

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

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Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

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HOT TOPIC: BUSINESS RATES EDUCATION

States must increase school funding: MP

AAP 27 August

Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop says the states must increase education funding to ensure Australia does not fall behind other developed countries.

A discussion paper released by the Business Council of Australia says more than 300,000 young Australians are unemployed or working part-time because the school system has failed them.

The council says Australia's school system is at risk of falling behind other developed nations and calls for all levels of government to boost spending as part of a broader overhaul of the education system.

But Ms Bishop said the federal government was already working hard to improve national standards and had boosted literacy and numeracy, and pushed for innovative pay structures for teachers. She said state governments should follow suit.

"If the state governments matched our rate of funding increase, then there would be an extra \$2 billion in education," Ms Bishop told ABC radio.

"So I do call upon the states to match the Australian government's rate of funding increase for investing in education."

But Labor's education spokesman Stephen Smith said the report confirmed the commonwealth had been under-investing in every level of education for far too long.

"It underlines what Labor has been saying - making greater investments in education at every level is the single most important thing we can do for Australia's future prosperity and living standards."

Pay teachers on performance - business

AAP 27 August

Performance-based pay for teachers is essential to improve the education of students, the Business Council of Australia (BCA) says.

The BCA today released a report warning that the education system is at risk of falling behind those of other developed countries.

Among five recommendations it made, the council said governments needed to increase spending on education, which declined from 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1995 to 4.3 per cent in 2003.

BCA president Michael Chaney said performance pay for teachers was needed.

"Teachers are under-rewarded and we've got a system where good teachers are paid just the same as poor teachers," he said on Southern Cross radio.

"Everybody within a school knows who the good teachers are, because there are certain qualities that define good teaching."

Schools needed to get away from a "one size fits all" system in which all teachers were paid the same.

Read the report at <http://www.bca.com.au/Content.aspx?ContentID=101154>

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PUBLIC : PRIVATE

Tutors find favour as students race to be the best

Bridie Smith The Age 27 August

Parents are paying for private tutors in growing numbers, according to a report that finds many regard tutoring as a way to complement their child's state school education.

Business information analysts IBISWorld found a perceived lack of individual attention in the state school system was one of the main drivers of the shift, which has been gaining momentum in the past decade.

Industry analyst Fiona Silke said Melbourne and Sydney were spearheading the growth, with the tutoring sector likely to continue to swell by an average of 7 per cent a year. Australia's tutoring industry was worth \$900 million, she said.

The IBISWorld report, released today, suggests that for many who send their children to a public school, tutoring is seen as an economical way to "top up" their child's education while avoiding private school fees.

"Tutoring is seen as a cheaper option by parents who want to ensure that their children are getting the maximum benefit out of school," Ms Silke said.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/tutors-find-favour-as-students-race-to-be-the-best/2007/08/26/1188066946380.html>

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA EXPANDS ARTS PROGRAM

Ten More Schools Join Arts Initiative

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith News Release 24 August

A \$1 million Rann Government program that uses the arts to inspire and stimulate the imaginations of disadvantaged school children has been expanded to a further 10 schools this year.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says there are now 24 schools involved in ARTSsmart initiative, which was extended in 2006 for a further four years.

"ARTSsmart brings artists and the arts industry into the State's schools to help children to build their confidence and sense of achievement through the arts," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"Since 2004, more than 120 South Australian artists and arts companies have been involved. They include opera singer Richard Chew, painter and graffiti artist Jimmy C and sculptor Gerry McMahon.

"Mr Chew introduced students from ARTSsmart school Parafield Gardens Primary School to opera through workshops on Puccini's opera Madama Butterfly.

Read more at <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=2061>

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MORE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS GO SOLAR

Public Schools Continue Energy Saving

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith News Release 24 August

Two more South Australian schools will soon switch onto solar power.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says The Heights School at Modbury Heights and Geranium Primary School have been included in the Rann Government's \$1.25m SA Solar Schools program.

