Pre Primary – Year 6
Information Booklet
2017
“Only Our Best”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUR SCHOOL CREED .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR VISION .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR CORE VALUES .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR CORE BELIEFS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT DETAILS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL HOURS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EARLY CLOSURE .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERM DATES IN 2017 .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS IN 2017 ................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFF MEETINGS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (P &amp; C) ................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL BOARD .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS ........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT REQUIREMENTS – PERSONAL ITEMS LIST ................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT ........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANTEEN .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRTHDAYS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HATS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL UNIFORM .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSONS ................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAL REPORTING .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BICYCLES / SKATE BOARDS / SCOOTERS .......................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSSWALK ATTENDANT .............................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIALIST PROGRAM .............................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEAC (PRIMARY EXTENSION AND CHALLENGE PROGRAM) ..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYE (EARLY YEARS EXTENSION PROGRAM) .....................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC .............................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL PHOTOS .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL FOYER .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL WEBSITE .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL APP .................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEDICATION POLICY / ACTION PLANS ................................................................. 12
ASSEMBLIES ........................................................................................................ 13
PARENT/CARER INTERVIEWS ........................................................................... 13
NEWSLETTER ...................................................................................................... 13
SCHOOL AGREEMENTS ...................................................................................... 13
STUDENT MOBILE PHONES ............................................................................. 14
ACCESS TO THE INTERNET ............................................................................. 14
PHOTOS ................................................................................................................ 14
ABSENCES / ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL ............................................................ 14
ILLNESS AT SCHOOL ......................................................................................... 14
INSURANCE .......................................................................................................... 15
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST .................................................................................. 15
SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT SERVICE ............................................................... 15
INFECTIOUS DISEASES ..................................................................................... 15
FAMILY LAW COURT ORDERS ......................................................................... 16
EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS .................................................................... 16
DENTAL THERAPY CENTRE ............................................................................. 16
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE ............................................................... 16
PROGRAMS OFFERED ....................................................................................... 17
OUT OF HOURS ACTIVITIES ............................................................................. 17
THE STORY OF THE STATE FOSSIL EMBLEM ............................................... 17
OUR SCHOOL CREED

We bow to the Sutherland Dianella tradition to live up to our name

We are polite, helpful and courteous to all members of the school community

We treat others as we would like to be treated

We take care and pride in our school and class environment

We always strive for

“ONLY OUR BEST”

OUR VISION

Sutherland Dianella Primary School students are challenged and supported to become confident and independent learners, who achieve their personal best.

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect
By respecting ourselves first, we are accepting and considerate, treating others with appreciation and encouragement.

Commitment
We always persevere, taking pride and responsibility to meet challenges and achieve our best.

Responsibility
We seek to be confident, responsible students and members of the greater community, by actively listening and modelling the right behaviours.

Citizenship
We promote equal voice and express any differences without fear, always demonstrating compassion, integrity and kindness within the school and the community.

OUR CORE BELIEFS

At Sutherland Dianella Primary School we believe:

1. Education is a shared responsibility between home, school and community
2. Strong community partnerships lead to success for all students
3. In innovative school resourcing
4. In an inclusive school community supporting success for all students
5. In providing an environment where all staff and students feel safe, valued and supported
6. In maintaining high standards and expectations under a model of best practice
7. In respectful relationships and inclusivity
8. In supporting students to become lifelong independent learners
CONTACT DETAILS

Sutherland Dianella Primary School
5 Sutherland Avenue
DIANELLA  WA  6059

Phone:      (08) 9375 1133
Fax:        (08) 9276 9246
Office Hours - 8:00am to 4:00pm
Monday to Friday
Email:      info@sdps.wa.edu.au
Web:        www.sdps.wa.edu.au

Principal       Jenn Allsop
Deputy Principal Blake Ingersole
Learning Support Coordinator Tricia Mitchell
School Psychologist Jodie Bell
Manager Corporate Services Michelle Warren
School Officer    Louise Goodall

SCHOOL HOURS

Classes Commence  8:40am
Morning Recess    10:55am to 11:15am
Lunch             12:15pm to 12:55pm
School Closes     3:00pm (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday)
School Closes (Early Closure) 2:35pm (Wednesday)

Students are asked to be at school fifteen minutes before lessons commence. Prior to that time, supervision of children cannot be reasonably guaranteed, so parents/carers are asked to be aware of this fact and discourage children from arriving at school too early. 8:25am is an ideal time to arrive on site.

