

PARENTS SAY

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PARENT COMMUNITIES INC.
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ECOLEARNING AT NEWBERY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL





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resources for
resumes, interviews,
and career
preparation.



SCAN ME



PRESIDENT'S SAY



JENICE ZERNA
PRESIDENT

Hello and welcome to the new school year. We especially extend a warm welcome to all new parents and carers who have begun the education journey for the first time – either at preschool or school; and we also welcome all the new preschool directors, principals, teachers and staff who have started this journey or started in a new site.

Affiliation 2026

To assist SAASPC with our ongoing work we have previously charged schools and preschools a small affiliation fee. However the SAASPC Executive has decided that no affiliation fee will be charged in 2026 – all public schools and preschools are therefore considered to be SAASPC affiliates and entitled to the benefits which come with affiliation; individual membership is still available. If you would like more information, please give us a call.

Parents in Education (PiE) funding 2026

PiE funding is made available by the Minister for Education and is open to all South Australian government preschools and schools. As in previous years SAASPC is pleased to be involved with the Department for Education in supporting preschools and schools with this valuable funding.

The PiE funding is available for parent engagement projects that focus on strengthening parent and school and preschool partnerships to support safe and inclusive learning environments.

Applications for funding are open now and close at the end of term 1 (on 10 April); and you can apply for between \$1000 and \$5000.

When considering applying it is important to read the information carefully, take note of *what you are eligible to apply for and what you are not eligible to apply for*; also ensure that you follow the steps required and supply all the necessary information. GOOD LUCK!

Information is available through your preschool and school – keep a look out for it at your parent group meeting or at your Governing Council meeting.

And all the information and the application form is available on the Dept for Education's website www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/parent-engagement/parents-education-funding-school-and-preschool-communities.

What we did in term 4 2025

Just some of the things that we have done:

- Met with the Minister for Education
- Met with the Chief Executive Department for Education
- Attended a Parent Round table with Jason Clare, the Federal Minister of Education, in Sydney
- Attended a Department for Education Consent and Respectful Relationships Education Advisory Committee meeting
- Provided RRHAN-EC training and Merit selection training

Information sessions

SAASPC continues to provide FREE information sessions for parents/carers and volunteers in public preschools and schools on:

- Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect in Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) for volunteers
- Merit Selection for governing council nominees and interested people – to inform and assist the nominee in their role when sitting on a panel for the selection and recommendation of principal/preschool directors. It is highly recommended that the Governing Council nominee attends training before sitting on the panel. More than one person can be trained
- Parent groups (affiliated committees) and their role in schools, parent participation and involvement.

SAASPC is your Association – our main role is to work with and support parents groups (affiliated committees) but we also support parents generally in our public preschools and schools. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any information, would like to organise an information session or raise any concerns or issues that you may have. And we are always happy to visit you – distance is not a barrier for us to do so.

South Australian Association of School Parent Communities (SAASPC)

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The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Association; nor does the Association necessarily endorse products/services advertised

BLAIR BOYER MP
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND SKILLS



2026 OFF TO A FLYING START

The 2026 school year got off to a flying start with the first three-year olds commencing preschool, and the final three technical colleges welcoming their first students.

The introduction of a second year of teacher-led, play-based preschool is the biggest change to education in a generation, and this year we will see more than 6,000 3 year-olds start as part of the government's Flying Start program – that's approximately a third of all SA three year olds.

Introducing a second year of preschool is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen children's development, laying the foundations for children to thrive in their education, and is fundamental to achieving the 20-year goal to reduce the rate of South Australian children who are developmentally vulnerable when they start school.

Research consistently shows that early years are critical to brain development, language acquisition and social and emotional growth. By supporting children earlier, three-year-old preschool helps set them up for success in their education and beyond.

Stronger starts lead to stronger communities. When children are supported from the early years, families are better supported, educators are better equipped, and communities are more connected and resilient.

The program is being introduced progressively and in partnership with long day care services and government and other sessional preschools across metropolitan and regional South Australia, supported by investment in the early childhood workforce, infrastructure and local planning. Every South Australian child will have access by 2032.

At the other end of our schooling system, the start of this year also saw the opening of our remaining three tech colleges, with the Heights, Tonsley and Limestone Coast Tech Colleges joining Findon and Port Augusta. This \$209m investment has been a nation-leading program linking secondary school students and industries to better ensure students are 'employment ready', giving them hands-on experiences, designing the facilities to echo workplaces and ensuring the training meets industry needs.

The government is committed to giving every South Australian young person the chance to succeed – from their earliest development, right through the education system and to a highly skilled job, in our most in-demand industries.

DID YOU KNOW YOU SAASPC HAS BROCHURES ON...

Parent teacher interviews • Parental engagement in student learning

Starting school • Transition to secondary school • Finding support

Fundraising • Information sessions for parents

Affiliated committees and parent groups

Connecting families with preschools and schools

you can find them at: www.saaspc.org.au/publications

NUMERACY AND LITERACY 2026



ROD NANCARROW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CURRICULUM AND LEARNING
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

With summer holidays over and students now back at school it's time to turn attention to supporting them to thrive in the classroom.

Numeracy and literacy are two key focuses of the Department for Education, and this year newly introduced testing will help identify primary school students which need additional support to boost their learning. For the first time in South Australian public schools, about 13,000 year 1 students will undergo a landmark numeracy check in term 1. Conducted in safe and nurturing environments, the testing will help lift numeracy outcomes for future generations.

Similar to the phonics screening check as a measure for a child's progress in reading, the numeracy check is not a pass or fail test but is a screening tool to identify year 1 students who may be struggling with mathematics.

