Broome Primary School P&C runs our school canteen and employs 3 casual staff. About 2 years ago we made the conscious decision to run a 100% green canteen. We knew this would not be easy for a few reasons:

1. as we all know, it costs more to eat healthy food;
2. preparing fresh food is more labour intensive so we would maybe need more staff hours; and
3. most importantly, we had to convince the kids that healthy food can also be yummy.

The first year was a trial and we did find that our profits were down but with the dedication of some wonderfully inspiring canteen staff, P&C members and with a whole of school approach we pushed forward. I’m pleased to say that our canteen is still the only 100% green canteen in WA, our profits are back up and the children are making healthy food choices without any prompting.

This is our small way of educating all of our kids on healthy lifestyle choices and helping to ‘close the gap’ health wise between white and indigenous Australians.

Recently we had a visit from Costa Georgiadis from the ABC’s Gardening Australia program. He dropped by to give us some advice on our school garden. The garden gets replanted at the start of every year by the children who then tend to it and eventually cook the food grown in it. Costa was super impressed with what we were teaching the next generation about gardening and sustainability.

Trenna Wadge, Vice President
Broome Primary School P&C Association Inc.
From the President’s Pen

Writing this column straight off the back of our record-setting 81st Annual Conference, I am still riding a wave of emotion – some weariness from the intense past week, but overwhelmingly a sense of achievement, enthusiasm for the future and confidence that our public schools are in safe hands with the wonderful collective of minds and hearts that have just come together to learn, share and discuss ideas.

I have been buoyed by the wonderful feedback received by myself and the WACSSO office, with many thanks going to the speakers, student performances and student panel who kept more than 300 delegates and guests engaged and entertained all weekend. The many presentations and information sessions comprehensively covered the theme of Connecting the DOTS – Developing Opportunities for Teamwork and Success and I am looking forward to building upon that theme in our work for the year ahead, continuing to help equip affiliates with the tools and information required to grow and maintain strong, successful and effective Associations.

During Conference I released the results of the School Community Contributions and Funding Survey. Over five weeks in June, 118 P&C Associations from across Western Australia submitted a survey telling us about the activities and contributions of their P&C and school community. From the responses we were able to deduce that P&Cs donated an estimated more than $1.5 million last year in funds and resources to schools in our state, with 2015 projections indicating that figure is on the increase. This is what your tireless work adds up to! But that’s not all, you are also donating your time in volunteer hours at an astounding rate of 45,825 hours per week statewide, or 1,833,000 hours per year! This works out at almost two full time jobs per school.

In other interesting results, P&Cs have an average of 40 financial members, 84% of you run a Uniform Shop and 71% a Canteen, your most popular fundraising activity is the Raffle, with a whopping 90% of you telling us this is part of your fundraising activities. Mother’s and Father’s Day Stalls were a close second at 86%. Finally, your most commonly donated items are shade, technology, playgrounds, books/resources, furniture/building works, arts equipment and sporting goods.

Your responses were invaluable in providing a clearer picture of what is happening at the grass roots level in our schools, and in showing trends in school communities. We intend to make this survey a regular part of our work in order to continue expanding the picture, and to monitor trends and demonstrate the valuable contribution that P&Cs make within their school communities.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey – we appreciate the time and effort it took for school communities to gather and supply the information. Congratulations again to Spencer Park Primary School who were the winners of the iPad, generously donated by Centrewest Insurance Brokers. A more comprehensive overview of results is available on our website.

On a separate note, you may be aware of the new smartphone app ‘Learning Potential’ that was released by the Federal Government in August. The app forms part of the $5 million set aside in the Federal budget for parental engagement. WACSSO has requested details on the full suite of initiatives budgeted for and we are awaiting a response from the Minister. Increasing parental engagement continues to be a key priority for WACSSO and we want to support school communities to see advances in this area. As such we have also recently provided feedback to the newest, online version of the Family-School and Community Partnerships Framework, which we hope to see released soon, and we are also working alongside the School Curriculum and Standards Authority to provide information and feedback to assist the development of their new Parent Website.

Finally, good luck to all students who are preparing for upcoming exams, especially Year 12 students approaching examinations. Thank you once again to all P&C members for your phenomenal efforts and contribution within your school communities.

Look out for the next edition of P&C Voice which will be our Conference edition, with highlights from the weekend. I wish you all the best for the remainder of Term 3.

Kylie Catto
WACSSO President

Message from the Minister for Education

I firmly believe in early intervention and early years learning, so I was pleased to recently announce a new initiative to support more young Aboriginal children to get the best start in life. KindiLink is a voluntary Kindergarten program for three-year-old Aboriginal children and their parents that will be piloted from next year in 37 schools across Western Australia.

