

## Wakakirri interactive Waka Workshops on tour

**W**akakirri, Australia's largest Performing Arts Festival for schools, will be touring schools during Terms 3 and 4 to meet teachers and run fun, interactive Waka Workshops for students. The workshop sessions are free and will give schools an opportunity to discover the fun and creativity involved in creating and presenting a Story Dance.

Wakakirri is the annual search for the most inspirational Story Dance created by an Australian school... a creative challenge that is accessible and affordable for every school in Australia whether public or private, primary or secondary, regional or remote.

For schools wanting to address the National Dance Curriculum, a Waka Workshop is the best first step. A Wakakirri Story Dance is a three-to seven-minute performance that theatrically tells a story using any combination of dancing, creative movement and acting to pre-recorded music. Schools can tell any story, in any way they wish.

After rehearsals, the three-stage selection process starts with non-competitive Showcase Day presentations at local venues where schools come together to perform in a professional theatre, under full lights and sound to an audience of family, friends and the official



Wakakirri National Search Panel (including Justine Clarke, Todd McKenney, Andrew McFarlane and Mark Wilson).

The best groups are invited back for Stage 2 to find the Stage 3 Story of the Year winner from 30 primary and six secondary schools

finalists, all of which are featured on Waka TV. Limited bookings are available for the Term3-4 school visits and free WakaWorkshops. Contact:

*email wakakirri@wakakirri.com  
tel 1800 650 979*

## Adjustable uniforms for long legged students

**A**s primary school students reach new heights, clothing manufacturers are making adjustments to ensure clothes fit for more than just the first term. School uniform company LW Reid has started producing adjustable clothes with extra-long sizes to cater for today's taller children. CEO Brad Aurisch said the company realised children were wearing clothing that was a size too big to fit their long legs, but then having to put up with baggy waists.

"We found parents were buying a size," Mr Aurisch said.

"With our adjustment mechanism, now they can buy the size that has the length suiting the kid, but you can pull in the waist to bring it back to the right size.

"It solves the problem of kids who want longer length garments, and has no impact on kids who are happy with what we think is the normal size ratio."

Several high schools made special orders for longer shorts last year and Mr Aurisch said it had become a standard product, along with longer tights for girls.

At Carlton Gardens Primary School, the new designs have been welcomed. "Kids are just growing quicker and having the spurt earlier," school business manager Joy Meredith said. "Children grow taller now as opposed to outwards.

"Their uniforms get too small in the arms, the length of their pants tends to be the issue, not so much outgrowing around the waist."



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www.lwreid.com.au*



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# THRASS training is key to handwriting, reading and spelling

*Denyse Ritchie, co author and developer of THRASS literacy teaching*

The THRASS Institute is first and foremost a teacher-training organisation. The institute provides professional development in the understanding of phonics and linguistics and the delivery of literacy teaching. To successfully practice THRASS, training by an accredited THRASS trainer is essential.

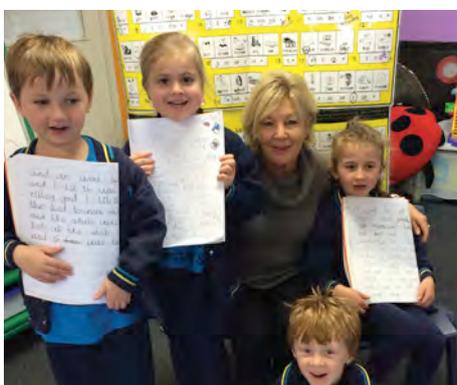
THRASS is not a program but a specific teaching practice. Therefore we refer to teachers as 'practicing' THRASS in their classroom or school, not 'doing' THRASS.

There are certain cognitive principles and beliefs that underpin the THRASS methodology and those wanting to practice THRASS must understand and apply these to their teaching.

Teachers' beliefs about a learner's intelligence are an important predictor of learning engagement and behaviour. Cognitive development is not a fixed progression through age related stages, rather, the learning and mastery of new concepts occurs in fits and starts. Because of this, content should not be kept from students because it is believed to be developmentally inappropriate.

Learners must be given the correct and sustainable prerequisites to master the learning of new concepts. Each subject area has a set of basic facts critical to understanding and when committed to long term memory these facts aid in problem solving.

