

# AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 1 Number 23, 28 August 2007

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## **CORRECTION**

### **21-08-07: Plan to Expand Science in Schools**

It has been pointed out to us that the URL provided in last week's item under this heading did not in fact link to the Australian School Science Education Action Plan 2008-2012, as advertised. "Unfortunately, this item gives a link to a 2000 report on the quality of teaching of science, not the plan announced by the Minister."

Our correspondent had also sought access to the report through DEST but was advised that "the report has only so far been released to the jurisdictions for their consideration at this week's AESOC meeting. There will be a decision re its wider release later."

AESOC is the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee, comprised of the Chief Executives of the Departments of Educations of the Australian Commonwealth, Australian State and New Zealand. We'll provide a better link as soon as it becomes available.

## **HOT TOPIC: SCIENCE EDUCATION**

### **No Focus on 'Real' Education Problems**

*Justine Ferrari, The Australian, 28 August*

The Australian Council of Deans of Science yesterday accused the federal Government of concentrating on marginal issues in education, such as performance pay for teachers, rather than addressing major problems with school science courses and a shortage of qualified teachers.

Council president John Rice said the Government had its priorities in education wrong, exemplified by its spending \$6billion to set up a higher education endowment fund when the nation faced losing half its qualified teachers in the next five to 10 years.

"There's a lack of vision and understanding. It's not as though they haven't the money; they have their priorities and perspective all wrong," he said.

The council's concerns were echoed yesterday by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, which released a report in 2002 about the problems in training science teachers.

Read more at

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,24897,22319418-12332,00.html>

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## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Principals Warned: Don't Carry the Burden Alone**

*ACER eNews 17 August 23, 2007*

School principals charged with improving educational outcomes should adapt their leadership style to fit in with the context of the school's needs rather than adopting a one-size fits all approach according to Professor Philip Hallinger, Chief Academic Officer of the College of Management, Mahidol University, Thailand.

Delivering the opening keynote address to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) annual conference on the theme The Leadership Challenge: Improving Learning in Schools, Professor Hallinger contrasted the two most influential models of educational leadership: instructional leadership and transformational leadership offered possible paths towards their integration in the practice of educational leadership.

Read more at [http://www.acer.edu.au/enews/0708\\_hallinger.html](http://www.acer.edu.au/enews/0708_hallinger.html)

Professor Hallinger's paper:

[http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/RC2007\\_Hallinger-RetrospectAndProspect.pdf](http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/RC2007_Hallinger-RetrospectAndProspect.pdf).

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## **POLITICS**

### **Federal: Howard Government Continues Support for Investing in Our Schools Programme**

*Julie Bishop, 28 August*

Following the overwhelming response to the Howard Government's \$1.2 billion Investing in Our Schools Programme (IOSP), the Minister for Education, Science and Training the Hon Julie Bishop MP today announced that the programme will be extended.

"The fourth and final round of the current funding was announced today, with \$140 million approved to State Government schools, which builds on the \$656 million that has already been approved under the Programme," Minister Bishop said.

"Through this highly successful initiative, announced during the 2004 election campaign, schools across Australia have received funding for small infrastructure projects such as shade cloth, air conditioning, new computer equipment, books, musical instruments and playground equipment."

Minister Bishop said the success of this programme comes from the fact that school communities are able to identify their priorities and to apply directly for Federal Government funding.

Details of the continued support for the Investing in Our Schools Programme will be announced in due course.

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## **Federal: BCA Report Highlights The Howard Government's Neglect**

***Stephen Smith, 27 August***

Federal Labor welcomes the release of the Business Council of Australia (BCA) discussion paper, 'Restoring Our Edge in Education: Making Australia's Education System its Next Competitive Advantage'.

The Paper exposes the Howard Government's under-investment and neglect of our education system over more than 11 long years, finding that:

Between 1995 and 2003, total public expenditure on education declined from 4.5 to 4.3 per cent of GDP ... Australia's public investment in education is below the OECD mean ... By international standards, Australia also has a very low level of investment in early childhood education.

The BCA Paper strongly supports Federal Labor's calls on the need for an 'Education Revolution' to increase investment, improve quality and standards at every level, increase school retention rates, and equip young Australians with the necessary skills and knowledge to get ahead.

Read more at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/0807/msedut270.php>

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## **Federal: Government Out of Touch on University Fees**

***Senator Natasha Stott Despoja, 15 August***

The latest edition of the Good Universities Guide reveals how university fees have blown out under the Howard Government, say the Australian Democrats.

"In 1999 Prime Minister Howard stated that would be no \$100 000 degrees under his watch. The Good Universities Guide shows that there are now more than 100 degrees costing at least that much, and even two that cost more than \$240 000," Democrats' Spokesperson for Higher Education, Senator Natasha Stott Despoja said.

"It is mind boggling for Minister Bishop to come out in defence of this policy by saying that those who oppose full-fee degrees are discriminating against the three percent of undergraduate students occupying full-fee places.

"Full-fee places are discriminatory, particularly for those who cannot afford to accumulate a mortgage-size debt to get an education," Senator Stott Despoja said.

The 2007 Budget included the removal of the cap on the proportion of places in a course that can be full-fee places. The Department of Education, Science and Training admitted

that this could lead to full-fee only degrees. Senator Stott Despoja moved an amendment to oppose the removal of the full-fee cap but the Government voted against it after announcing that they would ensure that any 'significant' shift of Commonwealth and full-fee places would require Ministerial approval.

"The Democrats remain committed to the principle that access to university should be based on academic merit, not wealth," Senator Stott Despoja said.

"We will continue to oppose the Howard Government's de-regulation of the higher education sector because that de-regulation has only led to higher and higher fees," Senator Stott Despoja said.

