ADELAIDE WEST SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRE

DELIVERING QUALITY EDUCATION AND CARE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
EMPOWERMENT

ACHIEVEMENT

RESPECT

CARE

FUN
2013 was a year of many highs and then a few lows in the latter half of the year.
At Adelaide West Special Education Centre we believe that the ability to communicate and move is fundamental to learning, engagement and well-being. All students can learn and it is our responsibility to find ways to engage students, increase opportunities for communication and ensure that students are able to move and explore to learn.

Through the use of PODDs and iPads, students demonstrated an improvement in their ability to communicate and to varying degrees make their wishes, choices and thoughts known.

We continued our work with Jane Farrall as our coach to improve literacy outcomes for our students. Through the implementation of the Four Blocks to Literacy program students became more aware of the purpose of reading and writing. Many students showed an improvement in word and letter recognition, communication and choice-making.

The end of year celebration for students in the MOVE program showcased their well deserved success in learning to walk or move to better support their health and learning.

During 2013 we hosted visitors from around Australia and overseas including Singapore, Nepal and New Zealand, the Riverland, Canberra and the Northern Territory. The visitors were highly complimentary of the teaching and learning at our school and we willingly shared programs and ideas that others might find useful.

We hosted four major conferences. Two were in conjunction with the local schools on the Le Fevre Peninsula, including our neighbour, Ocean View College, and the third was in conjunction with other Special Schools and units from SA. The focus for each conference was teaching and learning and the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. A fourth conference was co-hosted with the Special Education Resource Unit and focussed on the Four Blocks to Literacy. In addition staff attended or presented at a number of other conferences in Australia and New Zealand.

Whole school events, including Science Day and Sports Day were lots of fun and well attended by our families and students from Ocean View College. Ocean View students performed for our students on a number of occasions. However the highlight has been the interaction at lunch times. Both student groups really enjoy this.

We received Federal funding for the National Partnerships, More Support for Students with Disability: Developing Centres of Expertise for Students with Complex Communication Needs. This project is about supporting students with complex communication needs in mainstream public schools in SA to communicate using iPads. To date we have met the benchmarks agreed to with the State and Federal governments and made a difference to the lives of nineteen students and their families and staff.

However our school community was deeply saddened by the deaths of Ben Wellings, Tahlia Harding, William Timbol and Hayden Thackeray, and that of ex-students Kwan Ng and Georga Pyman. The deaths of these beautiful young people reminded us all how fragile life can be and to make the most of every day.

I would like to thank the staff for their willingness to continue their own learning so that we are better equipped to be the best teachers we can be for our students. I thank families most sincerely for entrusting us with the education and care of your children.

Sylvia Flato
CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

As noted from the Principal’s Report, 2013 has been another year of showcasing the expertise that Adelaide West has to offer. The work with Jane Farrall to continue the focus on communication and literacy has been a highlight. It was appreciated that Jane was willing to hold a workshop for parents which allowed the opportunity for further insight into the use of technologies used for communication and being aware of the positive outcomes that are being achieved.

There have also been many celebrations from the success of the MOVE program which is life changing for the individual student and their families.

I would particularly like to highlight the visits our students receive from Ocean View College. The social interaction with local peers brings an element of social inclusion and acceptance that is happening naturally. I know how much the students from Ocean View enjoy visiting and likewise our students also embrace the visits.

Our children are vulnerable and fragile, being saddened by the loss of students who are dear friends. Our hearts go out to the families, friends and teachers who will forever have special memories of those who have passed.

Governing Council is an opportunity to work in partnership with the leadership of the school. It is an honour and a privilege to meet with likeminded parents who seek the best opportunities for the children collectively. We do make a difference bringing to attention the best practises available in the school and wider community. Our school is a first class facility with first class staff.

Sonja Touli

OUR VISION

- Adelaide West Special Education Centre is a nationally recognised education facility for the teaching and education of students with physical and associated disabilities
- Students are accepted, appreciated and valued for who they are. Students feel empowered, supported and included by the community
- Students are encouraged to do their best in order to reach their potential
- Students learn in a positive environment
- Student engagement, wellbeing and happiness are our primary focus.
CONTEXT

Adelaide West Special Education Centre caters for the specific educational needs of students with physical and associated disabilities. Students range from 5 to 19 years of age. Students travel from across the greater metropolitan area to attend the school.

There are 71 students enrolled across 4 sites. The Adelaide West site is the largest with 48 students. Link programs are at Mitcham Primary School, Roma Mitchell Secondary College and Unley High School.

