SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

School number: 0406

School name: Solomontown Primary School

1. General information

- School Principal name: Jenne Chegwidden
- Deputy Principal’s name: Anne Franks
- Year of opening: 1897
- Postal Address: 90 Three Chain Road, Port Pirie, SA 5540
- DECS Region: Yorke and Midnorth
- Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km): 230km
- Telephone number: 08 86322191 Fax Number: 08 86325090
- School e-mail address: info@sollyr7.sa.edu.au
- April FTE student enrolment:

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• Currently the student enrolment includes 66% School card and 16% Aboriginal students

• **Student enrolment trends:** Student enrolment has reduced as the result of a plan to lower numbers because of overcrowding of facilities. A ‘catchment area’ was enforced for four years resulting in students only coming from the designated area. Numbers were also effected by the opening of a Christian School which in two separate years took a significant number of students. It is expected that student numbers will continue to drop in coming years though the impact of mining and industrial ventures in surrounding areas could effect this.

• **Staffing numbers**
  - 20 teachers
  - 15 SSO’s
  - ACEO (16hrs) and CPS Worker (12hrs)
  - Canteen Manager
  - Groundsperson

• **Public transport access:** The school is on the town bus route

• **Special site arrangements:**
  Solomontown Primary cooperates with other public schools in a range of projects
  - Keeping Them Connected (Year 7 – 8 Transition Project)
  - LOTE revitalisation project R – 12
  - Aboriginal Young Women’s Cultural Awareness Project
  - Primary Maths and Science Project

2. **Students (and their welfare)**

• **General characteristics**
  Most students live close to the school though a group live in the Risdon South area and come to school on the town bus. Solomontown is generally a low socio-economic area of Port Pirie with lower cost housing available. There is an increasing transience of students. 27% of students are on NEPs which has added significantly to the complexity of the school

• **Student well-being programs**
  Learning Through Engagement and Wellbeing is a major focus of the Site Learning Plan. The Counsellor role has been integrated into a Senior Leader 1 position because of the importance of the work in this area. School Values, developed in collaboration with the community, are the basis of all programs with a range of related incentive programs e.g Super Sollies, Class Learning Tokens. Whole school and class based programs are developed each year to take into account the particular needs of cohorts of students. In the past these have included concepts such as
Workshop, Boys Group, Mens Shed, True Colours, Swimming, Go Group etc

- **Student support offered**
  The Counsellor’s major role is in supporting students. This includes emotional, social and physical needs. A range of structures are in place to ensure that students physical needs can be met e.g. Breakfast Club, emergency lunches, provision of clothing items etc. Class teachers have a strong pastoral support role but all staff are expected to contribute to caring for all students R-7.

An ACEO (Aboriginal Community Education Officer) provides support to Aboriginal students and their families, particularly in strengthening the link between home and school. The ACEO also works with Risdon Park Primary School and at times joint activities are developed.

A CPS (Christian Pastoral Support) Worker is available to the school community. In this role the worker makes themselves available on need e.g. as a listening ear, to support a range of other programs

Student Mentors, funded through ICAN and the Aboriginal Mentoring Program, have an increasing role in supporting students, particularly those who experience complex disadvantage

- **Student management**
  Classes develop expectations of behaviour related to the values and students are consistently reminded about the range of choices they can make but encouraged to make decisions which lead to problems being solved. This problem solving approach ensures that students take responsibility for their decisions.

  Classroom teachers, the Senior Leader/Counsellor, the Principal and Deputy Principal make themselves available so that students are able to work through these processes. Families are often involved in the discussions so that children are getting consistent messages from the home and the school. This approach has been shown to be highly effective.

  A range of Regional Office and child and youth agencies e.g. CAMHS are involved to support individuals and groups of students.

  As in all schools “take home” and the SEE (Suspension, exclusion and expulsion) procedures are used in some situations to give the school the opportunity to develop alternative strategies to support the student.

**Student government**

The school has a motivated leadership group of students who work with the Counsellor representing all students and developing services for the school.
Some examples include lunch time activities and running assemblies. It is made up of School Captains, Vice Captains and Deputy Vice Captains.

Captains are also elected from Sports Teams. They are responsible for training students for sportsday and providing leadership on the day. They also run some lunch activities to involve students.

There is a structured Work Experience program at Year 6 / 7 where students work alongside adults in the school for a time each week learning the related skills. Students assist in the Canteen and Red Cross Breakfast Club.