KindiLink will provide play and learn sessions for up to six hours a week for children and their parents. The sessions will be planned and taught by qualified teachers.

The achievement and attendance at school of Aboriginal children are of great concern to me. We know, through both national and international research, the importance of providing support and services to families with young children as early as possible. KindiLink will do just this – as we work together to build the capabilities and confidence of Aboriginal families so their children are better prepared for school and lifetime success.

I also announced another five Child and Parent Centres to start next year. We are already providing children with important health checks and early learning opportunities, as well as offering advice and support to families on parenting and child development at 16 centres across the State. Next year I am delighted to say we will have 21 centres up and running – the five new ones being converted from Commonwealth Children and Family Centres to our State-initiated Child and Parent Centres.

The services these centres provide embrace the whole family – not just the child – resulting in a positive impact on communities.

Western Australia has a long and proud history of commitment to early childhood development and learning. I believe these further investments will deliver long-term benefits to our families and communities.

Hon Peter Collier MLC
Minister for Education
We all know that recruiting volunteers can be a challenge. I can tell you now – there is only one thing worse than failing to recruit a volunteer, and that is failing to retain them – to have a fantastic volunteer leave, disengaged and disillusioned.

Reasons to leave
In school volunteer communities, departure is inevitable. Children grow and leave. It is brutal to say it, but everyone (including you!) has a ‘shelf life’.

There are other, more avoidable, reasons to retire. When volunteers feel overburdened and undervalued, they will quickly burn out. You won’t see them for dust.

I was at the hairdressers not long ago, and spoke with a lady who had organised a cocktail evening for her school. It raised $4,500. At the next P&C meeting she went to, there was no mention or acknowledgement of her efforts – it was simply forgotten. As she was leaving the meeting, the president approached her and asked her to organise the fete the following year. She just shook her head in disbelief. Can you guess what her answer was?

Reasons to start
Let’s go back to the reason that volunteers will want to get involved in the first place.

• They want to improve the schooling experience for their children
• They want to make a contribution
• They want to meet people and have fun
• They want to feel like a part of something important

Nowhere on this list does it say that they want to be appreciated. Is this why we’re so bad at it? Appreciation, however, (even when we don’t realise it) is at the heart of the reasons we stay.

Reasons to stay
It’s one thing to achieve big things from our fundraising efforts. It’s quite another to feel amazing about it.

A volunteer, having succeeded in their goals, will rightfully feel proud of themselves. It takes only a very simple token gesture to turn that feeling ‘up to 11’ when they know that the whole community is proud of them. It’s like Arnie on steroids.

Simple things
As a busy member of the organising committee, you may now be shrieking, “WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT FROM ME!?!” The good news is – it doesn’t have to add to your workload. I actually recommend appointing a ‘Thank You Sergeant’ as a standalone role – one person who may not necessarily have a lot of time to commit, but is very organised and thoughtful.

Here are a handful of simple ways that you can build gratitude in to everything you do:

• Throw a party – it can be as simple as a morning tea, but it must include a speech with personal votes of thanks. Try to have fun.
• Conduct a giving ceremony. This can be included with the party above. Make them fun and personal – they don’t have to cost more than a token amount of money.
• Get personal. Write hand-written notes. If you are creative, write a little poem: Roses are red, violets are blue, we couldn’t be as amazing, without you (OK that’s terrible, but you get the gist!)
• If your school has a spare carpark, negotiate to have it donated to your volunteers. Every time someone volunteers during the month, they get a ticket. At the end of the month, conduct a prize draw for who wins the coveted carpark!
• Organise with a local coffee shop to have a $20 voucher donated every month or term. Use the same system above to conduct a prize draw where every volunteer has a chance of winning.
• Give out certificates. Volunteers can use certificates for personal memories, but also for job applications. Volunteering is a much sought-after quality in a candidate. A great idea is to have the volunteer’s child present the certificate on assembly – what parent wouldn’t enjoy that lovely pride in the eyes of their child!

The importance of expressing gratitude
As a P&C President or Fundraising Co-Ordinator, life is busy. The act of communicating a heartfelt thanks can easily be overlooked in our rush to attend to more ‘important’ details.

But remember: no matter how busy you get, or how tired you feel, there are few jobs as vital as saying ‘thank-you’ to your volunteers. It’s the right thing to do (what a privilege to be able to make someone feel amazing!) and when the time comes to ask for help again, you will find that people remember with a warm heart what a fantastic experience it was.