EARLY CLOSURE

The school closes at 2:35pm every Wednesday to allow collaborative time for staff to work on improving the curriculum for students.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL PARENTS/CARERS PROVIDE A CURRENT CONTACT NUMBER THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN BE REACHED IN AN EMERGENCY. PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES.
TERM DATES IN 2017

Semester One

Term 1  Wednesday 1 February 2017 to Friday 7 April 2017
Break  Saturday 8 April 2017 to Sunday 23 April 2017
Term 2  Monday 24 April 2017 to Friday 30 June 2017
Break  Saturday 1 July 2017 to Sunday 16 July 2017

Semester Two

Term 3  Monday 17 July 2017 to Friday 22 September 2017
Break  Saturday 23 September 2017 to Sunday 8 October 2017
Term 4  Monday 9 October 2017 to Thursday 14 December 2017

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS IN 2017

PD Day 1  30 January 2017
PD Day 2  31 January 2017
PD Day 3  3 March 2017
PD Day 4  17 July 2017
PD Day 5  9 October 2017
PD Day 6  15 December 2017

STAFF MEETINGS

Staff meetings are held outside the hours of instruction. On these days, children will need to be collected promptly.

PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (P & C)

This very valuable group of people meet at the school on a regular basis. At present the Parents and Citizens’ Association meetings are held on Monday evenings (see website for schedule of dates) at 7:00pm in the library. You will be reminded of the meetings in the P & C Newsletter and the school newsletter.

All parents/carers and other citizens of our community are most welcome.

Parents and Citizens’ Associations are directed under the Education Act toward two major aims.

1. To promote the interests of the school by endeavouring to bring about close cooperation between parents/carers, other citizens and teachers.
2. The provision of facilities and amenities and other education needs, not provided directly by the Government.

This is your association, and deserves your support. It is the major way of being aware of your school’s activities and what is planned to improve conditions for your child. There are many ways of supporting this organisation, but personal involvement is the most appreciated. We all live a busy
life but if we ‘all do our bit’ your child will benefit from the fundraising and also from the supportive relationship you have with the school.

SCHOOL BOARD

With the Independent Public School status being obtained in 2015 the Sutherland Dianella Primary School Board has been formed. The School Board functions to increase communication between home, school and community and to provide advice. This body is made up of a number of parents/carers and teachers with parents/carers being the majority. It has functions related to the School Business Plan. The exact functions may vary from year to year.

The School Board has no control over teaching methods, the curriculum, or the day to day functioning of the school, nor is it a fundraising body.

School Board members seek the broad interest of all students and their parents/carers. All parents/carers are welcome to observe a nominated School Board Meeting.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Some amenities are not supplied by the Department e.g. sport facilities, art/craft materials and educational tours; and other school requisites seen as essential by parents/carers and teachers. It also helps to supplement the contributions made to the school during the year by the Parent & Citizens’ body.

Voluntary Contributions are $60 per student for all students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Parents/carers in possession of a Health Care Card or equivalent receive a total discount of $20 per family.

We ask that all contributions are paid by the end of Term 1.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS – PERSONAL ITEMS LIST

The Education Department will continue to supply most text materials, work books etc however, parents/carers are asked to provide items such as consumable workbooks, pencils, pens, rulers and so forth. It is essential each child is equipped with these items and that they are replaced during the year as the need arises.

Separate lists of the requirements for each class will be issued. Additional copies of these lists will be available at the front office and are also online. All items children bring to school should be clearly named.

To develop habits of neatness and a pride in work, it would be appreciated if parents/carers would cover all books in which written work will be done by the child throughout the year.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

The management of student behaviour is encompassed in the teaching and learning process. At Sutherland Dianella Primary School, we aim to create safe and positive learning environments which:
- promotes pro-social behaviour and positive social interactions amongst staff and students
- provides opportunities for students to learn and practice appropriate social behaviours and self-discipline
- encourage appropriate and fair sanctions for students who display inappropriate behaviours.

Schools provide a social context which allows students to be supported whilst also being taught how to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Students need opportunities to develop appropriate behaviours, self-control, and resiliency through interactions with teachers and other staff and through the curriculum; and they need to be reinforced consistently in a manner which enhances their understanding of responsible social behaviour. The Behaviour Management Policy is available online via the school website.

