

**STAND  
OUT**

**SEPLA-CON 19**

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



## ‘No student is too anything to be able to read and write’ -Providing a literacy rich environment at Fernhill School

Mrs Alison Seckold<sup>1</sup>, Mrs Kimberley Rossouw<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Fernhill School

### **Biography:**

Alison Seckold – Deputy Principal Fernhill School

Alison has worked with students with a range of abilities from K-12 in both a Special School and an integrated setting for over 30 years. She is a leader in the development and implementation of school wide literacy and communication programs, providing support to staff through instructional leadership. Alison strongly believes that all our students can learn and have a right to quality teaching and learning.

Kimberley Rossouw - Assistant Principal (relieving)

Kimberley has worked in Special Education for over four years. She has worked with students from K-12 with a variety of disabilities and is currently leading the implementation of Balanced Literacy at Fernhill School. Kimberley is passionate about assisting all students to access the curriculum and has a wealth of experience helping students use a variety of AAC systems (including PCSs, PODD, Proloquo2Go and Tobii eye gaze devices) to develop their reading and writing skills.

At Fernhill School we are aiming to increase student engagement and reduce challenging behaviours by providing our students with literacy skills using explicit teaching strategies. To do this we are implementing a comprehensive balanced literacy program across the school with AAC embedded to provide access for all students, including those with complex communication needs (CCN). We have chosen a balanced literacy program based on the Four Blocks model developed by Karen Erickson from the Centre for Literacy and Disability Studies and David Koppenhaver.

To enable our students to be connected, successful, thriving learners the least dangerous assumption we can make is to presume competence. ‘The only way we will know if any of our children can learn to read or write is to get them the literacy instruction and create the opportunities for them to learn’ (Erin Sheldon).

Why Balanced literacy?

If we only teach parts of literacy, then students will only learn parts. Our balanced literacy program includes:

- ☐ Shared Reading/ Comprehension
- ☐ Working with words
- ☐ Self-selected reading
- ☐ Writing

How does it look at Fernhill School?

Several staff attended intensive literacy training for students with CCN and are now training the rest of the staff, providing support with implementation in each class. We will provide examples of impact in the classroom as well as inspiration, ideas, and practical examples to take back to your classrooms and schools.