Mandy Weidmann
P.S. In case anyone forgets to say it, THANK YOU for the amazing work you do!!!

Mandy Weidmann is Australia’s Fundraising Whisperer. She is the author of the Practical Fundraising Handbook for School and Club Volunteers, and the publisher of the Fundraising Directory – now in its 10th year. You can sign up to her free weekly tips at fundraisingdirectory.com.au

National Ride 2 School Day

Friday 13th March was National Ride 2 School Day and Mindarie Primary School students jumped on their wheels to make this a huge success.

It’s not hard to work out the benefits of children cycling, scooting or walking to school. Not only does this ease parking hassles, traffic congestion, environmental pollution, and the associated costs of running a car, the kids get regular exercise, are more alert and ready to learn when school begins and they can have fun joining in the school commute with their friends.

National Ride 2 School Day is promoted by The Bicycle Network and in 2015 the turnout was even better than previous years with –

• More than 2,040 schools participating in the celebration
Nature Play at Mindarie Primary School

Mindarie Primary School has been blessed with a natural parcel of untouched bushland within the school grounds. A vast number of banksia tree and xanthoria provided the main scope for the design. The area caters for Early Learning Centre (ELC) up to Year 6 and includes the following – flying fox, custom ship designed as a long boat, a challenging lookout, two forts, recycled tables and log seats, suspension bridges and a rope climb, not to mention the fantastic trees to climb in the space.

The P&C fundraised for almost 2 years to fund the $91,500 project. Various fundraising included an adult quiz night and bogan bingo, lapathon, regular lunches, Mother’s Day & Father’s Day stalls, an election BBQ, Easter raffles and discos. In 2013 there was also the fete and trash & treasure.

Designed by Natural Play Australia, their planning commenced in March 2014 and was fully constructed by October 2014. On Monday, December 8th, the whole school attended the official opening by City of Wanneroo Mayor Tracey Roberts.

Our students now have access to a wonderful learning area that will challenge them and allow them to develop greater skills physically, socially and in the areas of language and creativity.

Tracy Foley
Mindarie Primary School P&C Association Inc.

Win $5000 for your school

RAC is giving five schools $5000 to spend on resources. For a chance to win, simply encourage your students and their parents to join RAC Little Legends Club. Plus, parents have the chance to win a share of $10,000 worth of Perth Arena event tickets. 
Hurry – competition ends 30 September 2015!

Visit rac.com.au/littlelegends, call 08 9436 4471 or email littlelegends@rac.com.au
National Ride 2 School Day CONTINUED...

- Over 350,000 students riding, walking, scooting or skating
- 319 new schools registering their participation for the event
- 1,721 schools from 2014 taking part once again.

At Mindarie Primary we had 340 children come to school on their wheels or feet and not by car, which was a 13% increase on the 2014 participation figures.

To further incentivize participation two local bike shops, BikeForce Joondalup and BikeForce Clarkson donated prizes of a helmet and a voucher and the P&C put together 10 goody bags packed with things like slap bands, bike bells, bike lights, spoke beads along with an assortment of other bits and pieces like hats, bike drink bottles, tattoos, balloons, pencils and stickers.

Every child that rode to school on a bike or scooter who wore their helmet and any child walking were eligible to enter the prize draw to win these goodies. Every child that took part received a temporary tattoo and sticker.

We had 340 children eligible for the prize draw with a few more ineligible due to a lack of helmet – that’s 50% of the school population!

All children (and their cycling helmet-wearing parents) were eligible for faction points and in a bid to keep the kids active, further faction points will be on offer throughout the year with “Hands Up” counts taken on random days. Ditch the car on those days and the kid’s factions benefit.

As a result of this great response, Mindarie Primary is investing in providing Bike Skills courses to the Year 5 children. These courses are provided by Westcycle.org.au and are being partly funded by the Mindarie Primary P&C.

National Ride 2 School Day is not hard to organise and can make a huge difference to the school and local community. Remember to sign up for the 2016 day!

Helen James
Ride 2 School Coordinator
Mindarie Primary School

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Adventure Playground at Woodlands Primary School

Fences are unpleasant – they divide and separate people, rather than bringing them together. And one of the most frustrating fences in Western Australia this year has been the temporary barrier around the new adventure playground at Woodlands Primary School.

When first term began, kids clustered at the fence to watch the playground being built. Imaginations reached past the metal barricade as they planned ways to use the intriguing network of cables.

“I want to go across that bridge.”

“I’m going to climb all the way to the top of that spider’s web.”

“Do you think we can crawl through that bit without falling?”