Due to the complex nature of our students we develop strong partnerships with families and relevant agencies. Adelaide West Special Education Centre coordinates transport, equipment, transition, swimming, therapy and health needs.

Adelaide West Special Education Centre offers a Statewide Outreach Service for students with physical disabilities and complex communication needs who attend public and private mainstream schools across the state. This service provides information and training to ensure the successful integration of students into their local school.

Student Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adelaide West Site</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Link Programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitcham Primary School</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roma Mitchell Secondary College</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unley High School</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
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OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IS UNDERPINNED BY THE FOLLOWING:

- All students have individual ability and worth
- All students have something to offer the community and society
- Strong partnerships with families, carers and inter-agencies are developed and valued.
- Wellbeing of students and staff is integral to a successful education program
FINANCE REPORT

In 2013 the Resource Entitlement Statement for Adelaide West Special Education Centre was $3,322,664.95 of this $3,286,691.20 was allocated for staffing. A full report is available on request.

EXPENDITURE—Major Items
Conferences/Professional Development  16,754.36
Technology Equipment  26,161.88
Technology Consultancy  34,706.25
Consultancy/Four Blocks  43,773.92
Total  $121,396.41

GRANTS
ICT Support  13,862.83
Award Supplementation  109,686.68
School Support  48,109.11
Professional Development  4,483.79
Total  $176,142.41

STATEWIDE OUTREACH SERVICE

The program supports educators to enable learners with a physical disability and learners with complex communication needs to access, participate and engage in the school curriculum.
2013 has once again been a busy year for the Outreach teachers. There has been a particular increase in requests for support from schools in country areas this year with the Outreach teachers making 10 visits to country regions.
A summary of schools visited and support provided is listed below:

Schools visited: 53
Curriculum Support sessions/Staff in-services: 48
Demonstration lessons: 34
Disability Awareness lessons: 314

Examples of feedback from schools visited:

Curriculum Support:
“The service and follow-up write up was excellent. I wish I knew more about this service earlier. Maybe you could send out flyers to ALL Special Ed units as I know many are struggling at the moment with lack of concrete and active support. Too much support is verbal; I appreciated the observation and hands on advice from Michelle.”
Shann Hausler, Manager Regional Support Services, Murray and Mallee Regions

“Would definitely use this service again. Our P.E. teacher was very impressed with Rob’s knowledge and the practical advice he gave for including our student with a physical disability in P.E. lessons”
Carolyn Adams, Special Needs Coordinator, Emmaus College

Disability Awareness Lessons:
“The feedback I have received from all teachers has been very positive. We will definitely use this service again and have recommended it to our other campus. It was so practical, the students loved being involved in the activities and it really highlighted to them the difficulties that students with a disability encounter”
Amanda Bone, Learning Support Teacher, Southern Vales Christian School

Rob McKinnon & Michelle Sboro
Communication

TARGET
Build Adelaide West as a centre of expertise for students with Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

Adelaide West Special Education Centre staff are encouraged and supported to attend and present at national and international conferences in the area of teaching students with CCN. Various staff members have presented at a number of conferences including the SERU Expo, AGOSCI, SEPLA and ULearn13NZ conferences showcasing what we do at our school to support students with CCN. Feedback from participants has been positive and as a result we have had a number of interstate and overseas visitors to Adelaide West Special Education Centre.

The Adelaide West Special Education Centre Statewide Outreach Service is receiving an increasing number of referrals, asking for support for students with CCN. The CCNET Project has referred students who are ineligible for the project to the Statewide Outreach Service. Other referrals have come from schools and parents who have heard about the service via other sources.

TARGET

The CCNET Team are working toward achieving all seven project outcomes by the conclusion of the project. A range of individualised professional development and ongoing support has been provided by the project team for students, families, educators and DECD speech pathologists. Students have been provided with communication technology which together with the PD and CCNET support has helped them to develop functional communication skills which have resulted in improved communication and social inclusion.

The CCNET Team have reached all benchmarks since it started in mid 2012. These included 4-9 students by December 2012 (9 students), 9-20 students by December 2013 (16 students supported). The CCNET Project will continue in 2014 with the amended benchmark of 20 - 25 students by December 2014.

