



# SRE Update

## Excerpts from the Chairperson's Report AGM, 1 March 2011

### Ethics

During the past 12 months, without a doubt, the most pressing and challenging issue confronting ICCOREIS was the introduction of the Ethics pilot in SRE time, its review and the approval by the NSW Minister for Education of the introduction of "Special" ethics in the time set aside for SRE in NSW Government schools in 2011. The response to this issue has taken place at a number of levels with varying degrees of success. Firstly, very publicly in the television, radio and print media and at a systemic level in the support and encouragement of local SRE groups and even specific SRE teachers.

A statement distributed to the Heads of member Churches of the Commission at the beginning of December 2010 adequately summarises the position at the end of 2010:

*ICCOREIS is committed to **assisting** in the formulation of policy and procedural recommendations on Religious Education in Government Schools ... and the most effective approach is to continue to concentrate on the improvement of the provision of SRE so that the standard of SRE lessons and SRE teachers can bear the scrutiny that has been applied to ethics.*

*A complementary approach is to concentrate on the provision of SRE lessons to year 4 pupils. These children will be the first intake into ethics classes. It is essential that their parents be given good*



*Robyn Heeley and Ann Maree Whenman*

*information about proposed SRE classes for the Years 5 and 6 years at the end of this term in order to make a fully informed decision. The role of the local provider is to support their right to choose.*

Our goal (for SRE) is to make this a positive experience for all children and all providers. In the current climate, it is perhaps more important than ever in the history of the Commission and the provision of SRE that SRE providers work closely together. Differences need to be set aside. Failure to communicate in an open and constructive manner with other providers will significantly reduce the effectiveness of our ministry and our Christian witness.

In February 2011, members of the executive held a teleconference with the shadow Minister for Education to discuss some key issues related to the implementation of SRE and the impact of Special Ethics on SRE providers.

### Rationalising Finances/ Employment

Within this context ICCOREIS has faced a significant decline in its financial resources and took the decision to reduce its recurring costs and work towards an annual budget in which income and expenses remain balanced. This decision involved a review of employment costs and resulted in the position of Technical & Administrative Officer being made redundant at the beginning of February 2011.

Ann Maree thanked Robyn on behalf of the commission for her hard work, good humour and patience over the last 6 years.

Ann Maree Whenman

Chair ICCOREIS (NSW)

1 March 2011

### 2011 Executive

#### Chairperson:

Mrs Ann Maree Whenman

#### Deputy Chairperson:

Mr Peter Adamson

#### Honorary Secretary:

Rev Cheryl Clendinning

#### Honorary Treasurer:

Mr Robert Haddad

### In This Issue

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| State Snippets   | 2 |
| Celebrating RE   | 3 |
| Resources / Tips | 4 |

## State Snippets

### Lismore – Sue Sneddon

In mid-February I was privileged to visit the SRE support group on the north coast to give a brief state overview on SRE from the ICCOREIS perspective. It was wonderful to meet about 50 keen SRE teachers from various parts of the region who were full of questions and I gathered a long list of email addresses for the SRE Update distribution list.

### Central Coast – Ron Taylor

This committee has been in operation for over 20 years and covers an area containing 56 Primary schools. Since 2009 no fees have been charged to SRE teachers for training. Costs have been covered by donations from several Christian churches across the Coast and in 2010 a total of 327 people attended training sessions. This year there are plans for two training days each term, one in the northern and the other southern section of the Central Coast. One new initiative is to explore with school Principals the possibility of providing Smartboard training at local schools. The good news is that over 20 schools have provided a positive response to this request. The committee also plans to host a SRE Expo in term 3, showcasing the various curriculum materials with additional resources available.



*Teachers & Assistants discussing the day's lesson at Dubbo Primary School. Mrs Nicole Johnstone, Mrs Pat Thornton, Mrs Colleen Elliot, Mrs Rhonda Crain & Coordinator, Mrs Sue Cooper.*

### Western – Helen Ryan

The year began with a number of community meetings at Bathurst, Orange, Gilgandra, Dubbo, Mudgee and Cudal. The main discussion focussed on updating forms, the Authorisation Cards and the program they would use. The term also started with Training Days at Bathurst, Orange, Tullamore and Cowra. These days were well attended with many people travelling long distances e.g. 110kms, 135kms, and others who travelled between 50kms to 70kms to attend. From the evaluation sheets, the participants thought that it was really important to get together with like-minded people



*Mrs Haline Ford & Mrs Pam Kardell work together at Dubbo South Primary School with Stage 3 Students.*

and to listen and discuss information with presenters. Topics presented on those days included *Using the Bible in SRE, Recognising the Stages of Faith, Characteristics of Children, Drama and Mime*, and craft activities. More days are organised for second term.

The SRE teachers were delighted to receive the Bibles from the Bible Society. The delight on the faces of students at Mullion Creek and Gooloogong schools when the Bibles arrived was worth more than I can say. Thank you Bible Society for making this possible.

I would like to say welcome back to the teachers and assistants and a special welcome to the many new people who have started in this ministry through the western & south western areas of the state. Your dedication is to be commended.

### The GodSpace Training Team - Cheryl Clendinning and Sally Smith

The GodSpace team has held training this term with about 200 users of all curriculums at Nowra, Coffs Harbour, Taree, Wyoming, Toronto, Eastwood, Cootamundra and Wauchope. A highlight was being hosted by the Cootamundra school at which the canteen staff provided scrumptious home made delicacies for morning tea and a delicious lunch, then vacated one of the classrooms so we could use their electronic whiteboard. Sue, who coordinates SRE at the school declared it a 'professional development day' on their regular scripture day so everyone could attend.