The results of the check, which will be conducted with all year 1 students in March this year (between weeks 6 and 9 in term 1) will give schools the opportunity to adjust their teaching for the year ahead and achieve better outcomes for students. The check is a one-on-one hands-on assessment which allows teachers to observe the student's thinking and behaviour.

Done in a fun way, teachers are trained to conduct the check using hands-on interactive props, such as coins, small teddies and visual cards. Students explain their thinking and strategies used as they progress through a range of learning challenges.

Using the interview guide, the teacher checks each student's knowledge of number skills in 4 domains:

- Counting
- Place value
- Strategies for addition and subtraction
- Strategies for multiplication and division.

Teachers across the state have also been supported by an extensive professional learning program to help deliver the assessment and further support students in the classroom.

The new numeracy test comes ahead of the first year 2 phonics screening check taking place in term 3 this year. Phonics is the relationship between letters and sounds and is critical for learning to read.

Up until this year, only year 1 students in public schools took part in a short one-on-one assessment of 40 words, measuring how well students are learning to decode and blend letters into sounds. In term 3 this year, a year 2 phonics screening check will also be introduced to check the progress of students who did not reach the benchmark score of 28 or more in 2025.

Results will indicate those students who have caught up and mastered enough of the phonics code to access the curriculum heading into year 3, and those who will continue to need ongoing additional support.

The new phonics screening is part of the renewed *Literacy Guarantee* to better support parents, teachers and students to improve the overall literacy of South Australian students in public schools. A range of initiatives, including free online resources, will help teachers and parents with all aspects of reading from birth onwards – to better support our children's learning into the future.

SA SCHOOL TERM DATES

2026	27 January-10 April	27 April-3 July	20 July-25 September	12 October-11 December
2027	27 January-9 April	26 April-2 July	19 July-24 September	11 October-10 December
2028	31 January-13 April	1 May -7 July	24 July-29 September	16 October-15 December

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ELIZABETH NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL – IAN FUSS

This year, Elizabeth North Primary School recognised an outstanding milestone: 40 years of volunteer service from a community member who has become an essential part of the school's daily life. Over four decades, Ian Fuss has supported our school in countless practical and meaningful ways. He has been a long-standing contributor to our fundraising barbecues, often taking the lead with cooking and setup to ensure events run efficiently. His reliability at these fundraisers has helped raise vital funds and built a sense of community around each event.

Within the school grounds, he has always been ready to assist our groundsperson whenever extra help was needed. From general maintenance tasks to keeping outdoor areas tidy, his willingness to lend a hand has made a noticeable difference to the upkeep and safety of our environment.

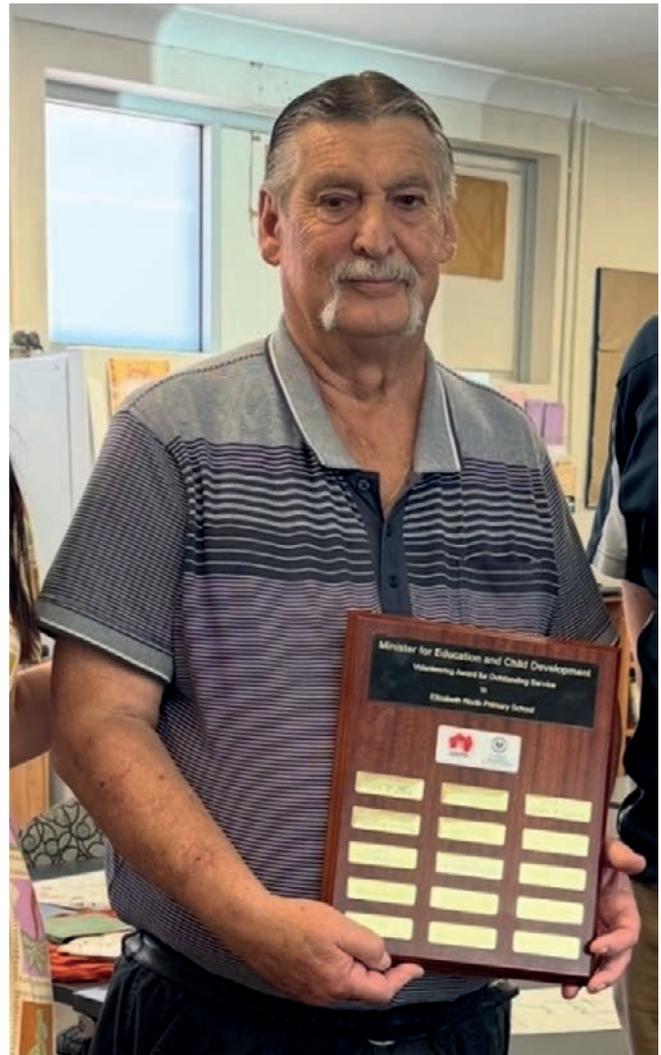
Ian's support for students has been just as consistent. Each year he has volunteered at swimming lessons, helping staff supervise and making sure students were safe and supported. He has also taken part in many excursions and school camps, providing an extra pair of hands and a steady presence that teachers and students alike could rely on.

One of his regular contributions happens quietly at the end of each day: locking the school gates. It's a simple task, but doing it every evening for years reflects the level of trust and responsibility he has carried.

Over time, he has been involved with our school not just as a volunteer but also as a parent and later a grandparent. His long-term connection has given him a unique understanding of our school community and its needs.

Reaching 40 years of voluntary service is a rare achievement. His commitment, reliability, and practical support have made a lasting impact, and our school is better for the time and effort he has given. This year we awarded Ian our Volunteer of the Year Award (he has won on more than one occasion), and he received a Minister's Volunteering Award for Outstanding Service signed by the Hon Blair Boyer, Minister for Education.

We sincerely thank him for his four decades of service and the steady contribution he continues to make to our school community.