The THRASS Charts are pivotal to the THRASS Teaching Practice. They allow for 'big picture' learning and provide teachers with a charted, visual reference of linguistic and phonic facts.



*Denyse Ritchie and primary students*

Learners understand new information and concepts via analogy and example, then by referencing ideas to what they already know. When working from the known to the unknown there must be a critical link between existing knowledge and what is to be learned. Through the explicit demonstration and teaching of these links, learners are able to perceive, understand and remember underlying structure, which enables them to apply problem-solving steps to future learning.

The various THRASS Charts provide practitioners with an analogous teaching chart containing a set of facts required for understanding the phoneme-grapheme relationships between spoken and written English.

Retaining information relies on understanding and the opportunity to apply learned information to a given problem. The

practice of THRASS in your classroom supports *enquiry based learning*, the term given to learning that supports learners to pursue their own lines of enquiry by drawing on existing knowledge to problem solve. *Enquiry based learning* encourages learners to engage with teachers as partners in the learning process.

Phonics is to reading and spelling, what times tables are to mathematics. It is the foundation on which reading and spelling are built. The use of phonics for reading and writing is a life-long skill. Even the most literate of adults, when faced with an unfamiliar word, will revert to phonics to decode and encode.

Mandating the teaching of phonics will make a major difference to literacy results in Australian schools but only if teachers have adequate understanding of the alphabetic principle and phonetic structure of English.

*enquiries@thrass.com.au*  
*tel 08 9244 2119*  
*http://www.thrass.com.au/*  
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**THRASS** provides an assemblage of specific resources to be used by those trained in THRASS to teach literacy skills. The THRASS Charts and various THRASS teaching resources are linguistically correct and provide content that is sustainable for future learning.

## Decorative, durable playground markings

Project Playgrounds want school playgrounds to be bright, fun and vibrant place for children to play, learn and exercise and for teachers to make learning more enjoyable out of the classroom.

Originally designed in the UK for use as road marking material, Project Playgrounds' UV-stable thermoplastic material has been developed and tested specifically for use in the playground; it will not fade, chip or peel and is anti-slip, making it safe for wet and slippery conditions.

Priya Commane says: "Given the durability and longevity of our thermoplastic, we are proud to deliver our wonderful playground markings to all areas of Australia.

"We will tailor packages to suit any school's



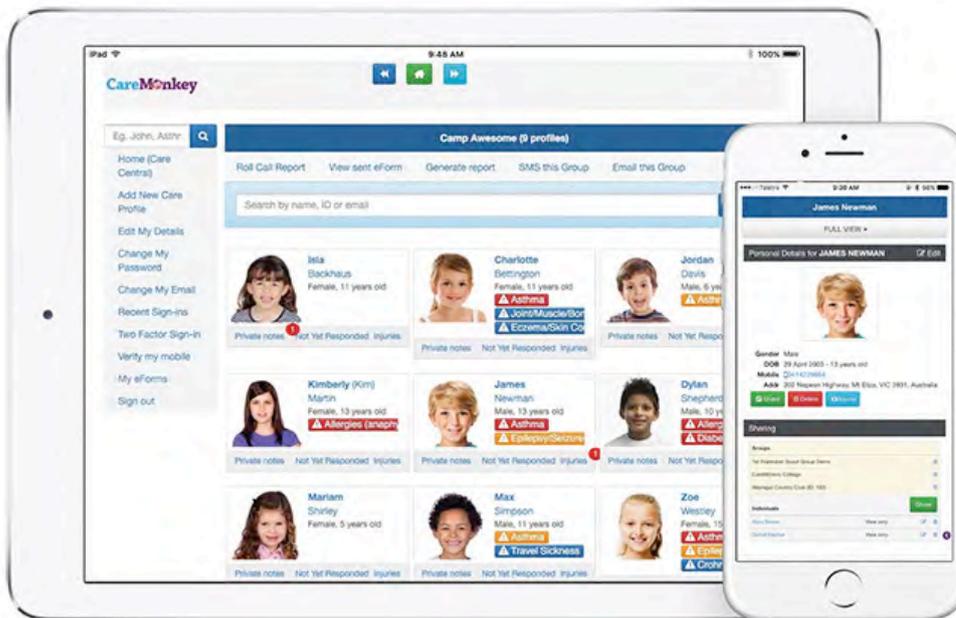
individual needs. Painted markings look great initially but soon require re-painting and can become dangerous from chipping and peeling.

