



At the Prep facilitators' conference were, from left, Lyndall Torrissi, Yungaburra State School; Angela Hack, Department of Education and the Arts Education Officer, Special Duties; Melissa Bushrod, Chillagoe State School; Patricia Connell QSA Senior Education Officer – Early Years; Kristine Butcher, Murray River Upper State School; and Kristine Erwood, Babinda State School.



Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Senior Education Officer – Early Years, Trudi Tobin, explains the new Early Years Curriculum Guidelines that will be used in Prep classrooms across the state from 2007.



Participants undertake group work at the Prep facilitators' conference held in Brisbane from March 6–8, 2006.

## Professional development starts for Prep facilitators

MORE than 130 educators from throughout Queensland met at Royal on the Park in Brisbane from March 6–8 for the first three days of a seven-day program of professional development for district Prep Year facilitators.

Delivered by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), the three days focused on the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines and the development of Preparatory Year programs based on the guidelines.

The QSA will provide a further two-day session on the guidelines and this will be followed by two additional days training delivered by Education Queensland and the non-state schooling sector that focuses on issues specific to classroom teaching and the priorities for each sector.

Facilitators will then return to their districts and work in teams to plan professional development within their local area.

QSA Syllabus Services manager Carolyn Harrod said the focus over the three days was helping facilitators become familiar with the six core modules in the Early Years Professional Development package.

"All our workshops are interactive and provide opportunities for participants to share their own ideas and find out more about the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines," she said.

"In addition to the paper-based materials, the package includes DVD clips that provide examples of what Prep looks like in action."

With the statewide implementation of Prep scheduled from the beginning of 2007, the department has been working closely with the non-state sector and Queensland Studies Authority to roll out an intensive program of professional development during 2006.

District Prep facilitators will play an important role in providing professional development for school staff involved in the implementation of Prep.

For Year 1 teacher Dianne Scott, the decision to become a Prep Year facilitator came from a passion for early childhood education and the



Duane Smith, Curriculum Coordinator P–3 at Pacific Pines State School was one of 132 facilitators who attended the facilitators' conference in Brisbane from March 6–8.

opportunity, not only to expand her own knowledge, but also to pass on knowledge to others who will be teaching Prep.

"From the conference, I'll need to go away and absorb the information we've been presented with before we all meet again at the end of March," Ms Scott said.

"Then we all go back to our respective districts where we'll be assigned our schools and then we can start disseminating this information out to all those inquiring minds.

"My first task will be to contact these schools to find out what they need to know about Prep implementation so that I can better tailor information to their level of readiness.

"On a personal level, my main focus isn't so much on Prep implementation, I believe the two documents produced by the QSA provide most of the answers or point you in the right direction to find the answers.

"My focus is on how can we allow the Early Years Curriculum Guide-

lines to permeate from Prep through to Year 3 and how will it be implemented in Years 1 to 3.

"Having worked as Preschool teacher, then with Year 2 students and currently with Year 1s, my passion is to make that all blend so that learning isn't segmented but rather a continuum from Prep to Year 3," she said.

It is anticipated that facilitators will deliver two-day induction workshops between July and December 2006 for 2007 Prep teachers and principals and again in October 2007 for 2008 Prep teachers and principals.

At the school level, principals will organise professional development for other staff, such as teacher aides, to ensure the successful implementation of Prep.

Additionally, online materials will also be available shortly on the Curriculum Exchange to allow teachers, teacher aides and principals to engage in further professional development at their own pace.

## Prep adviser appointed for Gold Coast District

WITH the creation of the new position of Education Adviser (Preparatory Year) for 2006, schools in the Gold Coast District can expect even more support as they ready themselves for Prep in 2007.

Taking up the position is Ms Fiona Graham, an experienced early years teacher who most recently taught Prep at Arundel State School.

According to Ms Graham, the new role was created in response to the needs of schools in the district and was developed in consultation between schools, the Gold Coast Preparatory Implementation Committee and Gold Coast District Office.

The position is funded jointly by district office and participating schools.

"With this new position, the Implementation Committee believes they will be able to provide a valuable service to schools implementing Prep for 2007," Ms Graham said.

"The committee believes that school administration teams and teachers will benefit from having one point of contact for specific advice and assistance about the implementation of Prep.

"We are committed to the professional growth of our educators and to the successful and smooth implementation of the Preparatory Year in 2007.

"I will be working closely with the Implementation Committee to ensure they are informed and advised of local needs and issues.

"One of my first tasks this year will be to survey schools to identify common areas of need so I can start planning professional development activities for teachers and teacher aides in the Early Phase of Learning," she said.

The creation of this position for 12 months means that schools in the Gold Coast district now have one point of contact for answers to their questions about the delivery of learning programs in Prep.

Schools can also refer inquiries from parents, private care providers, community members and other stakeholders to Ms Graham who can then provide specific advice and information about Prep.

"It's crucial to the successful implementation of Prep that schools and staff are receiving a consistent message and are able to pass on consistent information to the Gold Coast community," Ms Graham said.

Six facilitators have also been selected for the Gold Coast district based on their knowledge and expertise in the Early Phase of Learning.

Ms Graham will lead the coordination of these facilitators and ensure professional development programs are meeting the needs of district schools.

Several other districts have also created similar coordinating roles to help implement Prep.



Fiona Graham will be helping schools in the Gold Coast District implement Prep in her role of Education Adviser (Preparatory Year).