ECOLEARNING AT NEWBERY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

WORKING LOCALLY TO THINK GLOBALLY!

Environmental education has been a defining feature of Newbery Park Primary School for more than two decades. What began as a modest garden designed to engage students who struggled within the confines of a traditional classroom has evolved into a deeply embedded, whole-school EcoLearning approach that now sits at the heart of the school's identity.

The EcoLearning program is overseen by committed environmentalist and Student Support Officer Angela Jones, who brings a deep passion for sustainability and conservation. Actively involved in a range of local environmental initiatives, Ange plays a pivotal role in connecting the school with community partners and ensuring students are engaged in authentic projects that make a real difference to their local environment.



From its earliest days, EcoLearning at Newbery Park has been grounded in hands-on, experiential learning. Over time, the garden has grown into a productive kitchen garden, native plant nursery, science hub and immersive outdoor classroom, where learning is purposeful, connected and deeply engaging.

Food education is a central pillar of the program. Using organic growing principles, students cultivate fruit and vegetables that are eaten fresh, shared with families and used in school-based cooking. Early cooking experiences took place in camp ovens and cast-iron frypans over an open fire, later transitioning to electric frypans in the garden shed. In 2025, this work culminated in the construction of a purpose-built nine-bay Community Kitchen, bringing students, families and the wider community together around food security and shared responsibility.

Students now participate in weekly cooking lessons using produce grown on site. Each Friday, a whole-school meal is prepared and shared in the purpose-built dining room alongside community volunteers, while parents are invited to attend fortnightly after-school cooking classes. These experiences build food literacy, sustainability awareness and essential life skills, while fostering inclusion and meaningful participation for all learners, and their families.

Animals play an important role in EcoLearning at Newbery. School chickens provide eggs and form part of an integrated pest management system, while offering significant wellbeing benefits. Caring for the chickens builds confidence, responsibility and calm for many students; spending time with them is affectionately known as “chook therapy” by staff.

Sustainability practices such as recycling, composting and waste reduction are embedded across the school. Food scraps and paper waste are composted through worm farms, allowing students to see how everyday waste is transformed into nutrient-rich castings that are returned to the garden. This process provides a tangible understanding of environmental cycles and the impact of daily choices.

Native plant propagation is another cornerstone of EcoLearning. Students are involved in every stage of



the process, from seed collection and storage through to propagation, care and planting. In the early years of the program, an 11-year partnership with Forestry SA's Biodiversity Corridor Program saw students propagating and planting up to 3,000 native plants annually, making a lasting contribution to regional biodiversity.

Students at Newbery Park are currently actively involved in a range of authentic environmental partnerships across the Limestone Coast. Junior primary students participate in the Lake McIntyre Project, where they explore local birds, insects and aquatic life while planting native grasses, shrubs and trees. This work enhances an important community recreation space used for gatherings, reflection, fitness and education. Through the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Recovery Project, students propagate and plant Stringybark trees on private land and in native forest reserves, directly supporting the survival of this iconic endangered species. Students also partner with community volunteers on the Mt Burr Trails project, propagating local native plants for habitat rehabilitation along forest trail networks, enhancing biodiversity while improving access to nature and strengthening native ecosystems.

Connection to Country is a strong and intentional focus. The ongoing development of Budinya Mraatu, the school's Indigenous-themed outdoor learning area, deepens students' understanding of how First Nations people care for Country, while increasing biodiversity on site. The garden is



designed to reflect the Craitbul creation story, which begins at Belita (Mt Muirhead) near Millicent.

Key goals for 2026 include the establishment of a bushtucker garden to further strengthen the whole-school lunch program. Students will also work alongside Aboriginal Elders and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board through the Walking the Seasons program, engaging in authentic on-Country learning that explores Indigenous seasons, environmental change and cultural knowledge. These experiences foster belonging, identity and wellbeing.

The South Australian Department for Education's focus on Expeditionary Learning has further strengthened EcoLearning at Newbery Park. Staff have collaborated with international and local experts, including Ron Berger, Gwyn ap Harri and Kate Gwyn, to design deep, authentic learning experiences. One such expedition saw students investigate the importance of native pollinators, working with "The Bee Man" Clancy Lester to design and build bee hotels. Students are currently constructing a large public bee hotel with educational signage - in partnership with Wattle Range Council - to raise community awareness of the vital role native pollinators play.

At Newbery Park, EcoLearning is not a standalone program; it is a way of learning, living and caring for the world together. Through inquiry, agency, community partnerships and connection to Country, students are growing as capable, compassionate young people ready to steward a sustainable future. As Angela reflects, 'We connect with nature in the most comprehensive of all classrooms - our local environment. By delivering a consistent message, we are creating environmentally aware citizens who will care for the environment into the future'.

LEANNE SCUDDS
PRINCIPAL
NEWBERY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL



WALKING THE SEASONS SCHOOL PROGRAM – ENGAGING STUDENTS IN CULTURAL LEARNING IN THE LIMESTONE COAST

The seasonal knowledge of Traditional Owners guides an immersive environmental experience through the Walking the Seasons program. Using a collaborative approach (Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance), the South East Aboriginal Focus Group, Burrendies Aboriginal Corporation and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board continue to develop the South East Seasonal Calendar. The Seasonal Calendar provides the base for the Walking the Seasons program.

Walking with Traditional Owner perspectives, students are equipped with a better understanding of the natural world, the interconnectedness of all living things and the vital role we as humans play in the future of our landscape. Walking the Seasons is governed by the Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance Framework which provides a structure of how we can all

work together towards a connected and respectful future. We seek better outcomes for the environment, a stronger cultural connection, and positive social and emotional wellbeing for students. Using traditional wisdom and modern technology we can better care for the landscape – empowering the next generation.

What is Walking the Seasons in schools?

