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Education and Training
Reforms for the Future



A little WISDOM goes a long way

A NEW initiative at Moranbah State High School is allowing the school to take a more holistic approach to the delivery of its vocational education and training (VET) programs.

The Work Industry Skills Development of Moranbah (WISDOM) initiative was launched recently at the school's annual industry breakfast.

Deputy principal Dean Russell said WISDOM was developed to bring a number of different VET programs together under the one umbrella so they could be better coordinated and to improve the VET options for students.

"The WISDOM initiative aims to develop the reputation of Moranbah State High School as a centre that provides high quality vocational education and training," Mr Russell said.

"We're in the middle of a national skills shortage and we believe we are doing something meaningful about it.

"This is bigger than just our school – it's about jobs for our kids and the sustainability of our community."

The WISDOM team is made up of key people involved in coordinating VET at the school and in the community.

Along with initiative leader Mr Russell, the team behind WISDOM includes Moranbah State High School principal James Sloman, Vocational Education coordinator Delaney Nugent, who manages TAFE and other VET programs, student behaviour support teacher Melissa Frederickson, who coordinates programs for students at risk of disengaging from school and Central Highlands Innovative Education Foundation officer Kirsty Wright, who coordinates school-based apprenticeships and



Moranbah State High School students take part in a work experience program at a Moranbah mine site.

traineeships.

"We have a cohesive, unified team forging partnerships and creating opportunities for students in Moranbah," Mr Russell said.

A key project for the school is the establishment of the Coalfields Engineering Skills Centre, which is being overseen by the school principal.

The project is funded by the school, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and a local mine and represents an investment of more than \$1 million in building local skills in the mining and engineering trades.

Construction of the centre is due to start later this year and, when complete, it will provide a valuable resource for vocational education and training, not only for Moranbah, but for all the Central Highlands Coalfields area.

Along with the centre, the WISDOM initiative is also helping the school better coordinate a range of VET programs.

After-school TAFE courses are already being delivered at the school and by 2006, TAFE subjects will appear in the timetable as part of the regular selection for students.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships are also a high priority and at present 55 students are undertaking either an apprenticeship or traineeship.

"We plan to assign a teacher mentor to each student to help them keep up with the written component of their traineeship or apprenticeship," Mr Russell said.

"Alternative school-based and industry programs are being established to cater for students who are at risk of disengaging from school."

School rises to challenge of Middle Phase reform

CALOUNDRA State High School was one of the first Queensland state high schools to implement changes to the Middle Phase of Learning based on research findings about the learning needs of adolescents.

Their successes and challenges in teaching mathematics in the Middle Phase of Learning offer lessons for other schools embarking on Middle Phase reform.

The school's experience since 2000 in integrating mathematics with other parts of the curriculum has resulted in significant improvements in student engagement and achievement. Along the way, the teachers involved have learnt a lot too – particularly that integration needs to be strategic to work well.

Acting Head of Department Mathematics Kerry McAllister said teachers at Caloundra State High School had taken to creating and teaching integrated units for Years 8 and 9 "with gusto" and students had responded well.

"Maths is one of the areas that can lag behind with traditional teaching methods," Ms McAllister said.

"There is a community perception that maths shouldn't be fun and should be done the hard way with a pen and paper.

"However, it is very easy to integrate maths into many other subjects and to contextualise it around real-world applications.

"We've found that it works brilliantly when the maths is pitched at the right level, for example when we had Year 8 students in a sport unit applying statistical techniques to score diving and gymnastics events," she said.

Other successful examples of integrated units at Caloundra State High School include a maths-driven unit about cemeteries, which incorporates history and statistics, and a maths/science space unit, which teaches algebra to calculate distances in space.

In 2000, the school started with a trial of an integrated maths/science curriculum based on the draft syllabuses. After showing good results in four Year 8 classes that year, the curriculum was rolled out for all Year 8 classes in 2001, supported by the school's shift to a single teacher for maths and science in each class.

