Report to Affiliates

STATE COUNCIL 1, March 14-15, 2015

WACSSO State Council 1 convened over the weekend of March 14-15 at the Mantra on Hay in East Perth.

Director General Sharyn O’Neill’s address to State Council
The Director General addressed State Councillors on the morning of Sunday, March 15. She was pleased that the Year 7 Transition had occurred smoothly and that for the first time ever in 2014 the Beazley Awards for both academic and VET were awarded to students in the public system. The DG said she continued to be concerned about lack of progress in the educational outcomes of indigenous students and was working to influence changes on the performance management system for teaching staff in order to address teacher quality issues. State Councillors raised questions about disability, school maintenance, the Student-Centred Funding Model and the poor timing of announcements for various funding streams by the State Government. The DG explained that WA schools had $135 million in outstanding maintenance, identified in a Building Condition Assessment in 2013. The forward estimates provide around $35 million over four years for targeted preventive maintenance items in schools. While the majority of maintenance expenditure provided from recurrent funding is spent on compliance or breakdown repairs some of this expenditure also addresses items identified in the BCA. WACSSO thanks the Director General for taking the time on the weekend to address State Council.

81st WACSSO Annual Conference 2015
State Council resolved that the theme for Annual Conference 2015 is: Connecting the DOTS - Developing Opportunities for Teamwork and Success. A very exciting line-up of speakers is soon to be announced. This is also the first year that WACSSO is extending the invitation for non-affiliates to attend conference as fee-paying delegates. As usual, the WACSSO office will be taking expressions of interest from schools that would like to display student artwork during Conference weekend and is also on the lookout for some special primary and secondary students to participate in our much-loved ‘Student Panel.’ Please direct student panellist suggestions and your interest in supplying artwork to communications@wacsso.wa.edu.au or 9264 4000.

State of Play: Languages Education report
WACSSO Vice President Warren Daniel reported back from a School Curriculum and Standards Authority seminar surrounding the ‘State of Play: Languages education in WA’ report that looks into current Pre-Primary – Year 12 language education provision in WA schools. In summary, the report is based on ScASSA data collected from across the state. Findings/concerns included:

- A LOTE subject is no longer compulsory.
- More than ¼ of schools are no longer teaching languages.
- 120 indigenous languages are being taught across the state.
- Evidence shows students that study another language tend to do better in their English studies.
- By 2024 the State Government aims to have 40% of Year 12 students studying LOTE.

Chaplaincy
Reports from a number of electorateors shared concerns about Chaplaincy, given the State Government decision to announce funding for successful schools two days before the end of Term 4, 2014. With more than 100 schools that received funding in 2014 missing out in 2015 and with so little time to plan for the shortfall, many schools have been left with gaping holes in their pastoral care programs. WACSSO has previously raised with the Minister the removal of funding for secular welfare workers and will continue to lobby on all Chaplaincy issues.

Other issues in short:

- State Council resolved to seek clarification from the State Government around funding for the building maintenance program for older schools.
- State Council resolved to engage like state parent organisations (P&Cs QLD, TASSO, VICSSO etc.) and lobby the Federal Government for a change to the ATOs rules for P&Cs to have deductible gift recipient status.
- The ‘Issues’ section on the website has been relaunched for all matters affecting public schools that WACSSO is lobbying on. To view the page click here. Please check back regularly as there are many more issues to come.

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