This program is based upon the knowledge and cultural intellectual property of First Nations people of the South East of South Australia. It is one way in which First Nations people can strengthen and build the capacity of First Nations communities. It is an integral way to communicate cultural knowledge from Elders. Inspired by the First Nations Weaving the South East Seasonal Calendar, each season celebrates culturally significant

Weaving the South East Seasons
The days of the weather

LONGEST DAY - SHORTEST NIGHT / Coastal living / Fishing season abundant with seafood and shellfish / Fire danger season / Wattle seed gathering and Wattle seed damper prepared / Bursaria and Banksia in flower soaked in water to make traditional energy drink / Cumbungi in growth time to gather / Finishing season: Native Cherry, Currant-bush, Dianella, Elderberry

SEED COLLECTING SEASON: Acacia species, native grasses, Lomandra, Old Man's Beard, Senecio, Pommaderis, Native Geranium, Hop-bush, Velvet-bush / Season of butterflies / Hooded Plover eggs on beach and chicks hatching until February / Red-tailed Black Cockatoo migrate to Buloke country for season feeding on Buloke (January to March)

Shell & Wattle Seed Time

EARLY/MID SPRING / SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

Longer days and rise in temperature / Change in season brings storms, spring showers and changeable weather / Rainbow season / Brilgia pair up for breeding season / Breeding season for many mammals / Late planting season / Nesting birds / Orchids, Lilies and Yam Daisies begin to flower / Snakes and lizards become active / Tadpole season / Yabbies are crawling and turtle breeding / Kangaroo Apple blossom / Fish traps set / Fish spawning season begins / Egg season / The warmth encourages growth and the food chain in wetlands / Germination of Melaleuca, Leptospermum, Allocasuarina, Olea, Ozothamnus, Hakea, Dodonaea / native grasses, Lily's and all coastal, understorey and wetland species / Migrant birds return

Kangaroo & Grass Seed Time

LATE EARLY SUMMER / NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

Time of plenty / Land begins to dry from greens to browns / Wildflowers and Lilies in flower / Young macropods are out of the pouch / Birds are feeding their young with baby birds preparing to leave the nest / Kangaroos, wallabies and wombats are active feeding on fresh native grasses and growth / Fish spawning / Set fish traps as season warms / Benewing-bats congregate at maternity cave to give birth / Coastal Mallee in flower / Madroetes in flower / Grass trees flowering / Whales migrate South to Antarctica / Seed Collecting begins with Native grasses they are tall with seed heads flowering and seeding / Flax flowers begin to seed such as Kennedias, Swansonias, Dilwynia, Pultreasas etc. / Insects, bees and ants active till Autumn / Echidnas dig for ants / Eucalyptus germinating / Wedge-tailed eagles are breeding / Migrant birds return to Tasmania for breeding season such as Orange-bellied Parrots

EMU CAMP & STORY TIME

Wettest and coldest time of year / Longest night and shortest day / Sun is low and shadows long / Wetlands and drains flowing at highest point / Ground water levels rise and swell / Rock shelters and caves used for winter shelter / Sitting by the fire, campfire stories about creation, lore, hunt and gather and connection to country / tree planting season / Acacias in flower / Collect and sow Knobby CLE-tail, soot / Benewing-bats migrate to over wintering caves / Male Emus raising their young ones / Yam Daisy and Lily tubers dug, collected and cooked in underground ovens / Honey pot flowers sweet to eat / Native spinach lush for picking / Swamp Gum in flower / Southern right whales birthing in southern coastal waters / Echidna train - Echidna breeding season / Birds start building nests and ducks and swans start breeding in August / Blue Gum in flower

DEEP WINTER / JUNE - AUGUST

COUNTRY STARTS TO COOL DOWN / Mild weather / rainbow season / no wind and first rains / cobwebs / dew mornings / Families migrated inland to woodlands and higher ground near wetlands for winter / Set up camps / Gathering together for hunting and cultural ceremony / Make coats from possum and kangaroo skins / Make fish traps / Kangaroos and wallabies feeding on new growth / Reptiles less active / Seed collecting season: Bursaria seed, Coastal Rosemary, Sea-berry saltbush, Cushion bush, Scavola / Germination of Lomandra and Banksia seed / Bursaria late May into June / Mistlebe, Cherry Ballart and bush tomato fruiting / Shoak pollinating / In woodlands Heath flowering / Still days first frosts / Soil warmth and rainy days bring lung and mushrooms / Waterholes filling up and animals moving to higher ground / Birds flock and migrate north / Orange-bellied parrot start migration to the mainland across Bass Strait - over wintering and feeding on Coastal wetlands in Victoria and Southern South Australia / Snakes go into hibernation / Eagles building nests / Possums mating / Prepare ground for planting season / freestick farming / mammals are active feeding on fresh growth / Emus nesting

Cultural Ceremonial Time

APRIL - MAY / AUTUMN

Hot temps northerly winds / Coastal living / Fishing season / Fire danger season / Swamps and drains are dry / Water table at its lowest point / Wetlands drying as yabbies and Galaxia hibernate in the mud / Furthest first frosts / Egg trapping season / Moths emerge and provide food for birds and mammals / Seasonal fruit gathering / Muntzia, Pigface and Sweet Apple-berry, Coastal dune flower berry, Boobialla / Wattle sap collected for food, resin and glue / Seed collection season: Banksia, Xanthorrhoea, Gahnia and sedges / Dryland Tortoise begins to flower / Germination of Dianella, Gahnia, Currant-bush and native grasses

