



Minutes of the 2006 Annual Council Meeting

Present: Attachment 1

Apologies: As above

The President opened the meeting opened at 9.15a.m., formally welcomed those present, noted the apologies and recognized those carrying proxies. The President provided background information to the meeting. This Annual Council Meeting and AGM had been convened as per the requirements of the organisation's constitution to May 2005. A second Annual Council and AGM, incorporating the COGSO Annual Conference will be held in the latter half of 2006 under the current COGSO Constitution adopted at the May 2005 Council meeting.

The purpose of this Annual Council is to hold the AGM, to elect Executive office bearers, present Minutes of the 2005 Annual Council and AGM, and present the annual Audit report.

Item 1 MINUTES

1.1 Minutes of 2005 Annual Council Meeting

The Minutes of the 2005 Annual Council Meeting, held at the Darwin Plaza Hotel, on Sunday May 2nd, as amended were *accepted* as a true and correct record.

Sydney Robinson/Kirsten
Cridland

Council *noted* that:

A typographical error at Item 3.7 reads East Anthem instead of East Arnhem.

Item 2. BUSINESS ARISING

The President advised Council that all issues arising from the 2005 Annual Council meeting have been attended to (Attachment 2). It was affirmed by the President, that these items and others arising during the course of the year are placed on the discussion agenda at quarterly meetings with the Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the Chief Executive of the department.

Item 3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President's report (Attachment 3), was accepted as verbally tabled.

Steve Carter/Sydney Robinson

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

Item 4. ADJOURN COUNCIL AND OPEN AGM

The President *suspended* Council. The AGM *opened* at 10.00a.m. and closed at 10.41a.m.

Item 5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1 Late Motions

The President advised there were no Motions on Notice, and enquired of delegates as to whether or not there were any Late Motions from the floor of Council. None were forthcoming.

5.2 Life Membership

At the Executive meeting of February 2006 Darwin Region put the Motion that there be two members nominated to Life Membership. Life Membership is granted for meritorious service of high quality in support of the aims and objectives of the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations.

It was put that, Life Membership be granted to Steve Carter and Chandra Seneviratne, and that a separate vote for each nominee be held.

Wendy Pelizzo/Sydney Robinson

Life Membership - Steve Carter

Unanimous

Life Membership - Chandra Seneviratne

Unanimous

Item 6 MEETING CLOSE

The President extended his thanks to Howard Springs School Council and School for hosting the event, and all delegates for giving of their time to attend, and noted that he looked forward to working closely with all members in 2006.

The Annual Council and AGM 2006 was closed at 12.25p.m.

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

Attachment 1 - Delegates and Proxies

Delegate	School	Proxy
Steve Carter	Vice President	Darwin High School (1244 students)
Wendy Pelizzo	Hwd. Springs Primary School 330 students	
Julie Donohue	Wanguri Primary School (M Duffy carries votes)	Alice Springs High School (438 students)

		Nhulunbuy Primary School (532 students) Acacia Hill Primary School (33 students)
Michael Duffy	Wanguri Primary School (263 students)	
Sydney Robinson	Berry Springs Primary School (275 students)	
Brenda Heilig	Moulden Park Primary School (476 students)	
Tracy Bond	Girraween Primary School (307 students)	
Tracy Bester	Hwd. Springs Primary School (W. Pelizzo carries votes)	
Paul Clarke	Stuart Park Primary School (508 students)	
Ros Ther	Driestone Primary School (709 students)	Moil Primary School (384 students)
Justine Ward	Bakewell Primary School (686 students)	
Dee Haine	Bees Creek Primary School (407 students)	
Fiona Courtney	Nightcliff Primary School (582 students)	
Marilyn Cabales	Batchelor Area School (147 students)	
Kirsten Cridland	Wulagi Primary School (224 students)	
15 delegates representing 20 schools – representing 7,600 students in NT Government education		
COGSO President Peter Garrigan	Darwin High School	Chair
COGSO Secretariat Lesley Hosking	Executive Officer	Meeting organiser/Minute taker
Roberta Smith	Administrative Officer (as at May 8 th)	Observer
Apologies		
Annie Black	Hwd.Springs Primary School	
Kerrie Sankey	Acacia Hill Primary School	
Lisa Rothwell	Nhulunbuy Primary School	
Matt Skoss	Alice Springs High School	

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

Attachment 2 – Business Arising (Item 2 Annual Council Meeting 2006)

The following items were undertaken as per Council's instructions at the 2005 Annual Council Meeting:

Item 3.4

Council instructed Executive to:

Write to the Department of Employment, Education and Training to seek their advice on:

- a. *Is there any evidence which supports an Early Age of Entry policy for NT Government Pre-School children?*
- b. *If an Early Age of Entry policy is implemented for all NT Government Pre-Schools what kinds of*

resources and support will be provided to all staff and schools?