The following principles will guide SDPS in the management of all student behaviour:

- Student wellbeing and the prevention of inappropriate behaviour will be enhanced through a focus on early intervention and prevention.
- The use of appropriate curriculum and learning programs will encourage engagement by students.
- Student behaviour is best managed in ways that promote restorative practices and are educative in nature.
- All decisions relating to the management of student behaviour and the implementation of the policy are made according to the principles of procedural fairness.
- Teacher’s behaviour management processes will acknowledge the duty to take reasonable care for the safety of staff and students.
- Student behaviour must not be viewed in isolation but as part of an interaction between the student, staff and the school community.
- School staff will demonstrate accountability for evidence based decision making, reporting and referral to appropriate support, and record keeping.

### Canteen

The canteen is open on Tuesdays. Canteen menus go out each term and are also available from the front office. The menu is always available on the school website. You can order lunch using lunch order bags provided in the classroom lunch order box. In regards to Recess ordering, your child will have to approach the canteen with money to buy their recess (these items are also listed on the Canteen Menu).

### Birthdays

To help celebrate your child’s birthday, your child will be given a Birthday Certificate. This will be given in class either on the day, or as close to the day as possible. **No cakes, lolly bags, chocolates or soft drinks** in line with our Healthy Eating Guidelines.
HATS

Wearing of school broad brimmed or bucket hats is compulsory for children at recess and lunch times, and also during physical education and sport periods. This hat policy is effective in terms ONE, TWO, THREE and FOUR.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Under the Department of Education policy, students are required to wear school uniform at all times from Pre Primary – Year 6. We feel that this adds to the tone of the school community and the children wear the uniform with pride. The uniform gives children a sense of school identity and belonging. It is government policy that students are not permitted to wear denim to school.

School uniforms assist with supervision of students going on excursions in public.

Note: Hoodies are not appropriate in winter.

Uniform shop opening hours

Every Friday morning - 8:00am to 8:45am (during school terms)

Please check newsletters for additional information for opening times. You can also ask for an order form from the front office.

AVAILABILITY

Track pants and track jackets, school polo shirts, unisex shorts, skorts, dresses and school hats are available from the uniform shop.

If you are unsure of your child’s faction, or are new to the school, information can be obtained from the front office.
BOYS UNIFORMS

Summer  SDPS polo shirt, navy shorts, SDPS hat
Winter  SDPS polo shirt, navy shorts/pants, SDPS jacket, SDPS hat
Sports  SDPS faction polo shirt, navy shorts, SDPS hat

GIRLS UNIFORMS

Summer  SDPS polo shirt (or SDPS dress), navy shorts/skirt/skort, SDPS hat
Winter  SDPS polo shirt, navy shorts/skirt/skort/pants, SDPS hat
Sports  SDPS faction polo shirt, navy shorts/skirt/skort/pants, SDPS hat

SDPS polo shirt is navy and teal with an embroidered SDPS emblem.

Please put names on all clothing, shoes, hats, lunch boxes, drink bottles
and on the outside of school bags.

FACTION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSONS

Our four factions are all named after WA Olympians.

Kirby  Hawkes  Elliott  Strickland

Competition sports may involve faction sports carnivals, inter-school sports, winter sport
competition for Years 4 – 6, Aussie sports days and lightning winter carnivals.

Children are expected to wear their faction polo shirt every week on Fridays or for Juniors, on their
sport day. Sport Leaders will take responsibility for the organisation and use of the equipment.

Other sporting activities include:

Cricket, Tee-ball, Volleyball, Netball, Football, Basketball, Soccer and Tennis

Sutherland Dianella has a Physical Education specialist teacher. Two hours of sport/fitness each
week, is a National requirement.

LIBRARY

The school has a library that operates under the supervision of a Library Officer. Children are
educated to use the library for recreation and research.
The library is automated to increase the children’s access to information.

Children are permitted to borrow TWO (2) books on a weekly basis.

As books are very expensive, all students must have a library bag (at least 30cm x 50cm) to protect books from food and drinks before they may take a book out of the library.

The library is open to students at lunchtimes as outlined on the Library roster.