Sugar & Eel Time

LATE SUMMER / FEBRUARY - MARCH

EMU CAMP & STORY TIME

www.landscape.sa.gov.au/lc

LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA LIMESTONE COAST

observations such as an abundance of food. The South East Seasonal Calendar provides an opportunity for teachers and students to deepen their understanding of the local landscape to develop a connection to Country. This program shares traditional artefacts and First Nations landscape connections. This sharing of knowledge strengthens a sense of community and connection to Country. A walk can be undertaken almost anywhere in the local landscape. Identifying seasonally specific flora, fauna and environmental and weather changes makes this an interesting experience for all ages. The six seasons described in the Calendar for the Limestone Coast are outlined below:

South East Seasons	European Calendar Months
Shell and Wattle Seed Time	December/January
Sugar and Eel Time	February/March
Cultural Ceremonial Time	April/May
Emu Camp and Storytime	June/August
Egg and Orchid Time	September/October
Kangaroo and Grass Seed Time	November/December

By Walking the Seasons, students and teachers walk together with First Nations people, combining knowledge of the cultural significance of the local landscape with modern citizen science. Collectively we build our knowledge about local plants, animals, the landscape and climate of the Limestone Coast. Teachers can link the Walking the Seasons program across subject areas, curriculum priorities and to develop student dispositions and capabilities.

In 2025 students from 15 sites across the Limestone Coast attended Traditional Owner led seasonal walks. Students had the opportunity to go out on Country at different times of the year and share their seasonal observations. Seasonal walks



created the opportunity for enhanced wellbeing and sense of belonging and was a catalyst for further discovery across the curriculum.

Walking the Seasons at schools

Students attend six seasonal field trips observing changes in the landscape exploring how those changes impacted Traditional Owners. Each walk is led by a Burrendies Aboriginal Corporation contracted Traditional Owner and is accompanied by the Landscape Education Team. A pre session (incursion) is delivered by the Landscape Education Team, and it is expected that school communities develop their own Seasonal Calendar to track and record their experience. With support and resources which have been developed to support curriculum planning by Burrendies and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board throughout the year.

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board is grateful to Burrendies Aboriginal Corporation for working and walking collaboratively to deliver such an inspiring educational program.

Managing Director of Language and Education at Burrendies Aboriginal Corporation Tara Bonney said, *The best outcome for me was seeing students take part in the Walking the Seasons program and share what they learned and experienced. It was fantastic to hear students explain how the program helped them better understand our role in helping Country heal.*

Listening to the next generation talk about their stronger connection to Country, their respect, and their desire to care for our landscape showed how important the program is and why it should continue to grow in the region.

Limestone Coast Landscape Board educator Mel Holtz said, *The sharing of seasonal calendars across schools provided a special opportunity for students and teachers to share their experiences of Walking the Seasons. The seasonal calendars that have been created were phenomenal and show the deeper understanding of the landscape that has been observed during the sessions.*

For more information see <https://lc.landscape.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/landscape-learning/school-programs/walking-the-seasons-school-program>

FROM SUE-ANN CHARLTON - THE NEW REGISTRAR OF THE TEACHERS REGISTRATION BOARD

As South Australian families know, great teaching sits at the heart of every positive school experience. Behind the scenes, the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia (TRBSA) plays a crucial role in ensuring our state's educators meet the highest standards of professionalism and care. It is an honour to introduce myself as the new Registrar leading this important work.

I stepped into the role in January 2026, following an extensive recruitment process, and I am genuinely excited about the opportunity to support a strong, future focused teaching profession. To me, this role is both a privilege and an inspiring new chapter.

My career has spanned senior executive and board leadership, where I've focused on strategic direction, positive workplace culture, and creating environments where people and organisations can truly thrive. Collaboration, meaningful engagement, and constructive challenge have guided my work, qualities I believe are essential when supporting a profession as impactful as teaching.



My focus areas

For families, I want my priorities to offer reassurance: the quality, capability, and safety of our teaching profession are my central commitments. As I begin this role, I am focused on four key areas:

- **Delivering positive outcomes for children, with child safety at the forefront**

Above all else, every decision we make must prioritise the safety, wellbeing, and growth of children, the core purpose of the teaching profession.

- **Strengthening relationships and elevating the voice of teachers**

I want to ensure teachers feel heard, valued, and supported. They play an essential role in shaping children's education and overall wellbeing, and it is vital their expertise is recognised.

- **Maintaining high professional standards**

Upholding teacher capability and conduct is central to public confidence in schooling. I am committed to ensuring our standards remain rigorous, fair, contemporary, and reflective of the professionalism of South Australian teachers.

- **Collaborating locally and nationally**

Education is evolving rapidly, and so too are expectations of our teachers. By partnering closely with colleagues across the state and around Australia, we can remain responsive, aligned with best practice, and well positioned for the future.

I believe deeply in the power of partnership between teachers, schools, families, communities, and the systems that support them. My role is to foster transparency, respect, and a shared purpose so that the TRB can continue to strengthen both the profession and the outcomes for young people.

As I begin this journey, I am genuinely looking forward to meeting parents, teachers, and community members. There is so much we can learn from one another, and I know that working side by side is how we create the best possible environment for children to learn, grow, and thrive.

FULHAM GARDENS PRIMARY BRINGS THE JOY OF UKULELE TO LIFE!

On Friday, 24 October, Fulham Gardens Primary School was buzzing with excitement as we hosted the fifth annual Ukulele Day, an event that has quickly grown into a musical highlight for our community. Each year, we wonder how Ukulele Day could possibly get any better, yet somehow, it always does!

Our 'Uke Day' brought together Year 5 and 6 ukulele classes from both Fulham Gardens and Marion Primary, under the direction of our passionate music teacher, Mr Whitehead. The day began with a warm welcome from our Principal, Mr Philbrook, and a moving rendition of Advance Australia Fair, which included Auslan signing from students of both schools, setting a tone of unity and celebration.