Cross age tutoring, through the PAL program, is encouraged across classes.

- **Special programmes**

  *Bully Buster Program*

  Bullying is a form of cruelty that affects not just the bullies and victims, but those who witness the behaviour and the distress of the victim. Bullying is widespread in the community and is also found in schools.

  At Solomontown Primary School this is addressed by training students through classroom programs to follow set structures and then supporting them to make decisions and use the processes to deal with bullying when it arises.

  *Physical Activity*

  Physical activity is valued highly with P.E. specialists providing at least part of the NIT provision to each class R – 7.

  Though limited space, including no school oval, creates issues a range of physical activity and sporting opportunities are provided including district SAPSASA Carnivals and athletics. There is a high level of participation in the swimming program at all year levels. The main hall has been established as a space for coordination and fitness circuit activities. The increase in the size of the Hall as the result of the BER project has opened up the range of activities that can occur there.

  There are also established links with sporting clubs in the community. Funding is provided in the budget to involve students in an increasing range of activities with these clubs e.g. gymnastics, table tennis to encourage students to be active out of school hours.

  Physical activity is encouraged at breaks by providing a range of sporting equipment to classes.
Healthy Eating

Encouraging students to make healthy food choices has been a priority. Staff have been involved in training in nutrition and implement curriculum related to healthy choices. Many classes include the eating of healthy snacks, particularly fruit, as part of the daily program.

Families are encouraged to support their children, in both their long term health and their ability to function effectively at school, by:

- Ensuring children eat breakfast (since 2006 a Red Cross Breakfast program has operated on Monday, Wednesday and Friday)
- Limiting the packaged “treat foods” sent to school by packing foods for recess and lunch that are lower in fat, salt and sugar and higher in fibre
- Encouraging children to drink water regularly through the day

3. Key School Policies

- Site Learning Plan:
  A copy of the Site Learning Plan is included on the solomontown Primary School Website. The plan is reviewed over each year for successes/achievements, concerns/challenges, key findings and possible actions for the following period.

  The major focus is currently literacy with improvements being orchestrated through strategies related to literacy, science and numeracy and learning through engagement and wellbeing.

- Reporting to the Community:
  A copy of the Annual Report is also included on the website reporting on all areas of management and development.

  Regular updates are provided through the School Newsletter, the “Solly Serial” and End of Term Assemblies. An overview of the year is also included as part of the annual school magazine and the Annual General Meeting for the Governing Council

4. Curriculum

- Subject offerings:
  At Solomontown Primary School the curriculum, Reception to Year Seven, has been based on the SACSA (South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability) Framework. This is the document used in all South Australian Public Schools for planning, teaching and assessment.
During 2011 teaching staff have been exploring the National Curriculum in English, Maths and Science and it is anticipated that they would be the focus of planning and assessment from 2012.

Students study 7 Learning Areas:

- Maths
- Science
- English
- Technology
- Health and Personal Development
- The Arts
- Studies of Society and Environment

Previously German LOTE (Languages other than English) was provided R – 5 through Non Instruction time but a teacher was not available over the last two years. A teacher of German will begin at the school in 2012. Teachers have been encouraged to provided experiences of LOTE as part of integrated units of work.

- **Special needs:**

  With 27% of students on NEP s differentiating the curriculum to meet the range of need is a priority. SSO time is used to support class teachers to provide small group and individual programs. Practical, “real life” experiences are often part of this work. Resources in the school, particularly in the area of literacy and numeracy, support the needs of this group.

  Teachers and SSO s access a range of training and development to ensure they have an appropriate level of skill to support students.

  Two of the Regional Special Classes are based in the school catering for R-2 and 3-7 learners who are assessed as eligible for this program. Students travel across Port Pirie or from towns close by to access the classes.

  A Learning Difficulties Manager coordinates assessments, communication with Regional Support people, NEP reviews, applications for extra hours etc

- **Special curriculum features:**

  *Enterprise Culture:*

  The school has worked towards developing an enterprise culture where students develop skills for life long learning e.g Using initiative and drive,
Being creative and innovative, Being positive and flexible, Making decisions and solving problems, Planning and organising, Communicating and negotiating, Managing resources and people, Working cooperatively, Reviewing and assessing

It is intended that curriculum, teaching methods, procedures and policies reflect these attributes.

The community is an important resource in building these skills. A range of opportunities are developed so that students can engage with people and programs beyond the school.

