Welcome to the Special Education Program

The Special Education Program has always operated on the belief that exceptional children should be achieving to the best of their ability. Students with Special Education needs can achieve great things at school when they receive the support and services they require.

SEP would like to thank the following businesses in recognition of the kind donation towards the communication program for Students with Disabilities. SEP rely on community support and donations to enrich the resources which in turn provide a high standard of special education. Thank you for your kind donation and contribution:

- Byte wise IT solutions – Jo Ashford
- Keith Smith – Mirani Accountants
- Jodie Maloney – Tai Chi Teacher
- Jane Louise Watt - Ideality Designer - [www.idealitydesigner.com](http://www.idealitydesigner.com)
- Liz Nash – Hospitality & Early Childhood department Mirani SHS
- Ben Clutterbuck – Music department Mirani SHS
- Seaview & Mirani Sugar Valley Lions Clubs

SEP would like to acknowledge the assistance of additional support staff; Advisory Visiting Teachers as well as Occupational/Speech therapists and Physiotherapists mentioned below. These professionals work as part of our educational team, to assist children with disabilities achieve the best educational outcomes possible.

- Simone Netherwood – Physical Impairment
- Vicky O’Hara – Speech Therapist
- Andrew Obst – Hearing Impairment
- Iris Harvey – Transition
ICT as an enrichment strategy in students’ learning

At Mirani State High School SEP we are committed to engaging and supporting learning environments creating opportunities that stimulate, extend and deepen the student’s learning by incorporating the use of modern technology devices such as computers and iPads. This promotes student’s language development which continues to improve throughout their daily lives.

In addition to the subjects offered in mainstream school, the Mirani State High School Special Education Program also offers a number of alternative subjects that students can study. These subjects provide learning outcomes that focus on functional academics such as literacy and numeracy and transition activities including essential life skills, social and work readiness skills.

HEALTHY LIVING & WELL BEING PROGRAM

Tai Chi is a non-impact exercise that is good for people of all ages and those with disabilities. Tai Chi is easy on the joints and can be done standing, sitting or lying down. With a slight modification, the practice of Tai Chi is the ideal routine for those in wheelchairs. Its deep coordinated breath and slow circular movements will benefit many who have not exercised for years, irrespective of the reason.

The slow, non-strenuous Tai Chi and Chi Kung movements can improve one’s general health and feeling of well being. They will help with lower back pain, chronic knee and joint injury, and lower blood pressure. Other benefits include improved balance, concentration, flexibility, and mind control using both hemispheres of the brain, as well as improvement of heart, lung and digestive function.

“Tai Chi moves” Aleacha Spratt, Jodie Maloney (Tai Chi Teacher), Chris Turner

“Tai Chi ball” Neil Ward & Carol Bell (Teacher Aide)
**Cooking/Life skills**

Students in the SEP have been participating in a healthy eating program this year, learning about a variety of foods and identifying the foods that nourish our bodies and learning about healthier food choices. Our students are also working towards becoming more independent in the kitchen, making their own sandwiches and wrapping them themselves.

“Making vegemite sandwiches” Neil Ward

Keoni Odger, Vicki Brown (SEP Teacher), Dylan Bradshaw

**Gardening program**

Our students have been using their green thumbs planting sunflower seeds they have also been in charge of nurturing the plants making sure they get adequate sunlight and water. In addition to this we are starting our very own SEP gardening program where we will plant and grow herbs and vegetables to sell to parents/staff of Mirani State High School. The money that will be earned will go back into the SEP to fund the gardening program and will also be spent on resources that our students will benefit from! In order for this to be successful we are asking parents and our local community to contribute their time in helping us establish the garden, or donate materials or seeds which will be of great use.

**Mothers Day 2013!**

Happy Mothers Day to our SEP mum’s! Neil & Susan Ward, Riley Townley, Keoni-Ann & Renee Odger

**SEP Sunflower theory:** “Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow, it’s what sunflowers do”. We’re all different … sort of like flowers. Nothing says hope, life and happiness quite like the happy, round bright yellow faces of enormous sunflowers. It is easy to be captivated by these large flowers on tall stalks whose flower head follows the sun across the sky. Sunflowers seem to have smiling faces, they are powerful and show the way humankind tries to aspire. They are an extravagant emblem of constancy and strength. Glorious sunflowers have the capacity to brighten the dullest of days.
**Transition**

The major focus of Special Education Program (SEP) is to ensure that Students with disabilities have a successful transition to post school options such as work experience, apprenticeship/traineeship and TAFE.

Due to travel constraints we often rely on our local businesses in the Pioneer Valley region to provide an opportunity for our students to attend work experience. Without this support the students would not be able to gain valuable work skills in their chosen field of interest.

Mirani SEP would like to thank the following local businesses and organisations for their ongoing support:

- Nanyima Aged Care Facility
- Mirani Library & Museum
- Marian C&K Kindergarten
- Walkerston Wonderkids
- Mirani Lions Club
- Walkerston Rotary Club
- Pioneer Valley Kindergarten
- Mirani Kookaburra store
- Marian Post Office
- Walkerston ABC Early learning centre
- Mirani Rotary Club
- Mirani Regional Council
Mackay District Special School & Mirani SEP

“Fun & Friendship Day”

What is a Celebration, without cake?

Mirani SHS & Mackay District Special School FUN & FRIENDSHIP DAY

SEP also relies on vital links to Mackay services and networks to ensure we are receiving professional support specific to the student’s diagnosed disability. We have received ongoing support from Mackay businesses and organisations that provide students with work experience and assistance to support a smooth transition into the workplace or respite care post school life.

- Mackay District Special School
- CQ TAFE
- Ella Bache, Canelands
- The Laptop Man
- Blue Care Respite Centre
- Work Connections
- Mackay Regional City Council
- Fusion Hair & Beauty Salon
- Police Citizens Youth Club
Tobii eye gaze

Tobii eye tracking technology has helped thousands of individuals with a disability to lead more independent and happier lives. It does so by allowing you to access a computer and the Internet using only your eyes – no mouth sticks, switches or head mouse needed. Simply look at the computer screen and control the mouse cursor with your eye movement. Then, select by blinking or dwelling. It is fast, ergonomical and gives you access to the many ways a computer can enrich your life. Students of the SEP had the opportunity to use Tobii Gaze for a month in April, students had a positive reaction and increased motivation to communicate. This trial inspired parents to investigate using Tobii as a permanent communication device in the near future.

Music Program

The fact that MUSIC IS FUN should not be underestimated. Stimulating, FUN activities like playing percussion music will capture and hold children’s deepest interests. Music has the dual powers of being able to satisfy our student’s strong craving for activity and provide them with lessons for a lifetime. Making music increases children's intelligence. It actually improves various cognitive skills, including their social, observational, analytical & mathematic skills. Children that participate in music dramatically improve their abilities to work puzzles, copy patterns of colour and draw geometric figures. In short, music provides a healthy, natural and truly invaluable opportunity for individual expression. It encourages the development of the whole child by enhancing cognitive, social, physical, and emotional skills. Music therapy can be a clinical treatment for children with a range of disabilities and a variety of needs. Music teachers can contribute to special education programs, especially with children who have severe impairments.