If a book is lost or damaged parents/carers are expected to replace or pay the replacement cost of a new book before they can borrow another book. If they forget their book they must wait until their book is returned to borrow another book.

**FORMAL REPORTING**

A formal report is issued at the conclusion of Semester One and Semester Two, with the date of distribution being announced in the newsletter. Class meetings and three way interviews are other ways that may be used by staff to report on your child’s progress.

**BICYCLES / SKATE BOARDS / SCOOTERS**

Parents/carers are able to assess whether their children are responsible enough to ride their bikes to school.

Children who ride bicycles to school should:

- For security reasons a padlock should be used whilst at school
- Not ride a bike on school grounds as it is PROHIBITED
- Wear a helmet; as they are compulsory

**CROSSWALK ATTENDANT**

An attendant officiates at the corner of Sutherland Avenue and Grand Promenade. Please use this crossing or we may be in danger of losing this service.

**SPECIALIST PROGRAM**

A specialist Music program will continue in 2017. The school also has a School Choir and students from Year 2 - 6 may audition for this.

**PEAC (PRIMARY EXTENSION AND CHALLENGE PROGRAM)**

PEAC provides enrichment and extension activities for exceptionally able children in Years 5 and 6. A testing program is undertaken in Year 4 to assist in the identification of students that may be
eligible. This program is provided through the North Metro Education Region and parents/carers are responsible for taking their children to off-site venues.

**EYE (EARLY YEARS EXTENSION PROGRAM)**

These courses are a form of early childhood PEAC for younger students. Students are currently identified through Pre Primary On Entry assessment data and school nominations; and provide the opportunity for likeminded students to work together.

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Some children will have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (Brass and Clarinet) in Year 5 and 6 at the school. Testing will identify these students.

**SCHOOL PHOTOS**

An independent photo company is booked each year for student photos.

**SCHOOL FOYER**

Displayed for parents/carers and children to view are: Samples of children’s work, our Visions and Values, KidsMatter information, newsletters etc and end of year award recipient plaques.

**SCHOOL WEBSITE**

Our school website is www.sdps.wa.edu.au and has the latest school news, photos and excursion/incursion notes. Please check regularly to keep up to date.

**SCHOOL APP**

You can download the SDPS app from the iTunes or Android store. It is a great way to keep in touch with what’s happening at the school. Please ensure that you have ‘NOTIFICATIONS’ enabled.

**MEDICATION POLICY / ACTION PLANS**

Should your child need special assistance with a medical condition please complete a Medical Action Plan.

If parents/carers require medication to be given at school, it is best for them to visit the school to personally administer it. If this is not possible, written instructions on specific forms signed by the doctor (please collect from the front office) should be provided for the office. These should be attached to the medicine bottle, and a measurer provided to ensure the correct dosage to be administered.
During the day, admin staff will ensure that medicines are kept out of students reach and at the end of the day; any left-over medicine should be collected from the office. Children will not be given this responsibility. Children may manage their own asthma puffer.

ASSEMBLIES

Student orientated and conducted assemblies will be held regularly, on Wednesdays, once a fortnight. Parents/carers will be notified of which class is running the assembly in the fortnightly newsletter.

PARENT/CARER INTERVIEWS

Interviews with teachers regarding a student’s progress may be arranged at any time, but preferably with a minimum of 24 hours notice, so that teachers can be prepared to discuss specific areas of work and at a time which does not interfere with the hours of instruction.

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter (SDPS Times) is emailed out on alternate Thursdays. It is designed to keep parents/carers aware of all current and future happenings. Hard copies of the newsletter are always available from the front office the day after it is emailed out. Parents/carers and students are encouraged to collect a hard copy if required.

SCHOOL AGREEMENTS

When first entering the school, parents/carers will be asked to complete agreements. We ask parents/carers to advise the school of any changes to these documents.
STUDENT MOBILE PHONES

If students require a mobile phone to get to and from school, an agreement must be signed by the parents/carers, student and classroom teacher. All mobile phones will be locked away by staff during the day.

ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

Each student must sign a Technology Agreement. The Year 5 and Year 6’s must sign an iPromise agreement as part of the Bring Your Own Device program.

PHOTOS

Photos of school activities are taken regularly. Parents/Carers when first entering the school will be asked to complete an agreement to have their child’s photos placed in the school newsletter, community newspaper, on the school website etc. The approval can be withdrawn at any time in writing to the front office.