Jennifer Young
TARGET
Students will participate in a range of communication opportunities to develop skills for lifelong learning

Staff have continued to support our students to use a range of communication strategies and have modelled the use of many different forms of AAC. At the beginning of 2013, the whole staff agreed that the school needed to use one set of symbols for ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to enable students to learn that everyone was looking for the same response. Use of these symbols has assisted a number of our students to develop a consistent and easily recognised way of answering questions with a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’. The staff have attended professional development sessions in the use of Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) communication books. The use of these supported much of the literacy learning in the classrooms during the year. Many students are still observing staff as they model the use of the PODD and demonstrate how to find the vocabulary. However, some students have become proficient users of the PODD and are now able to express much more interesting opinions during lesson time.

All students have a communication goal and it is good to reflect on the progress that they made in 2013.

Building Adelaide West teachers’ knowledge of using Four Blocks to Literacy as a strategy to implement the Australian Curriculum in a way that supports student learning needs

The Four Blocks of Literacy is a balanced, structured approach to teaching literacy which Adelaide West introduced as a whole school in 2013. Jane Farrall, an internationally recognised leader in this field, who had established relationships with staff and students through her work on communication and AAC in 2012, ran a training day at the beginning of the year and then visited the school twice a term throughout 2013 to support the staff in the implementation of the Four Blocks. The Four Blocks are: Guided Reading, Self Selected Reading, Writing and Working with Words. Our students engaged with a rich variety of books as part of their literacy learning through this work and some of them made really exciting progress in this area.
The Australian Curriculum will determine classroom programs and student learning outcomes

**Strategies:**
- Teachers of R-10 students at Adelaide West will use the Australian Curriculum when developing teaching and learning programs that address individual students’ learning needs and goals.
- Assessment and reporting for all students at Adelaide West will reflect the use of the Australian curriculum and SACE.
- Pro-formas and long-term plans will be developed to support consistency of planning across the whole school.

During 2013 teachers at Adelaide West Special Education Centre used the Australian Curriculum and the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) framework to develop teaching and learning programs that addressed individual students’ learning needs and goals. The learning programs that students followed were designed to meet their particular learning needs and discussed at the annual NEP review meeting. Students achievements were reported on in relation to their NEP goals instead of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards for their year of schooling.

Adelaide West staff used the Australian Curriculum to provide students with learning experiences from the Australian Curriculum in the learning areas of English, Maths, History and Science. These are the learning areas that were mandated for schools to implement in 2013.

Because students are working towards individual NEP goals rather than their year level achievement standards, staff can select from a wide range of Australian Curriculum content to provide the students with a broad and balanced range of learning experiences. These learning experiences were reflected in students’ reports for 2013 that described classroom learning in subjects such as: Cooking, Gardening, Australian Animals, Houses and Homes, Occupations in the Community including transport and Me and My Body.

In the second half of the year, teachers worked in two groups to develop appropriate Maths and Numeracy programs to implement in 2014 that included literacy resources with a maths theme, on-line and interactive whiteboard resources to support numeracy learning and other resources to support teaching and learning in this area.

![Achievement towards NEP goals for all R-9 students in 2013](image)
Transition and SACE.

Strategies

- Working with the SACE Board to ensure the structures support and acknowledge student learning and achievement for all students.

Four students completed school at the Adelaide West site last year. All students chose to attend Day Options provided by SCOSA. Two now attend the Croydon Hub, one attends the program at Wynn Vale and one the Newton Hub. All of these graduating students completed and have been awarded a SACE Certificate after completing all the requirements of the Modified SACE Curriculum.

All students were supported by school staff during transition visits who exchanged crucial information about the students’ communication, physical, mealtime and personal care needs. Comprehensive transition support plans were also developed to document students’ preferences and needs for use by new staff in adult settings.

Student participation in these Day Option trials was documented and formed the basis of the compulsory Research Project that the SACE Board reviews to ensure students have satisfactorily completed the curriculum.

SCOSA Day Options providers prefer that trials happen as late as possible in the year to increase the chance of current information being given to staff who will be there when students start attending. However we need time to properly document trials for submission to the SACE Board for review, and so will renegotiate trial dates to hopefully happen in late term 3 in the future.

One of our students completed their SACE at the Unley High School Link program and they are now studying Developmental and Disability studies at TAFE this year. The range of SACE programs available to students at both Link Programs ensures success for our students.

Three students at the Roma Mitchell Link Program also finished their secondary studies. Two students have gone onto TAFE, one studying Creative Writing and the other Computer Design.

The Better Pathways program was reviewed in 2013. While it was decided that the program would not take on any more students, the program continues to support those who were involved in the pilot. These students are now in year 12 and 13. Funding may not continue after June. This is unfortunate as this program in the SACE and Transition Coordinator’s opinion created some continuity of support for students and their families during transition to adult life, by being available when school is no longer able to provide direct support and/or negotiate services.

