



# Science Teachers' Association of Victoria

## STAV Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

### President's Overview

STAV continues to function as a viable entity drawing its membership from Science Educators across Primary and Secondary sectors and Pre-Service teachers, researchers from the tertiary sector and individuals with an interest in science education. Subject associations across the nation are continuing to face membership challenges, STAV included and STAV Council has continued to look at ways in which we can grow our membership. I would like to acknowledge the work and effort that STAV Council has put into both this pressing issue as well as other ways in which we can support the teaching and learning of science across Victoria. It is appropriate that I acknowledge the 2014 STAV Councillors, who have volunteered their time to meet throughout the year and to represent the collective voice of science educators both within the state and nationally at various round table discussions, council meetings and conferences. The 2014 STAV Councillors are as follows: Joanna Alexander (Vermont Secondary), Alexandra Abela (Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School), Michael Rosenbrock (Wodonga Secondary College) Yuvadee Patchon (Quantum Victoria), Kathryn Sobey (Auburn Secondary College) and Suzanne O'Shannessy (Public Officer). I would also like to thank Kathryn Sobey for her contribution to Council over the past two years and wish her well with her future endeavours.

The remaining councillors have renominated for the 2014 Council and I would like to welcome Leonie McGlashan (Keysborough Secondary) and Jacinta Greer (Whittlesea Secondary) onto the 2015 Council. Once again I would like to extend a special thank you to the STAV Secretariat led by Annette McKenna for ensuring that we continue to support our members and their respective communities.

STAV is a not for profit member association and is governed by a Council and is supported by the paid STAV staff.

STAV's goals are to:

- Establish and maintain both financial and intellectual independence
- Represent the collective voice of science educators in Victoria
- Influence policy formulation in relation in matters relating to Science Education
- Support and maintain special interest groups within STAV
- Provide a range of resources and services to support science educators
- Provide for and encourage student participation in a range of challenging science activities
- Promote the importance of science education to the community
- Recognise significant contributions by STAV members to Science Education.

We have continued to ensure that all activities conducted throughout the financial year were aligned with the STAV goals.

### STAV Publications

Some delays were experienced with the publishing of our journals however we met our targets of publishing our quarterly editions of **Lab Talk and Let's Find Out**. It was also pleasing to source new contributors to both journals.

The delays experienced can be attributed to difficulty in sourcing articles and STAV Council is continuing to explore ways in which we can seek articles so that we meet our deadlines.

The monthly publication **Contact** continues to be published online.

Our team of exam writers continue to produce **Trial Exams** in support of the VCE Science subjects on offer. Trial Exams were issued on time to all schools purchasing the resource. The decision to continue with the existing practice of offering both a mid-year and end of year exam has received support from schools. A review of this process occurred and we will continue to publish the Trial Exams twice a year.

We continue to publish the **Science Coordinator's and Beginning Teacher's Handbooks**.

### Conferences & Workshops

STAV members continue to have access to the largest number of professional learning opportunities offered by a Science Teachers' Association in the nation.

The following conferences were hosted during the reported period:

- **STAVCON** was hosted at La Trobe University and attracted approximately 700 delegates across both days. The feedback received on the whole was very positive but teachers have expressed difficulty in being released for both days. We will be reviewing the 2 day format of STAVCON for 2014.
- The **VCE Conferences** were well attended with numbers similar to the previous year. We began the year with **Physics** hosted at Monash University and the **Biology and Environmental Science** following and finishing off with **Chemistry**, with the latter two conferences hosted at La Trobe University. Maria James, Curriculum Manager Science, VCAA, addressed the delegates at each conference, informing them of any updates and the pending changes to the Study Designs.
- The **Lab Tech Conference** hosted at Quantum Victoria continued to attract over 90 delegates and follow the theme of a more 'hands-on' approach. OH&S continues to be a topic that raises interest and we were fortunate once again to welcome Glenn Eckhardt, Senior OH&S Policy Advisor, Employee Safety and Well Being Branch, People and Productivity Division, DEECD to introduce the Lab Techs to the DEECD's new tool and to also answer questions.
- **CONASTA 62 "Celebrating Science: Transforming the future through science innovation"** was hosted in Melbourne at La Trobe University, securing platinum sponsorship from both La Trobe University and the DEECD, and sponsorship with other partners. Presenters and delegates came from across the nation. Keynotes showcased the depth of expertise that Victoria has to offer with the Stanhope Oration being delivered by Dr Barry Jones, who was very well received and who was joined by the late Roy Stanhope's son and family. CONASTA 62 registered the largest profit to date, with STAV receiving half of the \$80,000. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the support team behind the scenes, including the CONASTA Organising Committee, STAV Council, the team of Volunteers, the La Trobe University team, our partners and the ASTA CONASTA Management team led by Vic Dobos and Kimberley Gaal.
- The **ICT Conference** was once again hosted at Quantum Victoria and attracted over 90 delegates after receiving very positive feedback.
- Dr Christina Hart delivered two **Physics workshops** for Primary and Secondary teachers with both receiving positive feedback.
- Helen Silvester delivered 3 Primary **Science Workshops** at STAV House which were well received and we will continue to offer these 'boutique' style workshops in support of Primary Science teaching in 2015.

