

BILL ROGERS PRESENTATION

COGSO was delighted to invite Dr Bill Rogers to Darwin as part of the ACSSO Annual Conference. This presentation was a huge success, with roughly 300 parents and educators in attendance. COGSO was pleased to be able to provide this opportunity to all, reaffirming the message that teachers and parents must work together to provide the best educational outcomes for students.



Dr Bill Rogers presentation

Dr Rogers provided an insight for parents into what teachers experience on a day to day basis when working with students who present difficult behaviours, as well as some examples of dealing with these behaviours at home. For educators he presented strategies for a whole school approach to behaviour management, in his own entertaining style, giving examples from his own experience as a teacher and mentor.



Dr Bill Rogers

For those who may have missed out on attending this presentation Dr Rogers will be returning to Darwin in March and details can be found on his website www.billrogers.com.au.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Governance Workshops - This year COGSO and DECS together held three governance workshops in Darwin and Alice Springs, bringing together all Principals and School Council Chairs in each region. After the success of these workshops, COGSO has received a commitment that these will again run in April/May 2013. This will be after School Council AGMs, thus giving new School Council Chairs the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their role and the role of the School Council in the governance of the school. It is a great chance to meet other School Council Chairs, talk about common issues and ask COGSO and DECS any questions your Council may have.

More information with firm dates and locations will be distributed when available. DECS did collect feedback from the sessions, however if you have further feedback on how these workshops could be improved please feel free to send it to us in the office.

KEY DIARY DATES

Term 4 Holidays

17 December - 28 January*

*students resume school on **Tuesday 29 January**

*remote schools resume on **Wednesday 30 January**

Term 1 Dates

29 January - 5 April

Australia Day Public Holiday
28 January

Good Friday Public Holiday
29 March

Easter Monday Public Holiday
1 April

COGSO
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parent

Term 4, 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last few months have been busy for COGSO. We have met several times with the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) and continue to work on resolving your concerns outside of these meetings.

Of particular relevance and a great achievement in my mind is that COGSO has received a verbal commitment from the DECS Chief Executive, Mr Gary Barnes, to review relief teacher funding for schools in the New Year.

At our most recent meeting DECS briefed NT COGSO on the "draft" procurement tool for schools. Please note the use of the word draft; we have an assurance that the use of the tool is not compulsory. We'd appreciate your feedback if your school or staff have been advised otherwise. COGSO fully support improved practice/process for School Council, providing these improvements do not prove too cumbersome for our already very hard-working school based staff.

COGSO have also sought briefings across many other areas of parent interest/enquiry, including; Malak Re-Engagement Centre, Alternative Education Program, Student well-being and Students with Disabilities.

Most recently I have written to the Northern Territory Chief Minister Mr Terry Mills to convey COGSO's concerns around publicised increases to electricity costs in the NT. If your school is struggling or will struggle under these proposed increases I encourage you to contact us.

It was COGSO's pleasure to recently host Dr Bill Rogers in Darwin as part of the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) 66th Annual Conference. Dr Bill Rogers brought a wealth of knowledge on behaviour management to Territory parents and educators with his 3 ½ hour session as well as a great deal of entertainment.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all our

FROM THE PRESIDENT

dedicated teachers and parents here in the NT, for their support of our students. Enjoy a well-deserved break and I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Adam Walding

COGSO ACTION

Draft Procurement Tool - COGSO has received confirmation that the tool is not compulsory for use.

Extreme Behaviour Review - COGSO was briefed on the progress against the 13 recommendations from the 2011 review.

Safe Schools - COGSO provided input to the revision of the 'code of conduct'.

IT Review - COGSO provided input into this independent review.

Relief Teachers - COGSO received a commitment for review in 2013.

Governance Workshops - COGSO received a commitment for these to run again in April/May 2013.

Electricity Price Increases - COGSO has written to the Chief Minister seeking response to how School Councils will be funded to support these proposed increases.

ACSSO Annual Conference - COGSO as host affiliate provided secretariat and other support to ACSSO for the 66th Annual Conference in Darwin 1-4 November 2012.

EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGEMENT

In this edition of COGSO's parent newsletter we are featuring Girraween Primary School, winner of the 2012 Smart School Award for Excellence in Community Engagement. Principal Helen Chatto briefed us on what they are doing at the school and how it is benefiting students, parents, staff and the whole community.

Building a community with a strong sense of ownership of the school and programs was deemed as necessary to help plan for current and projected growth. Over the last two years, parents, community members and staff have worked together to expand the farm programs including the installation of an animal enclosure, overseen the installation of an outdoor learning centre and 3 more classrooms, a dry creek bed and a playground boat. The sense of pride and ownership amongst the community was showcased at our third annual Field Day which was organised by a committee consisting of parents, community members and staff. This has led to a very public sense of pride in our school and a high level of parental participation and engagement. We have moved from the teaching staff asking parents for help to a truly team approach where parents are driving the change and community involvement.



Before



EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGEMENT

By providing genuine opportunities for parents to be part of the decision making process with tangible growth projects we have built a stronger sense of community and ownership. This has led to increased school attendance, decreased behaviour issues and greater attendance of parents at class and other school events and increased parental involvement in governance of the school. Parents are now suggesting things we can do to further develop our school and assisting with future planning. As parents have seen improvements to the grounds and classrooms and the positive impact of programs beyond the classroom walls; the sense of pride and in the school has filtered throughout the wider community.



After



The school enjoys a very positive reputation in the wider community which has led to the need to enforce managed enrolment as it is a highly sought after educational option for rural families. We are now finding that many parents are willing to be on School Council; this meant we needed to hold elections this year. Other parents willingly volunteer for our task groups. Parents have articulated that seeing the improvements made and being a part of the decision making has made them more willing to be actively involved in the governance of the school.

EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGEMENT



The improvements to the grounds have created a greener and more interactive external space. This has led to a reduction in playground incidents. We developed a chill zone at the end of 2009. This space is a pleasant area with a resident long necked turtle, students can choose to chill in this space, they can come in if they need help with a problem or they can be sent by a teacher for playground issues. Data shows a large reduction in playground issues over the last two years. As students and families did the design and the labour to create our new areas, the sense of ownership is high, this has led to students looking after the areas very responsibly.



COGSO would like to congratulate Girraween Primary on their Smart School Awards win. COGSO loves to hear good news stories from your school, if you have a story we could feature please send it in to us.

ACSSO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This year COGSO was the host affiliate for the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) 66th Annual Conference held in Darwin, 1 - 4 November.

The event was attended by ACSSO affiliates from across Australia as well as parents and educators from the NT. It was a great opportunity for COGSO to network with similar organisations from other States and Territories and discuss the issues of relevance across jurisdictions.



ACSSO President Peter Garrigan, COGSO VP Lisa Rothwell, ACSSO VP Judith Bundy and COGSO President Adam Walding

There were many great speakers at the conference who brought a wealth of knowledge on educational matters as well as a strong focus of parental and community engagement.

Highlights of the event included: Alice Leung the head Science teacher at Merrylands High School, NSW and the 2011 winner of the Microsoft Innovative Teacher's Award. Alice discussed using social media in the classroom and gave an excellent presentation which included a student developed iPhone School Orientation app.

Danielle Cronin a member of the Parent Engagement Taskforce that developed the Parent Engagement Toolkit. Danielle gave brilliant insight into engaging parents in their children's education and presented the toolkit.

A panel discussion at the end of the Conference was held to discuss 'The State of Education in Australia'. Panel members included Jewel Topsfield, Education journalist for The Age and the Territory's own Lauren Moss who is a great campaigner for youth in the NT.