Project Playgrounds offers a wide range of jumping, skipping and counting games, and can create and install school logos, mottoes and design elements to match the school's décor.

Project Playgrounds has installed markings in schools across Australia from its Sydney fabrication plant and will soon open a second base in Victoria, to offer prompt service and installations for schools in the state.

*tel 1800 264 307*  
*email info@projectplaygrounds.com.au*  
*www.projectplaygrounds.com.au*

## CareMonkey takes the paper out of permissions



**F**rustrated by the seemingly never-ending stream of crumpled permission slips and reminders found in the bottom of his seven children's schoolbags, Troy Westley started thinking of how a smart phone app could be used to stop the paper flood.

The result was CareMonkey, launched less than 24 months ago with a single Catholic school in Victoria, and now in daily use by more than 300 schools in Australia as well as in the US, The Philippines, the UK, Ireland and by an American international school in remote Kazakhstan.

CareMonkey automates the collection of medical information and consent forms, providing authorised staff with emergency access, even when they are offline. CareMonkey ensures medical records are kept up to date, and helps authorised staff know what to do, who to call, and what to tell an ambulance paramedic in an emergency.

"It's all about the school's duty of care and parent communication," Westley says.

CareMonkey integrates with the leading school administration systems to provide an easy to administer, secure and flexible method of keeping key medical information current and accessible. Once established, the record is maintained by the child's parents or carers for as long as the child remains at the school. And, because it's cloud based, the record can be accessed by any participating organisation as he or she changes school – joins the scouts or guides, the local lifesaving club, plays hockey, netball... and the list goes on.

The process starts when a child is first enrolled and a CareMonkey record with



photo ID is created. This lists the child's relevant medical records, allergies, general and emergency contacts. Simultaneously, the parent is given a user name and password and takes responsibility for keeping the record up to date – with automatic reminders generated by the system at pre-set intervals.

Schools commonly have two or three CareMonkey administrators with access to all students' records while access by teachers and

other staff members is restricted to the children in their groups and can be changed whenever several teachers need access for a combined excursion.

For the school, it's a welcome boost to productivity with permission slips sent out instantly and reminders generated for parents that don't respond; every interaction is logged to create an indisputable audit trail.

"It's quite simple," Westley says. "No permission, no go."

For parents, giving permission could not be simpler. The app screen describes the activity or excursion, and the parent taps 'accept' or 'decline' and uses a fingertip to sign.

CareMonkey keeps everyone in the know through messages to a single parent or groups by email or SMS alert, whichever is the preferred method... 'The bus is running late' or 'Forecast is 12C and windy, warm coats and beanies today.'

It's also a convenient way to collect payments for excursions with bulk requests to start off, a report to tell the school who has paid and automatic reminders sent to the stragglers.

CareMonkey shines when there's an accident while on an excursion and there's a 000 call for help; having full medical details on the teacher's phone can make a vital difference to how paramedics treat the child in an emergency.

Incidents can be logged as they happen rather than relying on memory later, with the ability to add photos, and send accurate information straight to HQ where an incident report is generated to help analyse how and why the incident occurred and streamline insurance claims.

The annual cost is \$7.50 per student, which one school principal described as "Probably less than the cost of paper and printing all those forms during the school year." CareMonkey is available free for families.

There's a comprehensive demonstration and full details at:

[www.caremonkey.com](http://www.caremonkey.com)



### CareMonkey and Troy Westley

Troy Westley is CEO of CareMonkey. He has been a pioneer in the IT industry in Australia, starting the Pacific Islands Region for Oracle in his twenties, and becoming the Vice President of Salesforce.com for the Asia Pacific in his thirties.

Founded in 2013, CareMonkey has been the recipient of the largest prize ever offered in a pitching competition at *Slush*, in Helsinki in November last year, and is considered by Sir Richard Branson as "certainly one to watch".

With more than 1 million users around the world, CareMonkey is used by schools and universities, sporting clubs at all levels, outdoor groups, day care centres, businesses, plus the community and disability sectors.

