

## FROM THE DoE CE

As I am sure you are all aware we have a new Minister for Education, Hon Robyn Lambley MLA who is the Member for Araluen in Alice Springs. I know the Minister is looking forward to visiting Territory schools and for schools to have the opportunity to showcase the outstanding programs they are delivering.

I would also like to welcome and congratulate Adam Walding, the new COGSO President and I look forward to continuing our strong partnership and open communication.

I have been very pleased with the positive feedback from the jointly presented Department and COGSO Governance Workshops that have recently been conducted. I think the goals of the workshops were exceeded and we are already planning for these to be an annual event.

I would like to thank the School Council members who gave up their valuable time, took leave or who travelled in from regional and remote communities to attend. I cannot emphasise enough the benefits and importance of active parent and community involvement in schools. I would like to thank Kathleen Pledger and Elise Dungey from COGSO and Jackie Amagula from Ngakwurra Langwa College for sharing their community engagement stories. We will be making short online videos for schools to share the learning with their School Council and community.

The goals for the workshop will also be supported by the recently advertised COGSO Regional Governance Training Officer positions. These officers will provide ongoing training and support to all schools. I also encourage remote schools to fully utilise the funding providing to access this resource that can be tailored to the community needs and context.

**Gary Barnes**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### COGSO Conference

COGSO invites parents, teachers, school leaders and community members to attend a full day conference covering three key areas of current interest in NT public education.

The main speaker will be Dr Bill Rogers and will address the conference on behaviour management in the classroom and at home. Other key topics to be discussed include; Youth mental health and Disability access and information for schools/parents.

### ACSSO Conference

ACSSO will be holding their National Conference in Darwin from 1 - 4 November. Information will be sent out via your School Councils.

## KEY DIARY DATES

### Term 3 Holidays

**1 October - 5 October**

### World Teachers Day

**26 October**

### COGSO Conference

**3 November**

### ACSSO Conference

**1 November - 4 November**

### Term 4 Dates

**8 October - 13 December**

**\*note school finishes on a Thursday in 2012**

**COGSO**  
strong schools • strong communities

Term 3, 2012

parent

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is my pleasure to undertake the role of COGSO President to serve the interests of students and families in achieving better outcomes, service and support for public education in the Northern Territory.

I would like to thank outgoing COGSO Executive members, Mr Mark Brustolin (former President) and Mrs Beverley Ratahi (former COGSO Palmerston and Rural Representative) for their hard work and achievements. Mark and Beverley have been active and committed representatives for our public education system and their hard work and achievements are to be acknowledged. We wish them both the very best **and** thank them for their commitment to public education.

I have been involved with School Councils for over 10 years and with COGSO more recently. COGSO has worked hard for many years to advocate and represent the interests of families with children in public education.

Most recently I have had the pleasure of being involved in delivering workshops for School Council Chairs and Principals in partnership with Department of Education (DoE) to support improving and strengthening School Council governance. This has been a positive partnership and we look forward to continuing to work with DoE to deliver more of these workshops next year.

Our parent newsletter is just one source of information for you as to the role and actions of COGSO. Details of Regional Executive are provided in this newsletter, as well as information about your School Council nominating a COGSO representative.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I look forward to working with you all with a view to ensuring the best possible public education system in the country with the best possible outcomes for our children.

**Adam Walding**

## COGSO ACTION

**Governance workshops** - COGSO and DoE have just wrapped up the last of the Governance workshops in the series this year. The forums have been a really positive tool for School Councils and Principals to gather and share information.

**Training positions** – COGSO have advertised for 4 part time regional Training Officers, applications close 16/9/2012.

**School Council Constitutions** – COGSO have liaised with DoE to ensure that amended constitutions retain the school communities context within their desired format.

**Under Discussion** – Testing and tagging, Teacher Registration Board, Funding formula, School Reviews.

**New Government** – NT COGSO have requested a meeting with new Chief Minister Terry Mills and Education Minister Robyn Lambley to put forward schools concerns as well as a standing invitation to the Education Minister to attend COGSO Executive meetings quarterly.

## COGSO COUNCIL & AGM

The COGSO Annual Full Council and AGM was held at the Medina Vibe, Darwin Waterfront on Saturday 8 September.

The meeting was well attended by COGSO affiliate schools from all over the Northern Territory, including delegates from some of our very remote schools.

During the course of the meetings, the last 12 months of COGSO action and business was discussed. New goals and directions were set for the coming year of COGSO and new business was raised for addressing. Many discussions were held and it was great to hear opinions from all perspectives, urban, rural and remote schools.

The meeting also served as an opportunity for School Council Chairs and COGSO representatives to meet other representatives in their Region and from other Regions. This enabled us to discuss not only issues relevant to one school or one Region but issues relevant to the entire Northern Territory.