The festivities continued with a lively jam-a-long led by the Uke Day All-Star Band, featuring guest musicians from both schools. Students then had the chance to take the stage themselves, leading songs and bravely performing in a special Open Mic session. It was a proud moment for teachers and guests alike to see students showcasing impressive vocal and ukulele skills.

A real highlight was a guest performance by ukulele artist Ben Roberts, who not only played original tunes but also showed how the ukulele can be used in surprising ways, including as a percussion instrument. Ben's message was clear: music brings

joy and wellbeing, and the ukulele, in particular, is a 'feel-good' instrument that lifts our spirits.

After lunch, the festival took on a Hawaiian twist. The All-Star Band, dressed in colourful leis and shirts, led a workshop in traditional Hawaiian music. The fun peaked when Mrs Nicole taught hula dancing – inviting students and teacher Mr Starling as well as the principal, Mr Philbrook, to join her on stage, much to the delight of everyone.

We wrapped up the day with a group singalong, finishing with an enthusiastic rendition of 'Sweet Caroline', filling the Performing Arts Centre with smiles, laughter and song.

Ukulele Day 2025 was more than just a school event; it was a celebration of community, creativity, and connection through music. Special thanks go to our talented musicians, guest artist Ben Roberts, and everyone who helped make the day such a memorable experience.

At Fulham Gardens Primary, days like Ukulele Day remind us of the joy music can bring, especially when we share it together.

CHRIS PHILBROOK
PRINCIPAL
FULHAM GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL



LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: LOBETHAL PRIMARY SCHOOL'S BUSH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Just beyond the township of Lobethal, tucked into the natural surrounds of Bushland Park, learning takes on a very different form. Each year during terms 2 and 3, Lobethal Primary School's Bush School program invites students from Reception to Year 3 to step outside the classroom and into the bush, where curiosity, connection and confidence grow alongside the children themselves.

The Bush School program began in 2015 as a natural continuation of the much-loved Bush Kindy program at Lobethal Community Kindergarten. Recognising the powerful impact of nature-based learning in the early years, Lobethal Primary School embraced the opportunity to extend this approach into the primary setting, ensuring continuity for children as they transitioned into school.

At Lobethal Primary School, Bush School is valued not as an 'extra', but as an essential part of a balanced and inclusive curriculum. While academic growth remains important, equal emphasis is placed on social and emotional wellbeing. Bush

School provides a space where children can foster meaningful connections — with themselves, with others and with the natural environment. Developing a sense of place and a love of being outdoors encourages sustainable thinking and supports emotional wellbeing in ways that are both powerful and deeply therapeutic.

One of the most significant benefits of Bush School is the opportunity for children to learn how to assess and manage risk. Research consistently shows that safe risk-taking builds resilience, stamina and a growth mindset. At Bush School, students are encouraged to explore, problem-solve and persist — all while being supported to make thoughtful decisions about their own safety. Alongside this, teachers observe growth in vocabulary, oral language, persistence, collaboration and a strong sense of community.

The links to the South Australian Curriculum are wide and varied, with particular connections to Science, Geography, History and Health. Each visit has a clear learning focus,



shaped by teacher planning and discussions with students, while still allowing room for child-led inquiry. Authentic learning opportunities emerge naturally through observation, investigation and play.

Research strongly supports the benefits of outdoor play, including increased confidence, strengthened social skills, physical development, reduced anxiety and improved engagement in literacy and numeracy. The Lobethal Primary School Early Years Team consistently sees these outcomes in action. Bush School offers the gift of uninterrupted time — time for children to think deeply, collaborate meaningfully and learn independently.

MOLLIE STRACHAN AND BECK REEVES
BUSH SCHOOL TEACHERS
LOBETHAL PRIMARY SCHOOL



HALLETT COVE EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ABORIGINAL MURAL

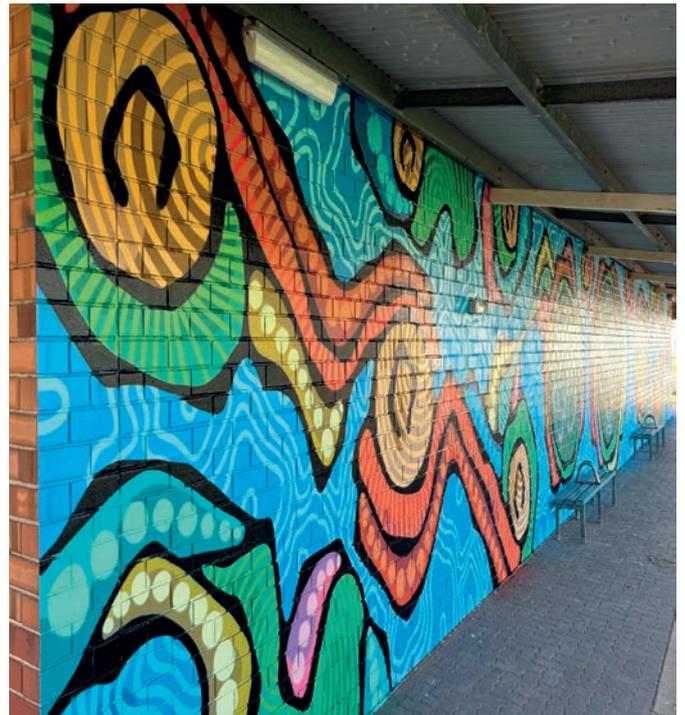
Our school wanted to increase the visual safety and cultural inclusiveness of our environment. The idea of an Aboriginal mural, brought together student thinking, community interest and the artistic talents of Artist, Scott Rathman from Rusted Tin. Scott worked with groups of students in years 4-6 to generate ideas that capture the importance of school and the journey we are on as we learn and grow in the Hallett Cove East Primary School community. The project was funded by the very generous donations of our community through various fundraising events in 2024 and 2025 and our hardworking volunteer parent community who hosted community events to ensure we achieved our fundraising goal. We are grateful for our community volunteers and all they do for our school.

