As we are commencing the third week of Term 2 there are several topics that I wish to share with all School Association members.

Anzac Day
Mr Ted Barrance, teacher in Blue Room, accepted the responsibility of representing the School of Special Education NW and accompanied Jake Groom to the 11am service held in Penguin. Jake did a fine job of placing a wreath at the base of the cenotaph.

Professional Learning Day - Monday, 3rd May
Staff members from both campuses met at Penguin High to work with the NW Special Education Advisors Jane Bird and Matthew Perry to review the following:
- positive behaviour management theory and appropriate strategies and current practices across both campuses
- risk assessment and how staff members can develop further consistent and effective measures when supporting students with severe disabilities.
This review will ultimately lead to the development of a whole school policy.

Written response to ACARA undertaken by Tasmanian Special Education Principals - Thursday, 13th May
Margaret Ridgers, Principal of the Northern Support Schools travelled with me to meet up with Sherry Edwards, Principal of the Southern Support School and Lynne James, Statewide Manager of Student Support. We met to draft a response to support the inclusion of two Special Education reps. to assist with the development and writing of the National Curriculum to ensure that students with disabilities are catered for. Our response included case studies of students enrolled at our schools as examples of the diversity of individual student’s educational pathways. We stressed the need for flexibility and recognition of our student’s learning styles and levels of achievement. This day was also an opportunity to inspect the new Southern Support School that is now opened and situated on the Eastern Shore on the old Wentworth School site.

Spectronics Conference - 26th, 27th & 28th May
The School of Special Education NW supported Lynne Ryan’s attendance at the 3 day IT conference held at Surfers Paradise, QLD. Lynne’s presence at the conference is a great opportunity for her to gain further knowledge about new software and peripherals specifically for students with disabilities. Usually Lynne returns with several demos to trial. This year she was fortunate in winning a $400 prize to spend on software.

At the Heart of the Matter: School and Classroom Leadership
I was most fortunate in being able to attend this conference in Darwin from 15th to 18th June. There were 300 Special Education Principals and teachers who participated in school visits, workshops and informal networking. The theme of the conference was led by the keynote speaker, Jean Crockett, Ph. D. who stated ‘inclusion can be a promise not a process’.
She stressed the need for Principals to advocate for meaningful educational attainment for students with disabilities. We must set a direction with vision combining analysis and scrutiny. A school's mission and goals need to be aligned with current research based on teaching and learning initiatives. Expert instruction where teachers and support staff actively demonstrate individualised instruction within small supportive learning groups is paramount. The term ‘Special Education’ needs to be demystified so that the stigma is taken out of intensive education.

Robert Randall from ACARA spoke of the National Curriculum containing a core of knowledge, skills and understandings that will be taught to ensure that students with disabilities attain achievable standards through ongoing formative assessment. Due to the lobbying from groups e.g. AASE & ASEPA, Margaret Lynch from South Australia and Tracey Chappell from a QLD Special School have been appointed to work alongside ACARA’s curriculum writers to ensure meaningful standards and modules are included for students with disabilities.

I visited the Nemarluk Primary Special School in central Darwin. This school had an enrolment of 30 students in 1991 – it now has 116 students with a waiting list. The school caters for students aged between 3.6 years to 12 years. Class groups generally consist of 5 students to 1 teacher + support staff. No specialist teachers are employed. Teachers receive 3 hrs release time per week.

Due to the growth of the school, there are 9 satellite classes in regular schools close to Nemarluk. The Special School is responsible for providing staffing, furniture, IT and teaching and learning resources – the regular school only provides the classroom. Interesting concept!

**OCC Health Education and SOSE NW School Survey**

Parents, teachers, students, support and ancillary staff members have now completed the annual survey online. This year, we have selected several students to take part. The survey results and data for 2010 will be available later in the year.

Term 2 has commenced well.

**Grace**