It is always interesting to see that even given the size of the NT and how far spread and remote some of our schools may be, we can all have the same concerns. Although an issue may only be affecting one Region or one school, it is important that collectively as COGSO - including all affiliate schools - we tackle this issue as one day it could be an issue in our Region.

COGSO Executive looks forward to the year ahead of COGSO business.

*\*Minutes from the AGM and Annual Full Council meeting will be sent to all affiliate School Council's. If you would like a copy of COGSO's Annual Report for 2011/2012 please contact the Office on:  
8999 3256 or enquiries@ntcogso.org.au*

## COGSO EXECUTIVE

We would like to introduce the COGSO Executive for the 2012/2013 year. This Executive see's some new faces on board and familiar faces returning to continue their hard work as part of the COGSO team.

We welcome **Adam Walding** to the position of COGSO President. Adam has previously served on COGSO Executive as the Treasurer, and currently is the Chair of Dripstone Middle School Council. Adam has had a long standing involvement with COGSO and School Councils in the NT.

**Lisa Rothwell** continues in her role as COGSO Vice President, and COGSO's ACSSO (Australian Council of State School Organisations - Federal peak parent body) Representative. Lisa is currently the Chair of Casuarina Senior College Council.

**Gerard Reid** is welcomed as a new member to Executive. Gerard was elected to the COGSO Executive in the position of Treasurer, and is also a member of the Casuarina Senior College Council.

**Jan Greentree** continues as a familiar face for the East Arnhem Region as their Regional Representative. Jan serves as member on the Nhulunbuy High School Council.  
Contact number: 8987 5185

**Suzanne Horton** remains the Regional Representative for the Katherine Region, and is a member of the Katherine South Primary Council.  
Contact number: 0429 392 970

**Matt Skoss** continues as the Southern Region Representative. Matt is also a member of the Centralian Middle School Council.  
Contact number: 0418 624 631

**Kathleen Pledger** also continues in her role as the Darwin Region Representative, and is the Chair of the Sanderson Middle School Council as well as a member of the Casuarina Senior College Council.  
Contact number: 0402 342 860

## COGSO EXECUTIVE

A new face to our Executive as a Regional Representative is **Ray Simpson**. Ray was elected as the Palmerston and Rural Region Representative, and is the Chair of the Rosebery Middle School Council.  
Contact number: 0416 170 000

COGSO's Regional Representatives serve as a point of contact/conduit for parents, School Council members and members of the school community in the Region.

Regional Council meetings are usually held once a term, these serve as an opportunity for school COGSO Representatives to network and hear the concerns within the Region, your concerns may be the same as many other schools. It is a valuable forum for your School Council to elevate concerns and/or obtain support/guidance. It is important for your school COGSO Representative to attend the Regional meetings, as this is the fundamental forum where all schools can have their say and input to achieve the best possible educational outcomes for our students in public education.

Each School Council should have a COGSO Representative. COGSO urges your School Council to elect a member of Council to this position and encourages you to put this on your next meeting agenda - unlike other positions this does not need to be done at the AGM - once determined please forward their contact details to the COGSO Office.

Information is regularly sent from the Office and from Regional Representatives, to schools, Chairs and COGSO Representatives. If your School Council is not receiving COGSO correspondence please contact the Office on 8999 3255.

Remember COGSO is here to work for you, your children and your School Council. If you have concerns or would like support, advice, representation or advocacy please contact your Regional representative or Elise and Tamika in the Office.

We are always happy to support our schools and enjoy attending meetings to meet you all and provide support in your improvement agendas.

## GOVERNANCE

The main job of the School Council is to make sure the school has good Governance.

**COGSO focuses on 6 key principles of good governance:**

**Delineation** - Governance vs Management. What the Council does, what the Principal does.

**Roles & Responsibilities** - Knowing about your role on Council and understanding the responsibilities

**Effective Governance Processes** - including:

- the constitution - ensuring your constitution reflects your school and community context as well as the legislative requirements
- processes - meetings, AGM's motions etc.
- policy - knowing and applying (DET and Council)

• committees - finance committee or fundraising committee etc.

**Effective Governance Controls** - including:

- Audit - ensure the audit is approved and concerns from the audit are rectified and processes put in place to prevent recurrence
- Annual and Strategic planning - be involved, oversee and monitor, ensure you receive and understand reports

• data - understand the data and how this influences your school including with planning and funding

• finance - ensure sound controls around bank accounts and signatories, separation of duties. Understand and question reports, question, understand budget, monitor and question tracking

**Governance Health Check and Improvement:**

• regularly undertake a health check of your Council's governance (COGSO have a template to support this)

• ongoing professional development/training for your Council (COGSO can provide this support)

**Responsiveness:**

- contextual representation - ensure that your constitution and actions represent your school context
- cultural representation - try to ensure your Council has a diverse cultural representation that is reflective of your school community
- relationships - build positive relationships with relative stakeholders
- representation - support your school by representing at events such as community events/forums, fetes, fundraising events