

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS
(ACSSO)**

**The national voice of parents of children in Australia's public schools and
their school communities**

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Having trouble reading this email?
Read it on the web at <http://www.acsso.org.au/AED070410.pdf>

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EDITORIAL

Homework: Hot Topic

The issues raised in last week's Digest in the paper "**Homework: is it any use at all, or a complete waste of time?**" have generated a great deal of community interest, including an article in The Australian (<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21530494-2702,00.html>) and - at last count - 73 comments on the paper's related blog (http://blogs.theaustralian.news.com.au/yoursay/index.php/theaustralian/comments/does_homework_help_or_hinder/).

To explore the issues further, ACSSO has devoted its inaugural website Editorial to the topic at <http://www.acsso.org.au>, part of the website's ongoing redesign into the definitive Australian news portal on education. We have also established a Hot Topics page at <http://www.acsso.org.au/hot12.htm> to collate some other opinions and resources on homework. Whether you have firm views on homework or not, you certainly have plenty of opportunity to canvass the range of opinions others hold.

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RESOURCES

Australian Schools Directory

Websites are a very effective means of communication with parents and the community at large. ACSSO has long been keen to assist public schools find cost-effective ways to develop their websites to promote the great things they do. ACSSO has now found a national website service which, for a small fee, will give your school a feature page on that site.

What is most attractive about this site is the fact that your school can directly update any messages or information. You can do this anytime you like using a secure key. It is a very simple process. We believe this opportunity is one worth looking at.

For more information about setting up a Feature Page for your school, including cost, go to: <http://www.australian.schools.directory.com.au>

Blue Dog Posters & Prints

Blue Dog is the biggest online poster shop in Australia, with over 4,700 posters available for sale through a secure ecommerce system. Prompt, nationwide distribution is handled by Australia Post.

The Blue Dog website has a useful category browsing system (including Art Prints, Maps, Anatomy Charts, Natural World, Inspiration, Built World and Animals), as well as a comprehensive site search facility. At a basic rate of \$10 per poster, with discounts for multiple purchases, it's a cost-effective resource already used by many schools and teachers.

Go to the Blue Dog website at <http://www.bluedogposters.com>.

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EVENTS

Getting Serious About Sport

Sue Campbell CBE, the Chair of UK Sport (the top position for sport in the UK) will be joined by prominent Australian social and military historian and Brumbies historian Dr Michael McKernan and ACT Minister for Sport Andrew Barr MLC for three forums in Canberra:

FORUM 1 – **Professionalising Womens Sport; 'Engaging with Business'**
Monday May 14 2007, Old Parliament House, Canberra

FORUM 2 - **Executive Sports Leadership; 'Vision, Strategy and Performance'**
Tuesday May 15 2007, National Press Club, Canberra

FORUM 3 - **Revitalising Physical Education and School Sport; 'Is the past good enough for the future?'**
Wednesday May 16 2007, National Library of Australia, Canberra

Go to <http://www.sealglobal.net/> for more information.

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INITIATIVES

Protecting your Daughter from Cervical Cancer: The National HPV Vaccination Program

Information is currently being distributed to families across Australia through State Health Departments, Education Departments and being sent out by your local School as part of their communication with their community, to provide details of the national Immunisation Program to protect young women against the risks of Cervical Cancer. The immunisation process consists of three injections over a six month period for maximum effectiveness. Schools are currently sending out information to parents and families about the arrangements for the first stage of this ongoing national strategy in 2007.

For more information visit the website: www.australia.gov.au/cervicalcancer

Formation of Animal Welfare and Training National Working Group

The Australian Government has set aside seed funding of \$6 million to implement the identified national priorities to improve the welfare of animals over the period 2005-2008, and to support a communication, education and training strategy to raise awareness and understanding not only in schools and their communities, but in every sector of our society.

The strategy encompasses the welfare issues affecting all animals – those used to produce food and fibres; those used for research and teaching purposes; aquatic animals; companion animals; those used for work, recreation, entertainment and display – and those in the wild who form an integral part of our living heritage and environment.

To find out more, visit:

<http://www.daff.gov.au/content/output.cfm?ObjectID=3C9C4ACE-B85B-465C-9C508C771F08C87E>

POLITICS

“Labor’s Commitment to Schools Infrastructure Funding Program”

Stephen Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Education

The *Local Schools Working Together* pilot program will provide capital funding for Government and Non-Government schools in growth regions across Australia. Financial incentives will be available in the first instance when new Government and Non-Government school communities choose to share infrastructure.

The pilot program will provide \$62.5 million in capital funding for an estimated 25 pilot projects across Australia to encourage new models of schooling.

Read the full statement at <http://www.acsso.org.au/smith070410.pdf>.

OPINION

Relaxed, Complacent and Risible: A critical decline in Asian studies is widening the gulf between Australia and Asia

Tim Lindsey

It’s a funny thing, the Australian-Indonesian relationship. On the one hand, Canberra likes to assure us that it is better than ever and that John Howard has a special relationship with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. On the other

hand, the relationship is routinely described by commentators as volatile, fragile or troubled.

In 2005, the Lowey Institute's annual poll on foreign policy found that Indonesia was seen as dangerous: only towards the Middle East, Iran and Iraq did we have more negative feelings. The next year the poll confirmed that "Australia was right to worry about Indonesia as a military threat".

So which is correct? Both. Our relationship with our giant northern neighbour is essentially ambivalent.

Read the whole article at

<http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/lindsey070410.pdf>.

REMINDERS

National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2007 – Minister's Awards of \$10,000 – nominations close 27 April - www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au

Prime Minister's Prize for Science Teaching 2007 – nominations close 27 April - <http://www.dest.gov.au/scienceprize>.

National Music Education Awards – applications close 30 April - <http://www.musicawards.asme.edu.au/>.

Australian Museum Eureka Prizes in Science – applications close 4 May - <http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka>.

Yapaneyepuk Indigenous Education Conference - Melbourne 27–28 May - www.cse.edu.au.

Community Building: Critical Voices, Alternative Strategies - Melbourne 19 June - <http://www.civilsociety.org.au>

ACSSO National Conference - Darwin 22–23 October - www.acsso.org.au.

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