This year Murray Bridge High School participated in the 2009 Rock Eisteddfod Challenge held at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre on Thursday 27 August. The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge is a national performing arts event for schools that motivates young Australians to make positive and healthy lifestyle choices. The event is unique and exciting opportunity for schools to take part in a dance, drama and design spectacular where the students are the stars. Each year the events are professionally staged in some of Australia’s top entertainment venues.

As part of the Global Rock Challenge, nearly 400 Australian schools and 30,000 students compete in Rock Eisteddfod Challenge and 1 Rock shows in 17 regions across Australia. Teams as small as 10 or as large as 140 students, plan an 8-minute performance based on a theme of their choice that is set to various styles of music. Students, teachers and entire communities work together over a period of months to plan and rehearse; before competing against other schools at events in a 100% drug and alcohol free environment.

Our students gave up a considerable amount of their own time throughout terms one, two and three in order to produce a high quality entry. The majority of rehearsals were held outside of school hours with students showing a high level of commitment and effort. Our entry was called ‘Dance The Divide’. This is the brief description of our piece as presented by Krystal McDonald at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. What would you do if you felt misunderstood? Confronted with this predicament our students set off on an adventure to discover what dance is like in other countries. Where, why and how people dance? They travel in search of this universal language, this expression of human movement in the hope to better explain their own cultures and unite as one.

We chose this theme due to the multicultural nature of our school. It was something that our students could both relate to and benefit from. In order to accurately represent our chosen cultures we brought in choreographers where needed. Teachers Mrs Kaur and Ms Panjwani helped with the Indian section, Year 12 student Aliik Chol assisted with the choreography for the Sudanese section, Xingmei Zhou choreographed the Chinese section and Melanie Koolmatrie worked closely with the students on the Indigenous section. Mrs Shakes with the support of a few others did a fantastic job on the costumes and Mr Peake, Ms Lord and Ms Clark showed their high level of artistic skills with the sets. We would also like to thank the parents and staff who attended on the event day for their support, enthusiasm and dedication.

Murray Bridge High School won the ‘Award of Excellence for Student Achievement’ and the ‘Gemma Dale Award’, in which teachers and students voted for the school, which best displayed the qualities of teamwork, encouragement, and commitment towards all schools throughout their involvement in the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge. We were very proud of winning these awards and the way in which our students both participated and performed on the event day.

Through our 2009 Rock Eisteddfod we proved that ‘by striving, we reach the stars’.
Monarto is the world’s biggest open range zoo with an area of 1450 hectares. Every Tuesday morning a group of Murray Bridge High School students, known as The Zoo Crew, travel to Monarto Zoo to work cooperatively on various projects that benefit both the students and the Zoo. The staff members who supervise and work with these students include Ann Ruckert, Steve Ide, Greg Fulwood and Dean Shakes.

The programme aims to develop students’ skills in working in a group and appropriate workplace behaviours. Subject specific aims and objectives are also covered by the programme. Originally Year 9 students were invited to join Zoo Crew but the programme has been extended to include Year 8 students. Interested students are asked to submit an application to join The Zoo Crew. Successful students work as members of a team and aim to complete set tasks. They develop an awareness of responsibility, ownership of their own learning and behaviours, and respect for each other (both person & possessions). Currently two Year 9 students, Brenton Gaskin and Jack-Henry Hills, have taken leadership roles and are acting as team leaders, supervising the Year 8 students.

Students have edged the new car park for each other (both person & possessions). Currently two Year 9 students, Brenton Gaskin and Jack-Henry Hills, have taken leadership roles and are acting as team leaders, supervising the Year 8 students. Students have edged the new car park by the Visitors’ Centre with old vine posts sourced from Monarto. They have used power tools to cut the posts to size and to drill holes to peg the posts to the ground. Occupational Health and Safety procedures have been followed religiously during these activities.

The old rhino enclosure-fencing has been dismantled and neatly stacked.