## Curriculum

### VCAA

Maria James, Curriculum Science Manager, provided updates to all delegates at both STAVCON and the VCE Conferences. Teachers had access to information via online sessions, face-to-face sessions and were also encouraged to provide written feedback regarding the changes to the Senior Years Science Study Designs.

### Recognition of Excellence in Science Education

David Trotter received the STAV Life Member Award, Bob Aikenhead received the award for Distinguished Service and Barb Brook received the STAV Fellowship Award. I would like to congratulate all for their contribution to Science Education. Details were published in our journals and we had a special award presentation at STAVCON for the recipients.

### Pre-Service Teachers

We continue to engage with Pre-Service teachers informing them of the benefits of joining STAV as a beginning teacher, and having access to a community that supports and influences the teaching and learning of science education both at a state and national level.

### ASTA

STAV has participated in the governance of ASTA through its representation on ASTA Council. STAV representatives (President and President Elect) have pursued the importance of ASTA having a prominent national presence to ensure consultation occurs in important initiatives such as the Australian Curriculum and other projects funded by the Federal Government in which Victorian teachers can access. STAV representatives participated in two face-to-face Council Meetings (November and July) and 4 teleconferences throughout the year.

### Social Media

STAV Facebook and Twitter accounts have continued to promote events to STAV Members and the wider community. We thank the diligence of our Social Media Liaison Officer who has facilitated this communication with members.

### DEECD

STAV has continued to enter into dialogue with the DEECD in seeking support for the Professional Development of Science teachers across the state. The reduced funding from the DEECD to support the delivery of professional learning has continued to be a challenge. Every endeavour will be made to ensure that STAV receives adequate funding from the DEECD in the future. STAV Councillors have participated in round table discussions primarily with a STEM based theme, both at the state level and involving national and international representatives.

### Science Talent Search

The STS Management and Committee along with Janice Teng have continued to support the STAV Science Talent Search (STS), attracting interest in all categories. Once again we had over 2,700 participants, their teachers and families celebrating on Exhibition Day at La Trobe University. I am pleased to announce that we had a **national student winner Conroy Cheers** and the **national teacher winner Judith Sise**, who attended ISEF hosted this year in Los Angeles California USA. We extend our gratitude and thanks to all who continue to volunteer their time to ensure that we offer such a worthwhile initiative.

### Science Drama Awards

The STAV Science Drama Awards were held at Canterbury Girls' Secondary College and continued to attract entries from both regional and metropolitan Primary and Secondary schools. A special thank you to the all involved.

### National Science Week

Schools continued to receive financial support to run programs during National Science Week in August 2013. The theme for this year was **'Food for our future: Science feeding the world'**.

**Financial Management**

After experiencing a very modest surplus in the last financial year, we see ourselves facing another deficit, not as large as the one experienced in 2012 -13 which was \$93,032 but one that will challenge us to seek strategies and implement a viable and sustainable model that will ensure STAV's viability into the future. The deficit registered is \$59, 137. STAV Council has begun to pursue strategies that will facilitate our viability and is committed to turning this deficit into a surplus.

STAV continues to maintain a presence both state wide and nationally working with the following partners:

- Deans of Science from the Universities of Victoria
- Deans of Education from La Trobe University, the University of Melbourne and Monash University
- Australian Academy of Science
- Australia's Chief Scientist
- CSIRO, Scientists in Schools
- BHP Billiton (Student and Teacher Awards)
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

**Soula Bennett**

**STAV President**