



UPDATE 7 July/August 2006

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Message from Executive Director Schools

Welcome back to another busy semester.

Following the restructure of the Department, I have been appointed to the position of Executive Director Schools with responsibility for Top End Schools, Building Better Schools, Middle Years, Schools Policy Performance and Reporting. As part of this change, Annette Jamieson will be responsible for the management of the Building Better Schools (BBS) and Middle Years programs.

This semester will see increased activity in relation to two significant areas of educational reform in the Territory; the implementation of Middle Years and the NT Distance Learning Service. Annette and I look forward to working with you during this exciting and rewarding time.

John Glasby

Middle Years

Planning for implementation has been underway within the Department for some time to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements for students and staff.

Principals have been involved in workshops and meetings to sort through a range of issues including infrastructure, staffing, and priority enrolment. Local area implementation groups, consisting of schools and relevant stakeholders, have been established and are working collectively to manage the transition for all students.

Furthermore, BBS has allocated funding for seven positions for Terms 2, 3 and 4 2006 to support schools to prepare and plan for implementation.

Many primary and secondary school leaders attended the recent Australian Primary Principals Association annual conference in Alice Springs, where Queensland educators, Roderick Crouch and Tracy Corbie, conducted inspiring, practical workshops on middle schooling.

The Middle Years Team in the Teaching, Learning and Standards Division has designed an extensive program of professional learning and development for teachers. Wherever possible it is intended this will be delivered onsite to minimise disruption to classes. The team is also developing the *Ready Set Go* Middle Years materials for distribution to teachers in Semester 2.

In Semester 2, schools will provide school publications, conduct information evenings and orientation activities to ensure a smooth transition for students and parents to their new school in 2007. Student enrolments will commence during Term 3. Detailed information including school profiles and key dates will be available in a dedicated Northern Territory News lift-out and the *Centralian Advocate* in late August.

NT Distance Learning Service (NTDLS)

Ken Davies, Deputy Chief Executive Education Services, has assumed responsibility for the implementation of the new streamlined distance education service.

On 25 July, the appointment of Andrew Street to the position of Director NTDLS was announced. Andrew joins DEET with a wealth of experience as an educator in Western Australia and the United Kingdom and will commence at the Northern Territory Open Education Centre (NTOEC) on 11 September 2006.

NTOEC and Katherine School of the Air (KSOA) have commenced planning for KSOA to commence their middle years program with the inclusion of Year 8 students from 2007.

New and replacement Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) equipment is being progressively rolled out to distance education students across the Territory.





Secondary Education in Remote Communities

The Collaborative Trial Sites and Specialist Teachers for Remote Communities projects are being rolled out concurrently. A full secondary program commenced at the start of 2006 at Raminging CEC with a further three sites identified for development at Yuendumu, Borroloola and Ngukurr. Each of the schools in these communities will be clustered with neighbouring schools to provide secondary education to nearby smaller communities.

A number of specialist secondary teachers have been allocated, and grants provided to the four sites to enhance their ICT capacity. The roll out of secondary education to the four sites, combined with the new distance education service, the middle schools approach, and the community engagement program will see a significant leap forward for education in remote communities.

Qualified Counsellors for Secondary Schools

From Semester 2, all nineteen positions have been filled and spread across urban schools, rural schools and remote communities. Welcome to Janet Muirhead who has commenced as Professional Supervisor with responsibility for management of this project. Data collection processes are being established to inform improvements in attendance, behaviours, and results, as well as preventative programs and intervention processes.

IDL Studio at Katherine School of the Air

The new IDL Studio at KSOA has been completed, and from early 2006 IDL delivery increased from 2½ to 5 days per week. New extra curricular activities and IDL lessons for parents and home tutors have been introduced. The new studio has also allowed the Darwin studio at NTOEC to commence delivery of IDL lessons to ten remote schools. The delivery of music lessons from the NT School of Music is also planned.

Indigenous Students' Leadership and Mentorship Program

The twenty-one current students are enjoying one of the benefits of the program with a grant of up to \$2500 to be spent towards their chosen goal. This money has variously been used to attend the Garma Festival, purchase sporting and musical equipment, purchase computers, software and desks and to sail on the STS Leeuwin.

The leadership camp held in May at Batchelor was a great success. Students are meeting regularly with their mentors and training for mentors will be held across the NT in October. The second round of applications for positions on the program will be advertised in late October.

Chief Executive's Student Forum

Applications are now open for sixteen students to join the Chief Executive's Student Forum. All students in Years 10 and 11 enrolled in government schools across the Northern Territory are eligible for a position on the program. The first student forum will be held via teleconference on Thursday 31 August during Education Week. A face-to-face forum will be held in mid-October in Darwin. For further information and an application form, visit the Building Better Schools website.

Parents and Teachers Working Together

This new project aims to strengthen the involvement of the community in education through providing opportunities for parents to collaborate with teachers and actively engage in the education process. The project has been contracted to the NT Council of Government School Organisations. COGSO will employ an officer to develop the program during Semester 2 2006, and then to implement the program in targeted secondary school communities in 2007.

Enterprise Establishment Grants

Applications were received from 39 schools with 24 applicants successful in attaining grants. Of these, 19 were approved for enterprise projects in remote schools, one regional and four urban schools projects. Teachers attended a workshop in designing and delivering enterprise learning activities in schools. Enterprise projects are aligned with middle years curriculum, senior secondary programs, and VET. The range of projects reflects the innovative and dynamic approach of teachers in the Territory in engaging students in hands-on and vocational learning experiences. Projects include a junior ranger program; a school-to-work transition project for students with disabilities; art and bush food enterprises; photography, publishing and postcards; recycling of bush bikes; international trade fair attendance; horticulture and land management enterprises. 2006 has been an exciting start to enterprise education in the Territory.

