

SBMAQ – SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGERS ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND

Attended by SASSAOA members - Katrina Starkey Streaky Bay Area School, Jo Colbec Pt Elliott Primary School, Judy Warrick Loxton Primary School and myself, Leanne from Le Fevre High School.

We were accompanied by SASSAOA Committee Members – Chris Plummer Blackwood High School, Lisa Hendry Yorketown Area School and Julie Collins Wells from Valley View Secondary School.

PORTRAITS OF SUCCESS, Conference 2019

20th Anniversary, Founded in 1999, they now have 975 members!
It was also their “School Support Staff Recognition Week”

Held at the Gold Coast, at the Gold Coast Convention Centre, Broad Beach. What a lovely place!!

And what a huge conference! 550 Delegates and 120 plus Sponsors, this was a logistical work of art. There was space to be all together, breakout rooms and stations to feed and water the large number of delegates efficiently.

The conference was **MC'D BY ANDREW HORABIN** who kept the event on schedule and provided snippets of his humour throughout.

The program was very comprehensive with a large number of Keynote Speakers and Master Class speakers (their “breakout” sessions).

The Conference opened with **BRAD BLAZE – A SPEED PAINTER**. Brad painted portraits of Elton John, Pink and Freddy Mercury in about 1 ½ minutes from a blank black canvas, with loud heavy metal music playing. He had arms, brushes and paint going in all directions, and he produced 3 brilliant portraits. The one of Freddy Mercury he actually painted upside down! On completion he turned the canvas around and there was Freddy! Unbelievable talent! He donates his portraits to charities for fundraising.

The **DIRECTOR GENERAL, DEPT of EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, MR TONY COOK** opened the conference. He acknowledged School Business Managers, Finance Officers and non-teaching staff, and recognised their valuable contribution in supporting students, sites and the Dept.

He talked about policy changes, such as the equivalent of our Entertainment Policy. The ethical use of public money, where clear definition and references would be in place to clarify appropriate expenditure on such items as catering and refreshments. *Just like us*
The Student Resource Scheme - School Fees charged to parents – they need to be reasonable, defensible, reportable and expended appropriately. *Just like our M&S Instructions and Policy Framework.*

He talked about Corporate Card fraud and corruption, and the need for standards to be adhered to, ensuring public confidence. *Wow, they were beginning to sound like a shonky lot, but again, Just like us!*

Then some good news, they have a \$1.4B Building Future Schools Fund to increase infrastructure – building growth. *Just like us right now, getting our facilities ready for the Year 7s to come onsite into high schools in 2022.*

Then there was -

DUNCAN ANSON, THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER OF DEPT EDUCATION spoke about the above points but in a little more detail -

- Student Resource Scheme (SRS) – parents want improved transparency, and schools must be able to justify how the amount charged was determined.
- Introducing QKR to reduce fraud, robbery and bullying of students who bring money to school!
- Corporate Card Fraud – a new policy will be available in 2020 to manage this, incorporating strict government requirements.
- Then the bad news – School's Bank Balances.... The combined total across the state is \$800M and they plan to use **ALL Dept of Education resources** to achieve their Strategic Plan outcomes in respect to Building and Infrastructure. The message

was - spend all your income earned in the year – spend on your current students and also for your facilities. *Have you heard this before? Just like us!*

Then there was -

The **TOGETHER UNION**, who recapped on the state of the current industrial environment. They are in arbitration for a 3% wage increase, processes for reclassification, job security and the creation of relief pools. *Sounds familiar?*

Now for the good stuff

There were many **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**. I won't tell you about them all. I have chosen my 2 favourites to talk about.

RACHEL ROBERTSON – SHE WAS THE LEADER OF THE 2005 AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC PROGRAM. She was the second female to lead a team to Davis Station in Antarctica where they lived for 12 months in total isolation and during winter total darkness, with no way in and no way out. She managed a diverse group of up to 120 people. This was a “leadership laboratory” in the most hostile and extreme environment on earth. Rachel has written a book inspired by this expedition called “Leading on the Edge”.