The end result is the visually stunning mural with an equally important message:

Our journey to this place is part of the journey from here. The connections we make shape who we are and prepare us for what comes next. We find belonging through the people around us, through our connection to this place, and through the creativity that allows us to be ourselves. Together, we grow, share, and carry our experiences forward into the next part of our journey.

We are very proud of the completed Aboriginal Mural which is a welcome and vibrant addition to the pavilion wall. We are so very grateful to our community for the very generous donations. The message is a very special and pertinent one for our whole school community and reminds us of the importance of connection, belonging and our experiences at school which help shape us as people, ready to take the next step in life.

MATTHEW CHAPMAN
PRINCIPAL
HALLETT COVE EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL



WEC DATA DAY EMPOWERS STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS RIDGEHAVEN PARTNERSHIP

Last year, Ridgehaven Primary School had the privilege of hosting a unique and inspiring event: our first ever Wellbeing and Engagement Collection (WEC) Data Day. This innovative day brought together student leaders from eight schools across our local partnership, all focused on understanding and improving student wellbeing.

Throughout the day, student leaders analysed WEC data at three levels—state-wide, partnership, and local school—gaining valuable insights into the experiences of children and young people across South Australia. With guidance from school staff, students developed a deeper understanding of the specific language and social-emotional literacy embedded in the WEC survey, learning how responses are organised and what they represent.

A key part of the day involved discussing the purpose of the WEC survey itself and exploring methods for student-led data analysis. By examining real data, students identified trends, strengths, and areas for growth. This analytical process not only developed data literacy skills but also encouraged critical thinking about how numbers and narratives influence school culture.

One of the most exciting elements was the brainstorming session, where children collaborated to generate fresh ideas for lifting wellbeing in their own schools. From practical changes in playground spaces to strategies for boosting student voice, their ideas reflected both creativity and empathy. The theme of

student agency shone through as our young leaders identified ways to empower their peers and make a positive difference in everyday school life.

The major takeaway from WEC Data Day was clear: when given the tools and trust, students can play a significant role in creating supportive, engaging learning environments. Our children left with increased understanding of the WEC process as well as new initiatives to enhance positive engagement during play times.

Thank you to all schools, staff, and — most importantly — student leaders who participated. Events like these highlight the power of partnership and the importance of student voice in shaping our community's future.

NATHAN ANDERSON
LEADER OF WELLBEING AND INCLUSION
RIDGEHAVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS: WOODVILLE HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM SETS A NEW STANDARD

At Woodville High School, we believe that every student possesses the potential to lead, inspire, and drive positive change. Our Student Leadership Team is a shining example of this belief in action. Developed in partnership with Students and Staff, our Student Leadership Team provides rich, authentic opportunities for young people to shape their school culture, amplify student voice, and develop skills that will serve them and their communities for life.

A structure designed for growth, inclusion, and impact

Our Student Leadership Team is not just a group of students voted into their positions based on popularity. It is a dynamic structure designed to encourage broad participation and real influence, where students must apply for their position, be shortlisted for interview and then present a compelling vision for how they will lead in their role. Our Student Leadership Team is made up of students from across all year levels, spanning a range of leadership roles, including Prefects, School Captains, and House Leaders who also represent their peers on our school committees. These committees inform decision making across all operations of the school and have students, staff, families and community members represented on each committee, ensuring all stakeholders are involved in decision making. This multi-layered approach ensures that leadership at Woodville High School is inclusive and collaborative. Every

young person with a passion to lead finds their place, whether as a committee member, advocating for fellow students, organising key events, representing the school at community forums, or launching learning and wellbeing initiatives. Their work is guided by a clear leadership framework detailed in our Student Leadership Handbook, which sets high expectations, provides clear role descriptions, and supports their ongoing growth and development.

Living our values

At the heart of our leadership program are the core values of Diversity, Integrity, and Resilience. These values are more than words; they serve as daily touchstones, guiding every decision and interaction. Diversity is embraced and celebrated in everything we do. Our Student Leadership Team reflects the rich range of backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, and identities within our school community. Leaders champion inclusion, encourage the celebration of individual differences, and ensure every student has a voice. Initiatives and projects carried out by the Student Leadership Team prioritise equity and work to create a sense of belonging for all, including our Braiding Project where students discuss their similarities and differences to understand different perspectives and shape a welcoming and harmonious school together. Integrity guides all student leaders in acting honestly, ethically, and with respect towards others. To



foster integrity means to do what's right, even when it's difficult, and earning the trust of peers through accountability and transparency. Whether representing fellow students or managing a school project, our leaders are expected to model fairness, openness, and strong moral character. Resilience is a vital quality for modern leadership and is cultivated through every challenge our leaders encounter. Student leaders learn to adapt, persevere in the face of setbacks, and creatively solve problems. Through training, support, and reflection, they develop the ability to keep moving forward, look after their own and others' wellbeing, and inspire others to overcome obstacles.

Student Leadership in action

Since the leadership structure's inception in 2022, our student leaders have showcased remarkable energy, passion, and innovation when working collaboratively within each Portfolio and Team. The improvements achieved have included policy changes, improvements to learning and teaching, additional wellbeing supports, and working alongside our Staff to develop our Strategic Plan, reviewing it annually to ensure our strategic direction is purposeful, effective and impactful. Our student

leaders are visible at every level of school life: valued members of all our school committees, welcoming guests and new students, members of the Governing Council, running assemblies and workshops, supporting fund raising, and representing Woodville High School at public events and forums. They regularly access student leadership training from external providers and represent the school on other statewide leadership teams such as the South Australian Student Representative Council, Youth Parliament and Teen Parliament. In 2025, three of our students travelled to New South Wales for the Magic Mountains Leadership Camp following their successful applications, and hope to attend again this year as camp leaders.