Outcome:

Correspondence outlining Council's concerns had been forwarded to the Department of Employment, Education and Training in May 2005. Executive members had been involved in a number of Early Age of Entry activities such as curriculum development, on reference group etc. As a standing member of the Education Advisory Council (EAC), COGSO oversighted development of an NT Early Years Framework – undertaken by joint DEET and NT Health and Community Services (HaCS) team. Correspondence had been received by the organization from the new DEET Chief Executive Ms

Margaret Banks outlining the following main points about Early Age of Entry trials:

Parent and Community Engagement

1. Parent and community engagement must be secured for participation in trials.
2. Preschool and Transition parents and staff have been involved in decision making to participate in trial.
3. A plan for including parents and school community in monitoring trial implementation has been formed.

Staff Capacity Building

1. Staff professional development needs have been identified and planned for in school action plan
2. School has agreed to provide Preschool and Transition staff (other Early Years staff also encouraged) with access to professional development modules in negotiation with Early Years team

Appropriate Physical Environments and Resourcing

1. School undertakes to conduct an OH&S audit addressing the safety and wellbeing of the physical environment for the new cohort.
2. School action plan is developed to address any OH&S issues or quality environment needs for improved play based learning.
3. Transition teachers have agreed to use the Assessment of Student Competencies from Term 1, 2006 to monitor students and provide data for system analysis in Term 4, 2006

Identification of Children At Risk, Monitoring and Tracking

1. Schools participating in Phase 2 of the Trial will be supported with an \$11,000 start-up grant to be used for physical teaching resources, the support of teacher's professional development or part time instructor assistance.
2. In line with the CE's advice the President advised delegates that School Councils were not required to accept an Early Age of Entry trial, and that if trials were to agreed to School Councils should ensure that all requirements as cited in the CE's advice should be met to facilitate those trials in an appropriate manner.

Item 3.12

Council instructed Executive to:

Write to the Minister for Employment, Education and Training to request that COGSO has a designated position on the NT Board of Studies.

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

Outcome:

The Minister's response to correspondence requesting a designated COGSO position on the NT Board of Studies, was to highlight his belief that the best interests of all parents of children in education were to be served by having a parent representative from the community to ensure broad representation of parent's interests and concerns.

Item 3.13

Council instructed Executive to:

Seek advice from the Literacy and Numeracy Working Group on how successful this program is in increasing student literacy and numeracy capabilities.

Outcome:

The Literacy and Numeracy Working Group advises the following:

Aim of Program (not to increase literacy and numeracy but to showcase it)

- a. Showcase the hard work school communities are undertaking in improving literacy and numeracy skills.
- b. Recognise the outstanding results schools achieve.
- c. Raise community awareness of the importance of all Australian students developing effective literacy and numeracy skills.
- d. Build on national initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy standards among young Australians.

Submission Writing

An emphasis has been on MAP data used for submission writing (vis-à-vis School Based outcomes performance in literacy & numeracy in support of their submissions) This has presented problems MAP data and its interpretation is difficult when considering submissions. It is now envisaged that the MAPRET tool (a data analysis tool which enables teachers and educators to conduct analysis of school and individual student performance as well as analysing individual student responses on the MAP test items) will be used after rollout this year, in future years submission writing. This should hopefully result in higher quality submission writing from approximately 2007 onwards, as it provides for an analysis of individual and cohort results - and tracks over a 3 year period.

Item 4.3

Council instructed Executive to:

Write to DEST seeking further clarification on the Indigenous Education Funding Program 2005-2008, guidelines and implementation process.

Outcome:

Executive forwarded correspondence as instructed.

The COGSO Vice President was also involved in several high level discussions as COGSO's Australian Council of State School Organisation's representative. The Vice President advised delegates of the following:

- a. The Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training withdrew ASSPA funding in 2005.
- b. Commonwealth funding was allocated to the NT for Indigenous education support programs, but was from release to it's target community. The NT's alternative system was unworkable.
- c. Discussion was undertaken between the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and DEET about how the funding would be spent, which held up the release of those funds until an agreement had been signed between the NT and Commonwealth.
- d. Once the agreement was signed, school communities found it very difficult to access information.
- e. Urban schools with the administrative capacity to fulfill the submission requirements, were generally the most successful in accessing any funding.
- f. In May 2005, DEST advised an ACSSO lobby group (of which the Vice President was a member) at a meeting in Canberra that there was a pilot scheme being implemented, where those schools successful in being part of the trial each received \$10,000. It was found that this amount was inadequate.
- g. Those schools spent the immediately spent the money on hiring Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA's) or in whatever way they thought their Indigenous children could be best served.
- h. A draft evaluation written by Australian Parents Council (APC) and ACSSO is still confidential. Generally feedback was that the guidelines and trials for Indigenous Funding are not parent friendly, particularly for remote Indigenous Communities.

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

- i. When the current Federal Minister signs off on the DEST review report, it will be circulated to the various State and Territory affiliates.

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

Attachment 3 – President’s Report

This past year has been an extremely busy one for the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations, and I look forward to another year of spirited debate and engagement in all education and related issues, on behalf of parents as partners in the education of their children. I would advise all delegates that a solid working relationship has now been established with the Department of Employment, Education and Training, Chief Executive, Ms Margaret Black. We meet quarterly and as called upon, or as the need arises to exchange information on current and future public education policy in the Northern Territory. The following provides a brief snapshot of some activities undertaken by Executive on behalf of Council.