When the position of SACE and Transition Co-ordinator was first described in 1994 there was a lack of clarity about the end point of schooling. The SACE curriculum and students with disabilities learning within it was new. Since then transition practices have become embedded into students and their family’s journey through school. A senior secondary curriculum that supports students to gain the skills and knowledge that they need in adult settings has been developed. Students achieve well in this curriculum and access post school options that suit their needs. The curriculum is meaningful by focusing on ensuring students reach their potential as adults. While there may no longer be a designated person for this task I believe that practices are well embedded.

Hermione Farmer
Students will have improved physical well being

TARGET
The physical and emotional wellbeing of students will be central in curriculum design and delivery

In 2013 Jackie Butler and Megan Palmer conducted MOVE Basic Provider training for our staff and also participants from intrastate and interstate. Planning commenced for an international conference in February 2014. One of our students, Declan, became a MOVE graduate, as he no longer requires any equipment to assist him with walking. We celebrated our other MOVE students successes at a whole school assembly with their families.
In 2013, the school purchased a fourth support station. These support stations allow students to have regular opportunities to stand and place weight through their legs while being assisted with personal care.

The pie graph below indicates that 42% of our total student population are participating in the MOVE program and have a completed assessment profile. 6% of students are MOVE graduates, 40% are ambulant and therefore do not participate in the MOVE program and 12% are unable to participate due to medical issues.

Jackie Butler
Student learning outcomes will be enhanced by increased collaboration with the wider community

Develop learning and teaching links with Ocean View College for students and staff from both sites

2013 saw a deepening relationship between staff and students from Adelaide West and Ocean View College. At the beginning of the year, staff from Ocean View College asked if any of their students wished to volunteer to become part of a ‘friendship group’ involving students from Ocean View College and Adelaide West. Over sixty students volunteered which meant that for almost every school day in 2013 some OVC students came over to spend their lunchtime with students at Adelaide West. In addition to the benefits derived from the friendships that developed, many Adelaide West students demonstrated improved communication, play and social skills when their Ocean View peers were around.

Adelaide West students also enjoyed a number of more formal learning activities organised and presented by students from Ocean View College. These included a Reconciliation Week story and art activity run in every class by a group of year 9 students, a ‘hair raising’ static electricity stand on Science Day and a wonderful exhibition of dance by classes from the OVC Primary School. Book Week was celebrated by students from both sites with a costume parade in our hall.

Staff and students from both sites value the ongoing relationship and regularly celebrate the learning benefits to the whole community.

Family Opinions

The staff at Adelaide West value the opinions of the families of our students and undertook a survey at the end of 2013 to ascertain the levels of satisfaction in the community of our families. The outcomes were extremely positive with comments like

“The teaching programs are exceptional, allowing our son to improve each term. The work of all the staff at Adelaide West is outstanding and probably isn't recognised enough.”

The following graphs demonstrate some of the responses:

Loma Fenech
The Link Programs are collaborative partnerships between Adelaide West Special Education Centre and the host schools. The programs aim to support students with a physical disability or a physical degenerative disorder to access, participate and engage in the host schools’ curriculum.

**Mitcham Primary School Link Program**

In 2013 the Mitcham Primary Link Program welcomed 4 new students - Amanda in Year 6, Lissa in Year 2, and Harrison and Liam in Reception. All 9 students have had a very busy and productive year. Two of our students, Liam S. and Lissa, were lucky enough to meet our former Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and have a friendly chat when she visited their classrooms. Another two of our students represented South Australia at the National Championships for AWD – Jay travelled to Sydney for the National Boccia Championships, and Jack broke a record for the 100m as well as achieving 2 new personal best times at the National Athletics Championships on the Gold Coast. Besides the many classroom excursions and activities our students participated in, we were also lucky enough to have fun-filled sessions playing boccia, balloon soccer and funky dance designed specifically for our students in wheelchairs. Two of our students attended their year level camps - Jay enjoyed 3 days at Narnu Farm on Hindmarsh Island and Lissa enjoyed 2 days at Aldinga Camp.

After 16 years of working with the students in the Mitcham Link Program, Harry Rout, one of the SSOs resigned from DECD at the start of Term 3. Harry’s passion for learning has touched many people and has made a big difference to our students’ happiness and wellbeing over many years.

