

In the news

GREAT ADVENTURE



**WACKY TRIO:** Emma Cooney (left, with fellow cast members) stars as Alice.

EMMA Cooney from Investigator College played the lead role in production *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* last week as part of her drama studies, while the Mad Hatter was played by James Paterson.

The one-off performance was held for the general public and Year 12 moderators.

Drama teacher Rachel Coghlan said text study looked at themes such as "fitting in" and the "madness" involved in growing up.

She encouraged students to draw from their own growing up experiences as they learned how Alice struggled to grow up.

PUSH FOR PEDAL POWER



**IN GEAR:** Grant High School principal Steven Phillips with student Daniel.

GRANT High School Year 11 student Daniel Jones has been lobbying heavily for the school to enter the Pedal Prix.

Last week, a team of 10 students entered the UniSA Australian HPV Super Series for the first time.

School Services Officer Peter Roachock said the plan was to look at building and designing their own trike and having more than one trike competing.

"The program is linked to Physical Education and Nutrition with students training for endurance and learning how to best prepare their bodies for the long distances they will need to pedal," he said.

GERMAN LINK A WINNER



**ALL SMILES:** St Paul Lutheran students Ninko, Jessie, Charlotte and Jonatan.

STUDENTS from St Paul Lutheran Primary School are celebrating the success of their four-minute action-packed film *In Ihrer Fantasie* which won a national award recently.

The school had entered the German School Film Festival – an annual event sponsored by the Goethe-Institute in Germany.

Last year the film won the state competition for WA and SA and this year competed against other primary and secondary schools.

The students won \$400 and a trophy for the SA/WA title, a national trophy and another \$300 for the national award.

Mr Armin Mayer said the film was based on an idea by Year 7 student Wanna Coleman-Goddard and lets the audience look into the imagined realities of a group of boys (karate warriors) and girls (glamour queens), before the facade is stripped away showing the reality of their life at school.

The 2012 topic is *Marchenhaft* (like a fairy-tale).

# Leaders in fear of school violence

NIE MANAGER

MARTINA SIMOS



AUSTRALIAN principals have reported a large number of threats and acts of violence against them by parents and adolescents, research shows.

The first independent national research project, undertaken by Monash University, found that despite the long hours and the issues they face, most of the principals enjoyed their job.

Lead researcher Dr Philip Riley said he was surprised at the responses to the question on violence.

"The one that surprised me was the level of bullying that principals experience from either colleagues or superiors and the levels of violence," Dr Riley said.

"There's a bit more secondary school violence because those students are bit more threaten-

ing – but it's basically parents, that is what principals are telling me."

The *Australian Principal Health and Well-being survey* interim report aimed to create a picture of the health and well-being of principals in Australia over a 10-year time frame.

The survey's aim to find out if principals were surviving or thriving showed a mixture of results.

What was highlighted, however, was that showed principals in rural or remote areas

were most at risk. Dr Riley said the data showed some principals were barely coping in the role while others are thriving because of their access to support networks based in cities.

"The people who seem to be doing best are the ones in the suburban location – that is the majority of principals, large rural and remote (locations) are not doing so well," he said.

"Society looks at schools differently than they used to. Principals used to be somebody you wouldn't question, now everybody feels they can question a principal or teacher or priest or a doctor."

The survey also found there was a high risk of adverse health outcomes if changes were not made to the work practice of

principals to reduce the negative aspects of the role.

Principals reported two major stresses in their role – too much work and not enough time to dedicate to teaching and learning.

Dr Riley said administrative tasks were the likely cause of the huge workload, which meant 80 per cent of principals worked more than 46 hours a week during the term.

The interim survey also found 70 per cent of Australia's 10,000 principals would reach retirement age in the next five years, with the average age being 51.

Baseline data for the new population of principals will continue to be gathered over the next decade for comparison by Dr Riley and his team.



## Principals call on network help

**JOB DONE:** Retired principal Di Charles, and current principal of Parafield Gardens Primary School, Simon Harding, with students Kaine, 12, Mikey, 5, Muskan, 5, and Jade, 13. **Picture: DEAN MARTIN**

MARTINA SIMOS

FORMER principal Di Charles is enjoying the freedom to be "normal" and do simple everyday activities such as reading the paper, catching up with family or shopping – without rushing.

She retired recently after eight years as principal of Parafield Gardens primary school, sometimes working 12-hour days.

Ms Charles said while she "thrived on the job" not everyone would see the role in that way and her personal experience was based on having a strong support

system among colleagues, associations and her staff.

"One of the things that helped me and my well-being was I was never afraid to ask for help or advice or clarification if I was unsure about something," she said.

"Over the last 18 months to two years there has been a genuine awareness of the complexity of the role of the principal... there has been a shift for the positive by a number of groups of people within the dept (state and regional), the union and principals organisations."

Former deputy of the school Simon

Harding, who has been appointed as principal, joked he would be "surviving" in the first few weeks and agreed networking was important.

He believes his personal experience, after the settling-in period, will be one of "thriving" because many organisational structures are already in place.

"Familiarity has been a bonus for everybody and has made the transition very calm," he said. "The areas of networking are vital. There's no point in sitting back and questioning without going and seeking that help out."

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