ABSENCES / ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Whenever a child is absent from school you need to phone the school or SMS: 0437 484 342 advising us of this. Written details are required for any absence from school. Please give this to the teacher when your child returns to school.

A student must have a reasonable explanation for their absence. Children are NOT PERMITTED to leave the school grounds without permission. Children must be signed in and out of the front office if they arrive and/or leave at alternate times.

If your child is having holidays during the school term, you will need to write a letter stating this addressed to the Principal.

Absences of three consecutive days or more will require medical evidence where possible.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

Minor injuries or illnesses during the day are normally attended to at school. In more serious emergencies, every endeavour is made to contact a parent/carer to arrange for the child to be collected from school. In extreme emergencies the child may be taken to hospital before parents/carers are notified.
INSURANCE

The school does not carry specific insurance for students or student property other than the Department of Education and Training public liability insurance. If parents/carers wish to take student insurance, arrangements need to be made outside of the school domain and will be at parental/carers expense.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The school employs a School Psychologist one day a week, for the purpose of supporting students in our community.

SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT SERVICE

The school employs a Counsellor one day a fortnight. Referral forms are available at the front office and on the school website.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following common ailments require a period of exclusion from school unless a doctor is prepared to issue a Medical Certificate to say that the child is free from infection and well enough to return to normal school activities.

CHICKEN POX : Exclude for at least 5 days after rash appears and until vesicles have formed crusts.

DIPHTHERIA (notifiable) : Refer to Doctor

HEPATITIS A (notifiable) : Exclude for 14 days after onset of illness (if not jaundiced) or 7 days after jaundice appears.

IMPETIGO – school sores : Exclude for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment commenced. Lesions on exposed skin surfaces should be covered with a waterproof dressing.

INFLUENZA : Return when symptoms are gone

MEASLES : Exclude for 4 days before to 4 days after rash appears

PEDICULOSIS (head lice) : Must be treated – see next page

RINGWORM : Exclude until person has received antibiotic treatment for 24 hours. Medical certificate

SCABIES : Exclude until the day after treatment has commenced.

CONJUNCTIVITIS : Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased.
HEAD LICE (NITS) and what to do about them

Head lice have no respect for people. They can be found in all types of families. They are not a medical emergency, but are highly infectious. If not treated properly, head lice can become a serious nuisance in the community as they are passed from one person to another. Any place where people live and play closely together is a good place for catching the head lice. They like to live on human scalps where they feed, breed and lay their eggs.

They feed on human blood and cause their owners to scratch their head. Head lice move quickly and are hard to find. Nits (eggs) appear as shiny, grey oval-shaped specks which unlike dandruff, are firmly attached to the scalp. If nits are found, we must presume live lice are present, even if they cannot be seen. Treatment should then start.

There are several lotions and shampoos readily available from a chemist. These are highly effective against lice and also treat nits. Directions on the bottle should be carefully followed. Dead nits must be removed from the hair. Children with nits will be asked to be treated before returning to school. The Education Act does allow the Principal or delegated staff to discreetly inspect children’s hair. If this should become necessary please advise your class teacher if you do not want your child to be included in the inspection. Web address - www.nitwits.com.au.

FAMILY LAW COURT ORDERS

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to keep the school informed of these orders.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

It is the parents/carers responsibility to keep the office informed of any changes to the emergency contact details.

DENTAL THERAPY CENTRE

The Dental Therapy Centre is situated at Mirrabooka Primary School and provides Dental treatment for children attending Sutherland Dianella Primary School.

The Dental Therapy Centre sends home appointment cards through the school. Parents/carers need to contact the Dental Clinic direct, to change appointment times if not suitable, on 9345 0330.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Helping Hands run a Before and After School Care Program on our school grounds. If you are interested in using this service please visit their website www.helpinghandsnetwork.com.au or phone 0428 320 640. Information packs are also available from the front office.
PROGRAMS OFFERED

- iPads/Laptops
- BYOD (Bring your own Device) (Year 5 & 6)
- Canberra - Year 6 Annual Camp
- Visual Arts
- Languages – Italian
- Numero
- Robotics
- Coding
- Performing Arts Music
- GATE programs
- KidsMatter
- Mathletics Pre Primary to Year 6
- After school sports programs
- Dance Programs

OUT OF HOURS ACTIVITIES

(PROVIDED BY EXTERNAL PROVIDERS)

Tennis lessons – information available on school website www.sdps.wa.edu.au > Programs > Physical Education.

