

**STAND  
OUT**

**SEPLA-CON 19**

Monday 22nd July – Rosehill Racecourse  
Tuesday 23rd July – Rydges Parramatta



Preparing for Life - moving into secondary school and beyond

Ms Sharon Stone<sup>1</sup>, Mrs Carolyn Hefferen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Ponds School

**Biography:** Sharon Stone has been teaching in Special Education since 2008. She has experience across all Stages and has taught across a range of class groupings. In 2016, Sharon moved to The Ponds School, relieving as Assistant Principal in 2018, and was appointed to the position in 2019. Carolyn Hefferen has worked in Special Education for 15 years, starting as a teacher and Assistant Principal in a Unit, before moving to The Ponds School in 2012. She has taught across Early Stage 1 to Stage 5.

The Ponds School opened in 2012 with 4 classes of Kindergarten students. Over the years, as students have moved through from primary school to high school, we have had to develop programs specific for high school aged students within a special education setting. Our staff have a variety of professional backgrounds and experience and many have not taught students with special needs in a high school setting before. This session aims to tell our story, and shares our journey through the introduction of programs specific to high school students, as well as the professional learning for staff which occurred during this time. In 2018, we dedicated a day to exploring Post School Options placements, as we learnt about the opportunities that exist for students beyond school. Historically students in an SSP setting participate in electives within their regular class groupings. This year The Ponds School has introduced another model of electives, where by students in our high school classes are grouped according to their interests. At the start of the year, staff came together to choose which electives would be offered and these have been aligned with the ASDAN programs to give a framework which aligns with the NSW Syllabus Life Skills outcomes. Students' needs and interests were taken into account when choosing electives to be offered. From there, parents and students were surveyed and asked to rank the 7 electives according to their interests. Students' voices were heard and we honoured their choices by creating groups which suited their interest levels. During 2019, students will participate in a different elective each term, covering 4 electives throughout the year. Groups change from term to term, and students are learning to mix with people from other classes as well as working with a different teacher and SLSO each term during these lessons. Students' interests are catered for and every student is Known, Valued and Cared for in this model of teaching our electives. In 2019, electives include Gardening, Photography, Work education/Craft making, Travel Training, Sport and Swimming, Food Technology, and Agriculture/Animal Care.