

Elizabeth South Primary – Capturing a moment in the life of a school student



Last week I was honoured to be among a group of people who witnessed a very special moment in the history of the Elizabeth South area of Adelaide. A digital time capsule was buried in the grounds of Elizabeth South Primary School and will remain there for 50 years. It contained a link to a film about the school as well as artwork by the current students. It was part of the South Australia History Festival and was sponsored by my office.

The wooden temporary buildings that made up Elizabeth South Primary opened in February 1956 as the first public school in the Elizabeth area. There were few reading books and no electricity or toilet block. The school started with 90 students but grew to more than 2000 students, making it the biggest in the state. The story of this growth also told the story of the growth of industry and a population migration to this area.

It's important that we know the history that surrounds us and we continue to tell the stories of our past to our young people while we still have those around us who have lived through it. It's equally important for our young people to hear those stories but to also begin to tell their own story of what it's like to be young in 2018.

In this lovely film made by young film maker Damon Sparkes from the City of Playford's Northern Sound System and Fatfish Films, current Elizabeth South students interviewed old scholars who went there in the 1960s and after. It was great to hear stories from the old scholars about fountain pens and their love of Elvis, but also how they felt when they went to school there and what impact that schooling had on their adult lives. The current students explained how they use google to help with their work and showed off the pumpkin patch and chicken coop at the school.

We sponsored this project so that young people can be active voices in the present, the future and the past. We also wanted to reflect on the importance of the experience we have of being young and going to school. It's important that our living history is passed down through the generations and it is equally important that the history as told by young people is part of that.

Young people are often seen as being completely future focused and not interested in the past. I am not sure how true this is. I think it is more about how interesting and engaging we make things. Hopefully by having young people directly involved in creating history we can change the image of everything in the past being boring.

Young people are digital citizens and this time capsule is reflective and fitting of young people born this century.

Elizabeth South School Principal Steve Clarke said that he hopes the students who contributed to the art work and film in the time capsule will have the opportunity to come back in 50 years and have a sense of pride and connectedness in their school when they remember the role they played in this moment in history.

It is by doing projects like this that we can strengthen connections in communities and between generations and help everyone understand the importance we all have in learning about history and passing our history on.

****Photo caption: Pupils from Elizabeth South Primary School
Lucy,Hannah,Jymain,Parbat,with School Principal Steve Clarke, Helen
Connolly and Mayor of City of Playford Glenn Docherty.***

******The SA History Festival continues until the end of this month.***