After a while, they gave up looking.

Since they couldn’t get into the new playground, they ignored it rather than torture themselves.

Then at 2.30pm on March 13th, the fence came down. But a last-minute disaster threatened to spoil the excitement – the bobcat broke down as it was spreading new, white sand around the playground for the soft fall base. Undefeated, playground creator Dean Woodham got stuck into the mountains of sand with a shovel on an afternoon which was hot and humid. A few minutes later, a class of older students trooped outside with a shovel on an afternoon which was hot and humid. A few minutes later, a class of older students trooped outside to watch, with a few more ineligible due to a lack of helmet – that’s 50% of the school population!

All children (and their cycling helmet-wearing parents) were eligible for faction points and in a bid to keep the kids active, further faction points will be on offer throughout the year with “Hands Up” counts taken on random days. Ditch the car on those days and the kid’s factions benefit.

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Helen James
Ride 2 School Coordinator
Mindarie Primary School

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Susan de Ruyter
Woodlands Primary School
P&C Association Inc.

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Every P&C would know the satisfaction of a job well done and the joy of seeing your goals achieved. For the Geraldton Primary School P&C, 2015 has been a fantastic year, not just in its own right, but as a culmination of the hard work and dedication of the committee and volunteers from years before. Our favourite part of fundraising projects is the way they enhance and complement the great community spirit at Geraldton Primary School.

A change in our annual fundraiser from Lapathon to Obstacleathon, led by our dedicated volunteer Emily, was a shining example of this. It was a fantastic day, seeing students having fun, teachers enjoying the activity, and so many parents getting involved as volunteers to make the day run smoothly. Fundraisers like this, and many others, enabled the P&C to build our new Nature Play Quad area. This area has transformed the centre of our school, and is already bringing joy and imagination to the students who use it on a daily basis.

The new Quad also set the scene to once again showcase the great community spirit at Geraldton Primary during our recent Open Night and Art Exhibition. Students and staff worked extremely hard to provide open classrooms and a fantastic ocean themed art display throughout the school. The school choirs performed in the quad on the evening. The P&C was pleased to provide food for the evening adjacent to the quad.

Staff, students, parents and friends enjoyed the evening and the chance to celebrate our awesome school.

Mandy Fry, Hon P&C Secretary
Geraldton Primary School
P&C Association Inc.
Questions and Answers

Every day, the WACSSO office receives enquiries from P&C members about the running of their P&C Association. The following are just some of the questions asked with answers that may be helpful to your Association. If there is a question you would like answered that does not appear here, please contact the WACSSO office or your WACSSO State Councillor.

Q: It’s half way through the year and our President (or other office bearers) can no longer fulfill their duty, what do we do?
A: From time to time personal and other circumstances preclude office bearers from being able to complete their full one-year term of their role. As office bearer roles are voluntary, the person may resign from their role, in writing. If willing, an executive member can act in the vacant role until the position can be filled ie: Vice President can take on the role of acting President. It is suggested that the P&C should advertise vacant position/s and vote in the new office bearer at a Special General Meeting or at its next General P&C Meeting. Once the position is filled, notify the Principal and WACSSO Office in writing.

Q: Who can call a P&C Special General Meeting?
A: A Special General Meeting may be convened by the President or Honorary Secretary or by requisition signed by five (5) financial members of the Association as stated at 15.2 of the P&C Constitution.

Q: What can we discuss at a P&C Special General Meeting?
A: The business discussed must be in the notice of the meeting that requires formal notice of seven (7) days for Special General Meetings and usually there is only one topic discussed. There can be three motions put forward all related to the one topic but no new business or reporting is undertaken within a Special Meeting. Members should be given every opportunity to be fully informed of the reasons for calling the meeting and of the background to the issues to be determined. Special General Meetings are called if an important item has arisen, and the P&C feel due care should be taken to ensure all legal requirements are met.

At the meeting, business will be limited to the items on the notice paper. If a substantial amendment is proposed, or if an important item has arisen, and the P&C feel due care should be taken to ensure all legal requirements are met.

At the meeting, business will be limited to the items on the notice paper. If a substantial amendment is proposed, or if a motion is closely contested then an independent person should be asked to count the votes to verify if the motion has been passed or lost. A motion can only be passed with an ‘absolute majority’ that is 50% plus 1 of a correct quorum of those members present. Voting should be by a clear show of hands. The Chairperson can ask for either those against or those for the motion to indicate with a show of hands. If a motion is closely contested then an independent person should be asked to count the votes to verify if the motion has been passed or lost. A motion can only be passed with an ‘absolute majority’ that is 50% plus 1 of a correct quorum of those members present.

