the school in relation to on-site demolition, noise levels and planning the bulk of the work to be done during the Christmas-New Year break. The Burnie Campus utilised some reserved funds for the following modifications:

- concreting in the lower section of playground to provide a bike riding circuit
- purchase of an aluminium shed for storage of bikes

The proposed Library alcove to be constructed in the Foyer area is currently on the drawing board. Mr Andrew Gurr is at present working with Stubbs Windows to develop a glass concept that will blend in with the original window structure. The design of the shelving joinery will be modelled on the SOSE D’port refurbishment. The next step will be to obtain a quote from Fairbrother Pty Ltd for the School Association to consider.

Fundraising

The Burnie Campus has been so fortunate in gaining acknowledgement from various local community clubs, businesses and members of the general public who have organised events, assisted to write submissions and donated time, effort and money to support initiatives to assist our students.

In October 2009, the Cocktail Party was once again a spectacular event that attracted a sell out of tickets. The organising committee led by Di Ewington, Wendy Cumming and Glenda Scaddan together with staff, parents/carers connected with Multicap and SOSE Burnie did a fantastic job of preparing sandwiches and savouries on the day. The amount raised and received directly by the school has been utilised to purchase the following:

* music therapy program costs
* overnight camp at Hagley Farm School
* installation of some shade sails in playground

Other fundraising and submission efforts include:

MyState Financial $2 500 to build wheelchair accessible vegie gardens
Cinema Charity Day organised by Chris Warriner raised $356

The commitment and generosity made by ordinary people is truly encouraging!
Alternative Programs

Personal skill development, friendship building, citizenship and fun between the students and staff across both school campuses and regular schools, continues to strengthen due to the following planned events and initiatives:

- Surf Experience Day
- Miniature Train Trip
- Cinema excursions
- Anzac Day Commemoration
- Autumn Picnic at Buddy School – Natone Primary
- Billy Tea Bush Band Dance
- Combined Sports Day for Special Kids
- Dracula’s Party
- ‘Artist in Residence’ program and art exhibition at Burnie regional library
- Learn to Swim program
- Christmas picnic held at the D’port pool
- Slip Stream Circus performance
- Overnight camp at Hagley Farm School
- Combined end of term assemblies
- Crazy Hair Day
- End of year Assembly and Presentation of Awards

In Conclusion

As I’ve collated the information for this year’s report I am genuinely overwhelmed by the highlights and initiatives that have been successfully achieved during 2009/10.

All members of the School Association play an important role in attending meetings, listening and providing feedback and actively supporting new proposals and policies. The holiday program funded by Ability Employment has been tirelessly supported by Wendy Cumming and with funding remaining from the January program we are expecting to offer a June holiday program for students aged 12 years and over who are enrolled at SOSE Burnie.

In spite of her Council responsibilities, Sandra French has continually fulfilled her role as President with great sincerity, commitment and purpose – I refer to the supportive stance made to support the Northern Support School’s discrimination claim for equity in funding specifically for Special Schools in Nov ’09 and the need to lead a response when an issue of student transport arose at the commencement of the 2010 school year.

In particular, I sincerely thank Gordon Patchin whose term is coming to a close. Gordon outwardly displayed his contribution as a member of the School Association by representing the views of parents and carers. Gordon has at all times provided opinions and statements which were honest and reflected his extensive understanding of being a parent of a disabled child.
Thank you sincerely for your family’s contributions to the life of the School of Special Education NW – Burnie campus over many years.

Once again, 2009/10 has been a successful year.

The challenges of the school building will remain as the student enrolment numbers steadily continue to grow. It will be the inner drive of all members of the School Association who will be required to continue to lobby for options to be seriously considered by the Manager of the LSNW.

Lastly, I express my gratitude to Patsy and Cathy as the Teacher in Charge, together with the dedicated teachers, social trainer, teacher assistants and ancillary staff in particular the school’s SEO’s Sandra Cock and Keenie Baker. This network of staff together with interagency personnel, continue to positively work as a team to enrich every student’s educational pathway.

My role as Principal across two campuses is positively assisted by the ongoing commitment of all members of this school’s community.

Yours truly,

Grace Brown
Principal
School of Special Education NW.

22.04.2010