THE STORY OF THE STATE FOSSIL EMBLEM

Three hundred and seventy million years ago – give or take ten million years – a small tenacious fish with a skin of tank-like armour plate, and the table manners of a bad-tempered great white shark died from causes unknown. As luck would have it, the fish became a fossil entombed within a yellowish, pizza-shaped lump of limestone and in 1986 a palaeontologist employed by the Western Australian Museum found the limestone lump and cracked it open. Over the next three years the palaeontologist, Dr John Long, pieced together the remains to reveal a new piece of the evolutionary jigsaw puzzle of life on earth. The fish, christened McNamaraspis kaprios by Dr Long, became famous – least amongst palaeontologists – and there the story would have ended but for a group of Perth school children.

The fossil campaign was born one evening in March 1994 when a Sutherland parent, Carol Simmonds happened to read about some Year 4 elementary school children in America who
successfully campaigned to have the Stegosaurus declared Colorado’s state fossil emblem. Carol suggested to Sutherland’s principal, Mr John Shortill, that Sutherland launch a similar campaign. He liked the idea and appointed Debra Parry as the teacher coordinator. Next the school approached the Museum for help and it volunteered Dr Long’s services. With the help of Dr Long’s article “Window On An Ancient World” Mrs Parry prepared a range of educational activities to enable the whole school to be part of the campaign, from the four and five year olds in the Pre Primary to the 11 and 12 year olds in year 7.

Little wonder the Sutherland children were fascinated by the Gogo fish fossils and an election had to be held to determine which of them would be nominated for the state fossil emblem. In the event MAC won by a landslide and the campaign entered a new phase. A student committee was set up to draft a formal submission to the State Government with the two-fold aim of convincing it of the merits of fossil emblems in general and MAC in particular. It was to prove a mammoth task. Every student wrote a personal letter of support and the older students enlisted help from outside: from the general public and students at other schools as well as various influential people in the community.

The campaign was conducted not just locally, but nationally and even internationally, and the final list of endorsers included children’s authors Paul Jennings and Morris Gleitzman, the Washington-based National Geographic Society and scientists from Japan, Germany, Canada, America, England and France.

In late 1994 a delegation of students presented a draft submission to the premier, Richard Court, at State Parliament. The final document – all 218 pages of it – was ready a short time later and formally handed over to the Education Minister, Mr Norman Moore and the Arts Minister, Mr Peter Foss.

A few months later the Premier visited the school to formally announce that Western Australia would become the first state in the country to have a fossil emblem. However, a committee of experts would be set up to accept nominations from the general public and make a final recommendation to Mr Foss. The school decided to renominate MAC and, under Mrs Parry’s guidance another submission even longer than the first was put together, this time focusing just on MAC. Once again the whole school community was enlisted to help and the final product was handed over to the committee in June, 1995.

On December 6, 1995 the announcement everyone had been waiting almost two years to hear was finally made: MAC was to be Western Australia’s official fossil emblem, the first such emblem in Australia and one of only a handful in the world!

The benefits, for the school, however, went far beyond making history. The campaign was incorporated into every aspect of the curricula from science to social studies, from art to music. Students not only read about fossils they touched them. They not only discussed democracy they lobbied members of parliament. They even produced a video on MAC that won a commendation in a national video competition.

There were sequels. In 1996 Sutherland Dianella published a book containing the various original curriculum materials written by Mrs Parry. Called “The Gogo Files”, this teacher’s resource book will
enable future generations of students not just at Sutherland Dianella but also at every school in the state to discover for themselves the wonder of Western Australia’s fossil heritage.

In 1997 Australia Post launched a series of stamps called “Wildlife of Ancient Australia” from Sutherland Dianella Primary School which celebrated Australia’s fossil heritage. The stamp issue featured prehistoric creatures that roamed ancient Australia and included Australia’s first state fossil emblem, Mcnamaraspis kaprios. In 1999 a group of Year 6 and 7 students were State finalists in the Australian Schools Web Challenge “Celebrating Australia’s Fossil Heritage”.