Since then the curriculum has been modified over time and teachers have developed their own integrated units bringing together a range of key learning areas. A comprehensive review of the curriculum this year will identify strengths and any improvements needed, including changes required to adopt the new mathematics syllabus.

To coordinate planning, teaching and assessment teachers meet regularly face to face, a factor that Ms McAllister says is the secret of success. And that success is obvious when you consider the increase in Year 8 mathematics students achieving a C or above – from 84 percent before the trial to 93 percent last year.

This year, several Year 8 and 9 classes are among those participating in a trial of new hardware and software to support maths teaching and learning. The school is testing interactive whiteboards, electronic texts and web-based learning materials to inform future strategies to support engagement and achievement.

More information about Caloundra State High School's experience with mathematics in the Middle Phase of Learning is available at the Curriculum Exchange Middle Phase of Learning gateway: www.educatin.qld.gov.au/tal/curriculum_exchange/teachers/mpl/

Tullawong Prep recognised with award

TULLAWONG State School Prep Year teachers and special education teachers have been recognised with an award from Early Childhood Intervention Australia for their Early Language Intervention Program.

Special education teacher Jenny Bowden said the program developed the communication and social competence of children in the Prep Year and demonstrated how specialist services can be integrated into the class program to benefit all children.

"Often children with speech language problems are withdrawn from the classroom setting and taught individually or in small groups," Ms Bowden said.

"The language program at Tullawong is delivered to the entire class, so we're addressing the needs of children with disabilities within the context of whole-class learning and I think that's been the real innovation.

"We have two Prep classes comprising 47 students and five students have recognised disabilities.

"I modified a program, which had initially been developed for use with kindergarten children, and this has been implemented across both Prep classes at the school.

"Our speech-language pathologist conducted pre- and post-testing of a sample of 15 children and we found that six of those children made significant improvements.

"But what was even more pleasing was that all the students tested showed improvement," she said.

Ms Bowden said there had also been a lot of positive feedback from parents who were seeing the value of the program and the value of teaching all the children together.

"I think one of the key achievements of the program is that we can

demonstrate to all team members, as well as visiting parents, how to build children's communication skills.

"While our speech pathologist was able to measure the short-term improvements in children's abilities, I think we're going to see ongoing improvements because parents, teacher aides and others have seen first hand how to speak with children to get good language results from them.

"We're also really interested to see what flow-on effect the program has on Year 1 results because early language development is the foundation for the development of literacy skills," she said.

The Tullawong team was presented with an Achievement Award for Quality Inclusive Practice by president of Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Queensland Chapter) Sandra Schuppar at their annual dinner during Early Childhood Intervention Awareness Week in August.

The achievement awards identify and celebrate quality inclusive practice and promote research and awareness in early childhood intervention for young children with disabilities and developmental delays and their families.



With their Achievement Award for the Tullawong State School Early Language Intervention Program are, back from left, special education teacher Jenny Bowden and Prep Year teacher Debbie Thompson, and front from left, Prep Year teacher Nicole Cawley and teacher assistant Ann Broadbent.

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Information Sessions at the following venues:

- **Brisbane:** Monday 24 October, 4.30pm, Education House
- **Gold Coast:** Wednesday 26 October 4.30pm, Arundel Community Centre, Napper Rd
- **Townsville:** Thursday 27 October 6.00pm, Holiday Inn

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ADR will be hosting Head teachers from a number of UK schools, who will interview prospective candidates for contract positions.

Successful candidates will be interviewed and appointed during this visit.

- **Brisbane:** Tuesday 18 October – Head teacher Interviews
- **Brisbane:** Wednesday 19 October – Head teacher Interviews

We will also be hosting head teacher interviews at the following locations throughout October:

- Adelaide • Perth • Melbourne • Sydney

For further information on UK teaching opportunities, and to register for information sessions and interviews, please contact **ADR on 1800 033 307 or email your resume to teach@adred.com.au**

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