Principal's Report – School Association Devonport August, ‘10
Here we are at the last week of Term 2 and I feel there is lots to share since our last meeting where we had a full complement of association members.
With a new Federal government about to be sworn in, we are consistently confronted with differing opinions and not always fully understanding why changes particularly in govt departments are considered innovative. Over the last few weeks staff in schools, parents and carers are grappling with new structures that are considered better able to assist us to deliver a more supportive framework to positively influence a student’s pathway to adulthood. But do they???

Reforms in the Disability Sector
In the newsletter dated 16th July ‘10, I included some information to members of the school community about the new agency – Gateway. I described in detail the three main functions in relation to disability services – Intake and Assessment, Active Monitoring and Brokerage. It is also proposed to have a co-located DHHS Disability Services Officer available at Gateway. The functions of this role are to provide advice and support to Gateway where there is lack of clarity around eligibility and complexity of referrals. This role is employed and managed by DHHS and will be a member of the area team. Already, however there are serious deficiencies appearing in the service which I will discuss more fully later in this meeting.

Disability Liaison and Mediation Services
Another change which has occurred is that the Department of Education has awarded the tender for Disability Liaison and Mediation Services to the Life Without Barriers organization. The service is:
- Accessible to both families and schools in relation to students with disabilities
- Available statewide
- To support collaborative communication processes between families and school staff
- To assist with conflict resolution mediation
This service replaces the current advocacy services previously funded by the Department of Education through the Association of Children with Disabilities. As you’re all aware, Mrs Diane Ewington has been a tireless supporter of families who have a child with a disability and I’m delighted that she continues to undertake to assist families with ongoing issues. In fact, Diane has joined with Vicki Brown, who is the Carer Services Officer on the North West and they are jointly supporting the formation of parent groups in the Devonport and Burnie localities.

Now it’s time to mention some school-based topics.

A Special Olympics Sports Day was held on Friday 16th July at the Forbes St. Basketball Stadium. The students from both campuses mingled and teamed up with other students with disabilities from many regular schools - Devonport, Ulverstone, Penguin and Burnie schools. It was a great opportunity for students to work as a team, practice their skills and co-operate with each other to finish activities in a given time frame.
This type of day will be offered throughout 2010 with young Aussie Sports Leaders being given the opportunity to organize the activities, set out the equipment and give a helping hand to students who require extra support. Both Teachers in Charge and I attended and we were able to provide feedback and suggestions to the organizers when planning future sports days.

**A Professional Learning Day** was held on Monday, 19th July with both campuses of teaching and support staff members including relief staff who met at the Devonport campus to attend the following sessions:

- ‘Focusing on programming for students with sensory behaviours in order to maximize their Learning’ – led by the DHHS Occupational Therapists, Cilla Travers and Sara Croome who presented a mix of practical activity as well as theoretical information.
- Feedback about our current PODD practices and in particular early PODD visual and auditory scanning books – led by Felicity Lovatt, Speech & Language Pathologist.
- Continuing on with development of Positive Behaviour Management with teachers in class groups aiming to facilitate further individual student management plans.

Overall all attendees praised the content and gained further knowledge to inform their classroom practice.

**A visit from Jane Hofto, Librarian Department of Education, Systems Support and Development**

Jane visited both campuses on Tuesday, 20th July for two purposes:

- to visit the Burnie campus to discuss the formal removal of the collections held in the Hellyer Library and the setting up of the library in the foyer once the alcove modifications are completed by Fairbrother Pty. Ltd.
- to discuss the arrangements for Mrs Michelle Anthony, the Library Technician at the Devonport campus to manage the setting up of the Burnie campus library with support from Mrs Keenie Baker and Mrs Cassie Bonis during Term 3. Keenie will undertake a 2 day introductory course to assist her with the extra duties she will be required to undertake once the library is set up and becomes operational. Cassie will shortly commence the Library Technician’s course as part of a long term succession plan.

**Staffing and interest in new student enrolments for 2011**

Mrs Karen Slade has chosen not to return to the Devonport campus after completing her maternity leave. Instead she has taken a temporary teaching appointment at Parklands High School until the end of 2010. Ms. Jo Corvinus will remain teaching students in the Yellow Rm. This arrangement will promote continuity throughout the whole of 2010 for both staff members and students.

There have been several enquiries and I feel assured that we will be receiving new enrolments during Term 3. We hope to be able to provide a transition program during Term 3 for any prospective new enrolments.
Continuation of Bowen Therapy for Term 3
I met with Bev Chell on Friday 13th August to discuss the feasibility of the Bowen Therapy program which was introduced at the Burnie campus via Bev's research project to be introduced to the D'port campus for Term 3. As stated in the newsletters, the research undertaken by Bev has clearly highlighted the following positive benefits gained by several of the Burnie campus students:

- fewer contractures
- improved control over movements
- increased performance of set exercises
- improved walking and steadiness
- improved concentration
- calmer mental state
- relaxation and enjoyment.

NEiTA nominee - Jacqui Astley
As you are all aware, Jacqui was nominated by Kate French in recognition of her inspiring music program that has been established here at the D'port campus since 1989. I submit to the meeting a copy of the letter written by me which accompanied the nomination. Jacqui has received a Certificate of Nomination and she has over this weekend completed the NEiTA's online Teacher Self-Portrait form.

‘Artist in Residence’ program with Jan Marinos - 2011
Already we are active in planning and seeking possible funding opportunities to be able to offer this program across the both campuses. Jan has submitted a proposal and included a letter written by me supporting her application to work across both campuses, to Arts Tasmania for funding through the Arts and Disability Program. Jan will shortly be interviewed as a requirement of the selection criteria.

Dance Event
This event will be the highlight of the last week of Term 2 with students from both campuses joining regular schools to have fun dancing the set steps that Jacqui and Rebecca Clark have been enthusiastically practising for many weeks.