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## **QLD: Scholarship Program Supports Aspiring Indigenous Teachers**

*Rod Welford, 22 August*

Indigenous Queenslanders who aspire to become teachers are being given the chance to realise their dream with the help of a State Government scholarship.

Education and Training Minister Rod Welford today called for applications for the 2008 Pearl Duncan Teaching Scholarships.

"Up to 15 scholarships worth up to \$20,000 are available in 2008," Mr Welford said.

"It's important that our teaching workforce mirrors the diversity of people and cultures in our communities.

"That's why our Government is committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers working in our schools and to improving education and employment opportunities for Indigenous Queenslanders.

"Apart from the positive contribution Indigenous teachers make to our schools, they also serve as important role models, not only for the children they teach, but also for their local communities."

Mr Welford said the scholarship program was named in honour of Aboriginal teacher Pearl Duncan, who had dedicated her life to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in education.

Read more at

<http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=53601>

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## **SA: Schools Prepare for Healthier Canteens**

*Jane-Lomax Smith, 22 August*

The healthy eating message is being taken to schools around the State as South Australia prepares for a ban on junk food in school canteens from 2008.

Twenty-three 'healthy eating' workshops are being held this school term for canteen managers, principals, teachers and parents to reinforce the importance of diet and healthy eating.

The Rann Government has invested \$1.55m to phase-out junk food, with guidelines already in place to help schools make informed choices about what students eat and drink.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says daily school canteen sales of foods high in fat and sugar will soon be a thing of the past.

"We want every school and preschool in the State to promote the healthy eating message to their students and set the example by selling healthy food in their canteens," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"Giving young people healthy diet and exercise messages at school is a good way to set them on the path to a healthy future.

"The Rann Government has made it a priority to address the childhood obesity epidemic and last week we launched a \$14 million, four-year campaign.

"The campaign will involve parents and teachers in a concerted effort to get children more active and encourage them to swap soft drinks and junk food snacks for water and fruit.

"According to SA data, one in five four-year-olds is overweight or obese. Obesity levels in SA have jumped by more than 8% since 1993 – with 234,200 people in this State regarded as obese.

Read more at <http://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=2047>

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## **WA: Craigie Primary School Students to Benefit from New \$13 Million School**

*Mark McGowan, 23 August*

Education and Training Minister Mark McGowan has announced a new \$13million school will be built to replace Craigie and Camberwarra Primary Schools.

Mr McGowan said the school, which would be located on the existing Craigie Primary School site, would cater for 310 students from kindergarten to Year Seven.

"The new school will have nine classrooms, three early childhood education classrooms, a library/resource centre, covered assembly area and canteen, music and art/craft facilities, a dental therapy centre and administration and staff facilities," he said.

"It will feature the latest in computer technology, including fibre optic cabling, a wireless network throughout all classrooms and high-speed internet access for every student and teacher."

Read more at <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/media/media.nsf>

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## COMPETITIONS, AWARDS & PRIZES

### Speaking Challenge for Young Australians

*Hon Julie Bishop MP, 15 August*

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, launched a national public speaking competition called "AussieSpeak'07" at Parliament House in Canberra today.

The Australian Government contributed \$75,000 towards this competition for young Australians in schools, through the innovative Quality Outcomes Programme.

"The event, which is initiated by its founder, Mr Greg Crowther, recognises the importance of supporting our students to develop essential life skills like public speaking," Minister Bishop said.

"Initiatives like this help our young people achieve their potential and make a valuable contribution to society. Our young people are our future."

The speaking challenge is open to primary and secondary students in Years 5 to 12. Entrants are required to prepare and deliver a 4-minute speech on the topic, "Australia in 2020 should be recognised as ....."

Winners in each of the categories will receive an electronic communications and technology pack valued at \$4,500 and the schools of the winning students will receive a prize pack valued at \$7,000.

Read more at <http://www.aussiespeak.com.au>

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## REMINDERS

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**Associations Forum National Conference** - Sydney - 29 & 30 August  
[www.associations.net.au](http://www.associations.net.au)

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**Queensland Association for Gifted and Talented Children Inc 2007 Regional Conference** - Emerald - 30 August  
[www.qagtc.org.au/regconf2007](http://www.qagtc.org.au/regconf2007)

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**SPERA National Conference** - Perth - 30-31 August - <http://www.spera.edu.au>

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**Flexible & Distance Learning Conference** - Brisbane - 19 to 21 September - <http://www.aades.edu.au>

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**National Outdoor Education Conference** - Ballarat - 20 to 23 September  
[www.outdooreducationaustralia.org.au](http://www.outdooreducationaustralia.org.au)

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**Linking Latitudes India Conference** - New Delhi & Agra, India - 30 September to 4 October - [http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/index\\_flash.htm](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/index_flash.htm)

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**Humane Education: a compassionate ethic for animals** - Brisbane - 5 & 6 October - [www.ciwf.org.au](http://www.ciwf.org.au)

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**2007 ACEL International Conference** - Sydney - 10 to 12 October  
<http://www.ancelconference2007.com>

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**Anti-Poverty Week** - 14 to 20 October - [www.antipovertyweek.org.au](http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au)

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**UNICEF Day for Change** - 24 October - <http://www.unicefdayforchange.org.au/>

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**ACSSO National Education Conference** - Darwin - 22 & 23 October  
[www.acsso.org.au/natconf](http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf)

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## RESOURCES

**Fundraising Directory** - [www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au](http://www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au) and  
[www.fetesandfestivals.com.au](http://www.fetesandfestivals.com.au)

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**Drug Awareness Website** - [www.drugawareness.com.au/](http://www.drugawareness.com.au/)

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**Australian Schools Directory** - [www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au](http://www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au)

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