**Information and Communication Technology**

ICT is a focus as a strategy to increase the engagement of students in learning, particularly in literacy. A Coordinator 2 was appointed in 2011 with the new DECS funding to support ICT and this role has been very important in building the confidence of staff to use a range of ICTs as part of their teaching. A strong peer coaching model is emerging.

Inetactive Whiteboards are in place in all but one of the classrooms. Laptops with wireless technology are available for a significant amount of time to students 4 – 7. Ipods and E-Books are being trialled as other technologies that can support learning. A Computer Room is available for whole class activities, particularly for R-3 students.

The ICT Coordinator works with classroom teachers in a resource based learning model to share and build skills

- **Teaching methodology:**
  Solomontown Primary School was involved with the Learning to Learn Project and the development of the South Australian TFEL. The TFEL is being investigated as the methodology framework for the implementation of the National Curriculum.
  Teachers are encouraged to collect and use data to plan for individual student progress

- **Student assessment procedures and reporting**

  A School Data Management Planner identifies the range of information collected to track progress of both individual students and the whole school with staff in leadership positions responsible for its implementation.

  The school is currently undergoing a Reporting Review. A sub group of Governing Council, involving teachers and parents are surveying the school community to better understand what is valued.

  The current process:
Term 1  
Acquaintance Evening
“First Impression” Report and Reporting Folder with standards information

Term 2  
Reporting Folder with standards information / Student/Parent/Teacher meetings

Term 3  
Curriculum Display
Reporting Folder with standards information
NAPLaN Tests (Year 3/5/7 only)

Term 4  
Reporting Folder summary task
Summary Report with standards information in Learning Areas with student goals and teacher comment.

5. Staff (and their welfare)

• Staff profile
The staff includes a range of levels of experience, is well balanced in gender and teaching skills. It socialises well within itself and is involved in the local community in sport and other activities. It is very supportive of new staff and inducts them into the team in the "Solly way".

• Leadership structure
The current leadership team consists of the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Senior Leader 1 / Counsellor, Coordinator Level 2 – Teaching and Learning, Coordinator Level 2 – Science and Maths, Coordinator Level Two – ICT, Special Education Manager and Aboriginal Education Teacher. A teacher is elected by staff to be part of the team which meets each week

• Staff support systems
The staff is organised into 3 teams: R - 3 (5 classes+ Special Ed R-2 Regional class), 4/5 (2 classes), 5 – 7 (3 classes + Special Ed 3-7 Regional Class) These teams are collocated and share resources. They have opportunities to meet as part of the staff meeting format and through release for professional enquiry processes. They play an important role in the induction of new staff. Teams are expected to collaborate in the provision of the curriculum.

Peer coaching is encouraged as a strategy for developing new skills amongst staff.
• **Staff Information**
  Staff information, until recently provided in hard copy as a “Management” and “Curriculum” Folder is being redeveloped as a Wiki which will then be available to staff and interested others both at school or at home.

• **Performance Development**
  All staff, teachers and SSOs are involved in a formal Performance Development Program. Based on the TFEL. Teachers are encouraged to apply for Step 9 as they become eligible.

6. **Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff**

• Complexity placement points
  Yes.

• Isolation placement points
  Yes.

• Shorter terms
  No.

• Travelling time
  For non-metro leave entitlements.

• Housing assistance
  Government housing is available.

• Cooling for school buildings
  Refrigerated throughout the school.

• Cash in lieu of removal allowance
  Yes.

• Additional increment allowance
  No.

• Designated schools benefits
  No.

• Aboriginal/Anangu schools
  No.

• Medical and dental treatment expenses
  No.

• Locality allowances
  No.

• Relocation assistance
  Yes.

• Principal’s telephone costs
  Yes.
7. **School Facilities**

- **Buildings and grounds**
  The school has five buildings around a central play yard. The main heritage building mainly of freestone construction has had significant upgrading through the BER Project including the addition of a large multi purpose hall. It contains the Resource Centre, a staff preparation area and staff room and the administration area. The R-2 building, called the "1919 " because of its age, has 6 classrooms and the ICT computer Room in a semicircular arrangement around a large hall used for joint activities. A group of 4 transportable classrooms have also been upgraded through the BER project with the provision of an extensive outdoor learning area. On the northern of the Main Building is a Samcon building which was redeveloped in 2004 with attached Technology Area and Canteen. The central area of the Samcon was opened up and developed into learning areas in 2004 and now has a workshop for use by small group programs and a wet/ work area. The 4 classrooms have been redeveloped into 2 large areas, now having access directly to the yard and to the central areas with glass viewing for supervision. Further to the North is another 2 classroom block used by senior classes. An ex-dental clinic is used as a Meeting Room and a focus for Aboriginal programs.