### Hunter and Newcastle

A recent innovation has been to offer a "thank you" luncheon to SRE coordinators – those people who order books, sort out problems with schools, find extra teachers and usually teach themselves. These days have been much appreciated with one attendee commenting: "If I don't come to anything else, I don't

# State Snippets

like to miss out on this day each year". The program includes worship, inservicing on current developments such as ethics and time for interacting with the committee to discuss issues at an unhurried pace.

'Encouragement Days' with a relaxed atmosphere, some professional development and lots of input from those present have proven to be the most popular with attendance around 30 at each event.



Enjoying the Thank You Luncheon

## Education Week

Education Week will be held from 1-5 August 2011.

The services for churches and schools will be available on the DET website: [www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/orderservice/index.htm](http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/orderservice/index.htm), along with suggestions for use.

## CHRISTIAN SRE

QUESTION. EXPLORE. DISCOVER.

ICCOREIS is part of a new 'brand strategy' to create greater awareness of the importance of SRE in our communities. A new website called **Christian SRE**

has been set up that is designed to be easily accessed by churches, schools, and parents. This site aims to share encouraging stories about the impact of SRE from people on the ground, as well as being an information source. There are links to various curriculum providers, training for SRE teachers and lots more. Try it for yourself: [www.christiansre.com.au](http://www.christiansre.com.au)

## ICCOREIS WEBSITE

Since losing Robyn Heeley as our webmaster you may have noticed that some events and documents on the website are now out of date. Be assured that ICCORIES is working to remedy this situation and hopes to soon have it updated with current training events and the latest SRE Update.

## Celebrating RE

For one whole month, there were events accompanied by blogs, publicity and competitions.

The month showcased RE by publicising the value and importance of RE (of all faiths) for every child and young person. The launch took place at the House of Commons. The very colourful website provided downloadable Wordles, posters, powerpoints and a video. Check out the website: [www.recelebration.org.uk](http://www.recelebration.org.uk)



Did you know that in England and Wales, March was *Celebrating RE (Religious Education)* month?

Celebrating RE is a bi-national festival organised by the **RE Council of England and Wales**.

## Tassie

Tassie is an occasional visitor to my SRE classes. The kids love it when Tassie comes, and every week they ask me "Is Tassie here today?"

Tassie has become aware that he is not a real puppet, but only an oven mitt. This gives him the opportunity to remind me of the time I stuck his head in the oven! But it doesn't hurt ... because he's an oven mitt and that is what oven mitts are for!

Tassie and I sometimes use the dramas that come in the lesson materials. But it isn't too hard to include Tassie in other parts of the class like the Bible verse - where



he often gets the words mixed up and the kids help him to get it right.

Recently we did a Year 1 class on creation and our responsibility to look after the world. Tassie had fun throwing screwed up bits of paper onto the floor for all the kids to collect. The kids then discovered that each piece of paper had part of the Bible verse on it.

I don't bring Tassie to every class because I think the novelty would wear off. But it is amazing to see how easy it is to inject some fun into the class with a simple hand puppet, without having to be a puppet expert.

Gareth Hadfield  
Children & Youth Pastor at  
West Ryde Baptist Church

## The Bible's Birthday

The King James Version of the Bible (also known as the Authorised Version) is **four hundred years old** this year. Fascinating short videos of an exhibition currently touring Australian capital cities can be viewed at: <http://www.kjv11.com.au/p/online-exhibition.html>. These would make excellent teaching tools for students in Stage 3 onwards, especially on interactive whiteboards.

## Resources - Tips for SRE Teachers

SRE teachers are always looking for new ideas. Here are a couple for you:

### WEEKLY TEACHING TIP

GodSpace supplies a weekly teaching tip, by EMAIL, during term time.

Just go to <http://www.godspace.org.au/>, and send your email address via the contact page.

This tip on recruitment comes from Judy Esmond who also emails regular tips like this one:

### PEOPLE AND THE WORD "CAN'T"

Have you ever had to deal with people who often use the word "CAN'T"? Whatever your request to do

something or to complete something by a certain date, then the word "can't" is often used.

### Changing the focus strategy

Stay calm! Try this simple strategy when communicating with people and moving forward.

When people say "We can't do that," ask them "What can you do?" This stops both of you dwelling on the word "can't" and moving on to what can be done.

When people say "We can't be ready by that date", ask them "When can you be ready?" or "What issues do you need to resolve so you will be ready on that date?" Again, this turns the focus back on moving on and getting it done.

To get onto Judy's list, go to [www.morevolunteers.com](http://www.morevolunteers.com)

## SRE Teacher Survey

**Would you be willing to complete an online survey about SRE? It only takes a few minutes to do.**

**Would you go one step further and invite other SRE teachers to do it too?**

Go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7ZLQPGM> to participate.

On the question 'What one thing would lead to better outcomes for the children?' the greatest number of those who have responded so far listed 'Regular meetings and prayer by the whole SRE team' as their top choice.

ICCOREIS (NSW) Inc.

Website

[www.iccoreis.asn.au](http://www.iccoreis.asn.au)

Executive Officer

Mrs Sue Sneddon

ph: 02 4979 1328

PO Box 756

Newcastle NSW 2300

e: [execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au](mailto:execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au)