I look forward to 2014 with energy and optimism. I extend special thanks to the Mitcham Primary School and the classroom teachers for their support and commitment to the Link students’ needs. The program highly values the ongoing collaboration between Mitcham Primary School and Adelaide West Special Education Centre in assisting students with disabilities to build much needed self-confidence within such a positive learning environment.

_Rosemary Moorhouse, Mitcham Primary School Link Program teacher_

**Unley High School Link Program**

We welcomed one Year 8 student at the commencement of the 2012 school year. Having come from the Mitcham Link Program the student settled into school life with ease.

Sports Day was an exciting, event-filled day with our students competing as fiercely as their able-bodied peers. The Link students designed and ran two events this year, ‘Capture the Flag’ and a wheelie race which attracted an enormous crowd of supporters. Link students also participated in javelin, discus, the long distance race and novelty events where a senior student volunteered as the anchor in the tug of war and led his house to victory.

Other sporting events included the Boccia Interschool Carnival and the Bowling Challenge at Kingpin Bowling with the Roma Mitchell Link Program. Link Students also continued the weekly DECD swimming lessons at the Minda Aquatic Centre. One student has been identified as a possible future Paralympian.

Technology has continued to play a very large part in the school life. All students continue to explore new iPad apps and technologies to empower their learning. The iPad is an integral component of the learning program at Unley High. A Year 9 Link student has proven to be a very successful iPad coach to staff and students.

Academically 2013 has been a successful year with three Link students continuing their SACE Stage 2 studies and one completing SACE. One student has studied Design, using Photoshop to explore...
SACE. One student has studied Design, using Photoshop to explore and produce a visual study complete with merchandising; another student is completing a Community Study by creating a nutritious recipe book for people with limited mobility; and a third student with a keen interest in technology has volunteered with the IT Department at Unley High to improve his skills and knowledge as part of his SACE studies. Two students are currently completing TAFE courses with a view to their transition from high school. One is completing a unit in Fashion Design and the other a unit in Information Technology, with both achieving high levels of recognition for their engagement and knowledge. Sadly we say goodbye to one student who has successfully graduated and been awarded the 2013 Old Scholar's History and Classical Studies Award from Mitcham Girls High School. She has applied to study a Bachelor of Arts at Adelaide University and is currently making transition visits to familiarise herself with the University environment.

The Link students, despite their individual challenges, continue to grow personally and academically, meeting all our expectations and continually striving to do their best. They are a resilient group of capable and caring students with a bright future.

Lynn Roberts, Unley High School Link Program teacher

Roma Mitchell Secondary College Link Program

2013 was a busy year for students and staff. Students returned for a strong year of learning with clear personal goals, aspirations, and challenges.

We welcomed Kaitlyn, as a Year 8 student and watched her settle successfully into secondary schooling. This year has provided Kaitlyn with many opportunities for personal development. She was selected to represent South Australia in the Paralympics. During the year she travelled to Brisbane and Canberra to compete in the Paralympics in athletics and was very successful in her endeavors.

At the conclusion of term two Danny made a decision to leave school. He made the transition with support of Better Pathways, the Muscular Dystrophy Association and Disabilities SA. These organisations provided support for Danny to access community services and learning opportunities of his personal interest like music, singing and cooking.

Travis participated in Business Studies at Marden TAFE this year. He has excelled in his work there and is looking forward to further studies within the TAFE system next year.

Travis and Dara both participated in Yr12 photography. They organised photographic shoots in Stockade Park, the Botanic Gardens, Adelaide CBD and the Adelaide Zoo. The depth and quality of their work has been exemplary. We were proud to discover each had prize winning photographic entries exhibited at the Adelaide Show.

Students participated in a range of excursions this year. As a group we attended a lecture at the Julia Farr Centre based on independent living and self-advocacy, the Disability and Aging Expo and the Royal Adelaide Show. We had end of term excursions to the Patawalonga Walking Trail and Arndale Cinemas. All Link students were strongly supported by Roma Mitchell subject teachers and leadership to achieve great personal results. I commend these staff members and our Link SSOs for their dedication and hard work, ensuring all students experienced a positive learning environment within which to thrive as learners and individuals.

Travis and Dara left at the end of 2013 to pursue their aspirations as adult learners. Both students aim to be studying at TAFE in the new year. We congratulate them on their many achievements, the contribution they have made to their school and the wider community and wish them every success for the future.

Vas Dolman, Roma Mitchell Secondary College Link Program teacher
We Remember

Ben Wellings
William Timbol
Tahlia Harding
Hayden Thackeray

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