Testimonials: Leadership in their words

The most powerful evidence of our program's impact comes from the voices of our student leaders themselves.

Amelia, a Year 9 Student Leader, reflects: 'Being part of the Leadership Team has helped me realise the difference a single person can make. I've learned to balance what's best for everyone with what's possible, and that collaboration is the key to achieving big changes'.



Sahil, a Year 11 Student Leader, adds: 'I used to be nervous about speaking up. Now, I've helped lead discussions with teachers, working alongside them during our student free days to co-design curriculum and assessment. The support from other students and staff has given me greater confidence'.

In every story, there is a common theme: student leaders discover new strengths, develop life skills, from public speaking and project management to emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. They also form lasting connections with their peers and mentors.

A growth-focused developmental journey

Our Student Leadership Handbook sets a clear developmental pathway, providing access to regular training workshops, mentorship from staff and community leaders, and opportunities for reflection and feedback. This intentional focus on growth helps students move from emerging leaders to confident, capable individuals ready to contribute in diverse settings. Leaders are encouraged to participate in state-wide student leadership forums, complete accredited leadership and community service awards, and engage in peer mentoring for younger or aspiring leaders. The handbook also outlines the expectations for balancing leadership responsibilities with academic and personal commitments, with a strong emphasis

on wellbeing and support. This handbook is accessible via our school website.

A lasting impact: Beyond school walls

Our student leaders finish their time at Woodville High School equipped with practical skills and a clear sense of purpose. Many have gone on to take up leadership positions in the broader community, in sporting clubs, civic organisations, and beyond. Feedback from parents and community members underscores the contribution of our Student Leadership Team, not only in improving school life, but in building pride and engagement among families and the wider Woodville community. We are proud of what our Student Leadership Teams has accomplished over the last four years, and we are excited for what the future holds as each team builds on the progress from the previous year. As our program grows, every student is encouraged to find their unique voice and take up the opportunity to lead, serve, and shape their world. Thank you to Bloom Leadership, led by Tom Jonas and Nat von Bertouch for training our 2026 Student Leadership Team in Week 0 this year.

Together, we are building tomorrow's leaders – today.

LUKE SMITH
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
WOODVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



INSPIRING LEARNING AND WELLBEING THROUGH MUSIC AND THE ARTS

For six years, students in South Australia have been sharpening their music skills with The Song Room and in the process have boosted learning, wellbeing and school connection.

When I was performing I was nervous, but when we started the song I felt happy and proud. I was amazed by how we all worked together. Student reflects on The Song Room program.

On a warm Friday afternoon toward the end of 2025, the Millicent North School Hall pulsed with sound. Drums echoed. Feet shuffled and stamped in time. Voices - some confident, some tentative- rose together in song. This was Millipalooza, and it was anything but an ordinary school event.

More than 250 children, from pre-schoolers to Year 6 students, travelled from nine schools and early learning sites in the Mount Gambier region to celebrate a year of music and arts learning. For many, it was the first time performing as part of such a large ensemble. For others, it was the joy of mentoring younger children - helping them keep the beat, showing them when to come in, reassuring and guiding them.

What unfolded was not just a performance. Students took part in listening games, rhythm activities, and group singing - building focus, trust and confidence with every shared beat. It was a powerful demonstration of how arts learning supports children's wellbeing and engagement in learning.

It really allows all the students to shine in their own way.

Principal, Millicent North Primary School

Whether it's drumming, drama, dance or storytelling, the arts give young people a safe space to explore emotions, grow confidence, and discover their strengths. But for many schools, access to specialist arts educators can be limited. That's where The Song Room steps in.

Since 2020, arts learning experts The Song Room, have been working alongside South Australian public schools, using music education to support student wellbeing and learning in regional communities.

In partnership with the SA Department for Education and the South East Coast and Vines Regional Office, The Song Room



delivers high-quality, sequential music programs that do more than teach skills — they connect children to each other, to their teachers and to their communities.

Teaching Artists work in classrooms alongside teachers, building their confidence and capability so the impact continues long after the program ends. Community events like Millipalooza bring families and schools together, strengthening local connections and shared pride.

Arts learning plays a powerful role in schools. It creates structured, joyful opportunities for children to regulate their emotions, work collaboratively, listen to one another and express themselves safely. It helps anxious children find calm, gives quieter students a voice, and channels energy in positive ways.

The confidence children build through music doesn't stay in the hall. It travels back into classrooms.

Teachers taking part in The Song Room program report calmer classrooms (across subjects), reduced negative behaviours, and improved attendance on music days. Students who once struggled to speak up begin contributing. Children who found learning overwhelming show greater persistence.

As one school leader explains, 'When students feel good about themselves, they're more open to learning. Music helps them get there'.

Today's children are navigating increasing levels of anxiety, disruption and pressure. Schools are being asked to support not just academic outcomes, but the whole child.

Arts learning meets this challenge head-on. By prioritising the arts, schools create the conditions children need to engage deeply in their learning. They foster resilience, communication, collaboration and confidence — the foundations for lifelong learning and mental health.



Millipalooza is a reminder of what's possible when the arts are placed at the centre of learning. As the final song ended and applause filled the hall, one thing was clear – high quality music education shouldn't be seen as an extra. All children deserve the benefits of arts learning.

The new year brings a new opportunity to create a space where every student feels safe, engaged and ready to learn. The Song Room's evidence-based arts learning programs are designed to do exactly that. Schools interested in getting a program at their school in 2026 can contact The Song Room at songroom.org.au.





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