  The grounds have been significantly redeveloped recently to include turfed areas, large shades and a new playground. Soft Fall has been installed under equipment.

- **Cooling**
  Air-conditioned facilities, all being refrigerated units.

- **Specialist facilities**
  A School Canteen opens each day, operated by a Manager with assistance from parent volunteers and work experience students.

  With a reduction in school numbers there are now three areas that can be utilised flexibly to support programs for students. e.g. a coordination program

- **Staff facilities**
  A pleasant work area has been created in the main building area for SSOs and teachers to work in. Three computers are available to use in this area as well as access to telephone and photocopiers.

- **Access for students and staff with disabilities**
  There is a ramp to most areas. The staff toilet is large enough for a wheelchair. There is also a disabled toilet/ shower facility adjacent to the transportable classrooms.
• **Access to bus transport**  
  Approved students can travel to school from outside the town on a DECS bus.

8. **School Operations**

• **Decision making structures**  
  A school Management Framework has been developed which lists tasks to be managed and staff who are responsible. Staff, students and parents are encouraged to go to this person initially with ideas or concerns. If a major change is necessary a decision making proforma is used which includes an assessment of who needs to be involved in the decisions. As much as possible decisions come through consensus or vote.

• **Regular Communications**  
  An Information Booklet is made available to new families. The Solly Serial is the major communication and is sent home weekly. As well as letting the school community know what is happening in the school school leaders report each week on aspects of the Site Learning Plan. The staff also access the Bulletin which is distributed on Monday for the coming week, and also the ‘Day Book’ with day to day messages and Staff Meeting agenda.

• **Other communication**  
  A Home Communication Book system R-7 exists to foster positive relationships between student, staff and families.

• **Special funding**  
  The school financial position is positive with most areas already well resourced. Opportunities for grants or DECS projects that complement school priorities are pursued.

9. **Local Community**

• **General characteristics**  
  Solomontown Primary School is situated in the Eastern most suburb of the City of Port Pirie, with a lot of older style homes which are being tastefully renovated by both young families and retired couples. Port Pirie is an industrial/human services city with an undeserved reputation based on its major industry – Nyrstar - lead and zinc smelters. It has a wide range of community facilities and has been seen by the great majority of teachers who have come here to be a quiet, friendly, safe community in which to live and raise a family.

• **Parent and community involvement**  
  Governing Council meets twice per term, there are sub committees which report back to this body e.g.Finance, Facilities, Canteen, Fundraising.
Sub Committees are set up on need to review school policies. The school has parent-helpers in the classroom, particularly in the R-2 area of the school.

- **Feeder Schools**
  
The majority of Reception students come from the Solomontown Kindergarten. The majority of Solomontown Primary students transition to Year 8 at John Pirie Secondary School.

- **Other local care and educational facilities**
  
  There are several kindergartens in Port Pirie, after hours care in one school, and two Child Day Care Centres. Port Pirie has 4 DECS primary schools, a large secondary school (John Pirie Secondary School), and a Catholic R-12 complex and a Christian School R-12.

- **Commercial / industrial / shopping / other facilities**
  
  Port Pirie has a wide range of shopping outlets, from Coles/Woolworths/K-Mart to speciality shopping in the City Centre. Apart from the Smelter there are many service and light construction industries, ‘fast food’ outlets etc.

  Port Pirie has 3 large medical centres supported by a large Regional Health Service with a wide range of visiting specialists conducting day surgery.

- **Availability of staff housing**
  
  Government housing and general low cost rental is readily available. A wide range of quality housing can be purchased at prices considerably less than comparable housing in Adelaide.

- **Local Government body**
  
  Port Pirie Regional Council – 8632 1222 (Fax: 8632 5801). Our Council has a vigorous, well led development/employment brief.

**10. Further Comments**

Solomontown has a strong collegiate ethos among staff, which facilitates collaboration and joint decision making. There has been a general move towards bringing even more cohesiveness to already existing structures and working towards a whole “schoolness” which allows each person to see themselves as part of the whole rather than working in isolation in their classrooms.