Middle Years of Schooling

Building Better Schools has become one of the major issues the organization has been responding to and keeping a watchful eye on, particularly the debate on Middle Years of Schooling. COGSO has

responded at an Executive, Regional and individual level to all consultations, had membership on related reference groups and lodged a strong written submission on the organisation's views on implementation of Middle Schooling and Middle Schools. Our Middle Years discussion paper was commissioned to provide unbiased advice on the concept of Middle Schooling. Placed on the COGSO website, it was also distributed in hard copy to all School Councils, Principals, Members of Parliament, the Australian Education Union and other key stakeholders in mid 2005 to inform the debate. DEET has referenced quite widely from this discussion paper. COGSO Executive were unable to take a strong stand one way or the other in relation to government's proposals due to the variation in directives coming from different School Councils across the Territory. Our objective became one of keeping everyone honest, given the way in which the debate was moved from Middle Schooling to Middle Schools. It is my belief that government's plans will be implemented, although at this stage it is not clear how they implementation will progress. It seems fairly clear that Year 7 will go into a Middle Years environment and Year 10 into Senior secondary.

COGSO's recommendations for a 10 year plan to implement Middle Schooling have received great commendation. We acknowledged that a well planned and well resourced program was required before any consideration was given to the physical movement of children. During a short confidential briefing with DEET, I was shown a document which was very similar to what COGSO proposed, although it did not have any timelines.

One of my biggest concerns, is that at a recent Leader's Forum strong focus was placed on the Middle Years with much discussion around individual teacher concerns that primary teachers may become Principals of Middle Schools, and that Secondary teachers may lose some of their subject related benefits such as access to subject specific conferences as professional development etc.

I note that some schools are actively engaged in middle years schooling and have been for a number of years. The pedagogy can be done anywhere

Investing in Our Schools

School Councils should be aware of the DEST funding program, Investing In Our Schools, which allows for grant submissions of up to \$150,000 to fund capital works upgrades, purchase of equipment etc. for all schools across Australia. If your submission has not gone in, get it in now as the cut off date for 2006 is April 26th. The program is projected to carry through across into 2008.

Review of Education Act (and School Councils)

At the recent Leaders Forum it was flagged that there will review of the NT Education Act. Such a review will School Councils included in new legislative guidelines. There are a number of outcomes which could result. In the ACT they recently reviewed their Education Act, which resulted in possible regulations which would see public education no longer be a free. must watch for this. It must be noted that there are already some moves within the Territory which are not in line with public education ie. introduction this year of book packs, which are absolutely contrary to the current Act. Schools are provided with funds to pay for the books, rulers, pencils and writing pads. In many instances on advise from the school they produce bookpacs and still charge a voluntary contribution. When School Councils consider their budgets they must be aware that the \$50 voucher is the first step to moving people to paying school fees.

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc

It is a subtle move to get a change to the Act to have people start paying for education. Education is a right. Once you start charging for it you disadvantage people, as education is power. The ACT had a strong fight on their hands to stop privatization of education. The best outcome for the ACT was a stipulation that if items were to be paid for then those items had to be clearly identified by the School Council at the beginning of each year.

School Council Training

We will keep you advised about current discussions with DEST and DEET to secure training funding.

Roles and Responsibilities of School Councils

School Councils cannot instruct teachers or impact on curriculum. School Councils currently control funding – all money must be banked into one School Council account. The account should be audited annually, with the Audit Report provided at your AGM and included in your school's Annual General Report. No money can be spent unless the council has an approved budget. Technically, if no the

School Council does not approve a budget, every cheque or payment drawn must be presented to the School Council prior to expenditure.

Chairing Interview Panels

A School Council has the right to chair all *promotion* positions within the school environment by providing the parent rep to every selection panel for Executive Teacher's interviews. When interviewing for Registrar this does not apply, although it is still important to have a parent representative included. In the instance of interview panels lower than Executive Teacher there is no automatic right to chair the selection panel.

Setting School Action Plans

School Council working in conjunction with the school sets a strategic plan/action plan for school improvement, etc. It must be remembered that a School Council cannot give directive to teachers, or deal with issues held by parents in relation to school based issues. It should also be noted that a School Council can often speak on issues which a Principal may be unable to speak about due to his/her contract agreement.

DEET Financial Reporting requirements

The department has changed the chart of accounts for all schools- using one which is soon to be rescinded. The new chart of accounts being used shows that money children have raised for sporting or other events is being seen as income, which in turn is being considered by DEET as a surplus of funds and could be called back by the department. School Councils and schools need to ensure they allocate fundraising income appropriately so it cannot be considered as income against school operational expenses. DEET is using it's control of money to control an independent body such as a School Council.

Signed as a true and correct record of the Minutes of the April 22nd AGM, accepted by the Annual Council at the Annual Conference of the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations, at the Airport Resort, Darwin NT, September 17th 2006.

Peter Garrigan _____

President 2006-2007

Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations Inc.

Darwin NT September 17th 2006.

P:\2006 AGM & Conference April\Council April 2006 Minutes.doc