In brief, **Rachel's message was about Leadership and Resilience.** Her key words or phrases were –

- **Resilience and respect trumps harmony** (eg, Harmony - don't rock the boat, but under pressure this model shatters)
- **Regret what you did rather than not do it**
- **Every job has an “Antarctic Winter”** so find reasons to celebrate
- **Inspire** – find reasons to celebrate, even tedious repetitive work can be celebrated
- **Integrity** – have “No Triangles” This means in a situation where you would use a grievance procedure, do that, go direct to the person, otherwise things may be taken out of context if you operate in a “triangle model” – that is involving a third person
- **Collaboration** – protect the tribe so the individual thrives. Keep the team strong
- **Lead without a title** – titles aren't leadership, leadership is a behaviour

- **Have boundaries**, eg use time management, **being able to say NOT NOW** doesn't mean NO
- **Bacon Wars** – your'e probably asking yourself "what are they?" It's about looking after the little things before they become big things. She talked about how the staff at the station worked in small teams to manage the domestic duties and chores at the station. One duty was breakfast duty. Everyone had a turn working in a smaller team to cook breakfast for the whole staff at the station. Soggy, under cooked bacon was served occasionally by some, as a way to get back at others for things they weren't happy with. Best to deal with the problem first up and have great bacon for breakfast. **Bacon wars..... We've all had them!**

My very favourite speaker was Samuel Johnson, actor and fundraiser. He is the recipient of an OAM (Order of Australia Medal), for his outstanding services to cancer research. His sister Connie had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. To raise funds Samuel rode a unicycle around Australia, (travelling 15,465 kms in total) to remind everywoman to be breast aware. From this he founded the **LOVE YOUR SISTER ORGANISATON**, which has now raised over \$7m for cancer research.

I didn't write any notes during this session. My notebook page was clean apart from the date and his name.

The room was exceptionally quiet. You could hear a pin drop, despite the number of people in attendance. There was laughter at his humour, there was nodding in agreement and understanding, there was heavy silence and there were tears.

Here are some words the other girls have written -

Jo Colbeck from Pt Elliot Primary School says this about Samuel Johnson -

I just want to reiterate too; how amazing many of the speakers were and "Oh my GOSH! Sam I love you even more than ever"! He is such an inspiration, but Connie his sister was the true star! Fighting legislation right to end of her short life.

AND -

Katrina Starkey from Steaky Bay Area School says this about Samuel Johnson –

I would like to mention Samuel Johnson. If anyone gets the opportunity to hear him speak, I highly recommend him. He is a truly inspirational human, who had so much love and compassion for his beautiful sister Connie when he spoke, that it touched everyone in the room. His amazing contribution to cancer research and awareness is astounding. I think the message I took away from his talk was "anything is possible".

Katrina also said this about one of the master classes (workshops) she attended -

Andrew Horabin held my favourite workshop - The 9 Different Personality types. It was fantastic and provided a real insight into all the different personalities that we work with. The Enneagram test is a very interesting tool. Do you know what personality type you are? Take a look at one if you haven't before. It's very interesting, I found myself relating the different personalities to those I work with.

AND IN CLOSING –

From Jo Colbec -

Sorry I couldn't be there today, but I just want say a huge thank you to SASSAOA for giving me the opportunity to "fill my bucket". Not only an amazing insight to bring back to the work place, but also networking with some amazing South Australian Business Managers, who I know we will be friends for ever!

I would encourage you all to apply to attend an interstate conference in the future, as I gained much more than I bargained for. No, actually if you don't apply, then I may have a high chance of going again! From the bottom of my heart thank you SASSAOA!

And from Katrina -

I would like to thank the SASSAOA committee and the wonderful ladies I had the pleasure of meeting, for the fabulous opportunity to network and grow my confidence in this wonderful world of education that we work.

The Thank You comes from all of us. Sincere thanks SASSAOA for the wonderful PD opportunity!