Q: Something has come up on which a decision needs to be made urgently. Can our P&C hold out of session meeting by email and not have a convened meeting?
A: No, decisions need to be made at an Executive or General Meeting of the P&C and minutes need to be produced and ratified at a General Meeting. An urgent financial decision can be made by the Executive and only 48 hours notice needs to be given.

Q: Can the Principal be an Office Bearer for the P&C?
A: Yes. As an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee the Principal has the same rights and responsibilities as any other Executive Committee member. The Principal can propose motions, vote and be elected to sub-committees and Office Bearer positions.

Q: What is the correct use of P&C funds?
A: The School Education Act 1999 Section 143 (3) states that “an association is not to expend its funds that are in excess of administrative costs otherwise than for the benefit of students at a government school”. The P&C Constitution (Rule 4.1) reiterates this objective. WACSSO does not recommend P&C funds be used to purchase gifts or to provide entertainment for teachers, volunteers, or P&C members but suggests looking at other ways of supporting these particular objectives.

Q: I want to attend a P&C General Meeting but I do not want to pay a membership fee, can I still attend without being a member to observe?
A: Yes, but without paying a membership fee, you do not have a vote and a request can only be made through the chairperson for speaking rights. Whereas being a financial member, you do have a say, a vote and can nominate and be elected to any position within the P&C including sub committees of the P&C.

Q: How should voting be undertaken at a P&C meeting?
A: Voting should be by a clear show of hands. The Chairperson can ask for either those against or those for the motion to indicate with a show of hands. If a motion is closely contested then an independent person should be asked to count the votes to verify if the motion has been passed or lost. A motion can only be passed with an ‘absolute majority’ that is 50% plus 1 of a correct quorum of those members present.

Q: Is there a maximum number of years someone can serve as a P&C Office Bearer or Executive Member?
A: No, all office bearer positions and executive committee memberships come up for election every year at the Annual General Meeting and there is nothing stopping a person continuing to nominate and seek re-election.

Q: Can the position of President be held by more than one person?
A: No, the P&C Constitution only allows for one person to hold any position on the Executive Committee including that of President. The composition of the Executive Committee is for 8 individuals. The role of the Vice-President is to understudy the President. Some of the President’s tasks can be delegated to the Vice-President. The Constitution also allows for the Vice-President to chair the meeting should the President be absent.
Noticeboard

How can the P&C Association give recognition for long term members?

The Certificate is awarded by WACSSO on behalf of the sponsoring affiliated school organisation members, for long and meritorious service (minimum of 10 years). The Certificate is a wonderful way to recognise the longstanding contributions in your school community. Include the following details with each written nomination: full name of person sponsored, length of service, positions held, duties covering period of each office held, details of service and any special activities undertaken on behalf of the affiliated P&C, and details of community activities where relevant. The Certificate may be presented at a special function, school assembly or P&C meeting.

If you have someone to nominate for a Certificate of Merit, please fill in the online form at the WACSSO website: http://www.wacsso.wa.edu.au/pc-resources/wacsso-certificate-of-merit OR forward details to WACSSO President at: Email: info@wacsso.wa.edu.au Fax: 9264 4948, PO Box 6295, East Perth WA 6892.

Please allow 2-3 weeks delivery of Certificate from the date of approval from WACSSO office.

P&C Training at Schools

These 2.5 hour sessions cover governance, roles & responsibilities, meeting format and WACSSO’s role.

Would your P&C like to host a P&C Training session please register your P&C’s interest at https://v1.bookwhen.com/wacsso.

Term 3, 2015 training dates are now available on https://v1.bookwhen.com/wacsso for schools in the Perth and Mandurah areas. Please follow the instructions at the top of the page to book a training session for your P&C.

P&Cs in regional areas can contact the Training and Development Officer on 08 9264 5026 to book 2015 training.

If you would like to attend any of the training, please register your interest with the WACSSO office or email: training@wacsso.wa.edu.au or visit our website www.wacsso.wa.edu.au

Upcoming P&C Training

Is your district having a training session? See if a P&C is ‘Hosting’ a session near your school.

Venue          Day            Date              Time
Nollamara Primary School       Wednesday       16th Sept       7:00pm - 9:30pm
Kalamunda Primary School       Thursday        24th Sept       7:00pm - 9:00pm

Training is free with affiliation

Contact the WACSSO office on (08) 9264 4000 if your P&C would like to nominate someone to represent a vacant electorate or if you would like further information on the roles and responsibilities of a State Councillor.