The two schools will join 110 State schools to have photovoltaic panels installed as part of the highly popular program, first launched in 2003.

Dr Lomax-Smith says the SA Solar Schools program is one of several initiatives to support schools and preschools to improve their energy and water efficiency.

"Solar panels allow schools to generate electricity, assist in the reduction of greenhouse gases and teach students about renewable energy sources," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"Schools and preschools are also being encouraged to save water and energy through the \$1 million Green Schools grants fund, which is giving 78 schools the chance to improve their environmental sustainability.

Read more at <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=2059>

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Parents Victoria Online Conference 10-16 September 2007

Parents of primary and secondary students in government schools, in all locations, are warmly invited to take part in the first online conference to be held by Parents Victoria.

The conference will be held non-stop on the internet from 9am Monday 10 September to midnight Sunday 16 September. There is no cost for participating in the conference and no special software is needed, other than an internet-connected computer and a browser.

The online discussions will be very easy to join in, and guidelines about how to participate will be provided. You don't need to be a member of Parents Victoria to take part. Join in day or night, for all days or just some, depending on your lifestyle and other commitments.

The discussion pages will be open when the conference opens at 9am on Monday 10 September. Please note down the exact website address, or save it as a 'favourite' so you can go there quickly next time.

The conference will feature seven 'live' daily online discussions, each of them hosted, for several hours each day, by a member of Parents Victoria. Each 24-hour period will focus on a topic that is currently of concern to parents.

Monday: Should school uniforms be compulsory?

Tuesday: Is discipline in your school effective?

Wednesday: Parent participation - is the day of the parent club over?

Thursday: Literacy and numeracy standards - are our schools up to scratch?

Friday: How do you rate the new reports?

Saturday: Is the local public school still the best option for your child?

Sunday: Are we paying too much for free education?

Visit the conference website and register online at: www.cybertext.net.au/pv/

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JOIN IN NATIONWIDE STUDY

'Aussie Have Your Say'

Aussies have a long and strong history of pride in our nation. We also often share values and beliefs that make us uniquely Australian in one of the most successful multicultural nations on Earth. In today's changing world we are more often asking ourselves:

- What does it mean to be Australian?
- Where are we heading as a nation?
- What do we stand for?

In an attempt to help answer such questions the Centre for Educational Research; University of Western Sydney (through funding from the Australian Research Council) is conducting a nationwide study to find out what it means to be an Australian.

"We want to find out what Australians think about what makes us Australian, the values

we share, and the loyalties we cherish. This study is aimed at all Australians, from our youngsters to our elders, and of course to our many new and culturally diverse Australians. We are calling on Aussies from all walks of life to have their say by answering a survey" says Professor Rhonda Craven from the University of Western Sydney.

"We all come from different backgrounds and we believe that all those collective personal experiences help to shape our identity as a nation. The study will explore whether our different cultural backgrounds, where we live, how we work and play, and our life experiences, help mould our ideas of what it means to be an Aussie and to what extent we identify with our nationality. We are hoping Aussies will have their say and tell us what they really think by logging onto our website".

Australians are renowned for their generosity. We hope you will give us just 25 minutes of your time to complete this survey. Please note it is possible to save your survey in progress and complete at your convenience. It is also possible to download a hard copy of the survey from the website or if you would like a copy of the survey posted or emailed to you please contact: Lisa Car (l.inman@uws.edu.au; 02 9772 6661).

Read more at www.aussiehaveyoursay.com

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REMINDERS

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

National Outdoor Education Conference - Ballarat - 20 to 23 September
www.outdooreducationaustralia.org.au

Linking Latitudes India Conference - New Delhi & Agra, India - 30 September to 4 October - http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/index_flash.htm

Humane Education: a compassionate ethic for animals - Brisbane - 5 & 6 October - www.ciwf.org.au

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

Anti-Poverty Week - 14 to 20 October - www.antipovertyweek.org.au

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

ACSSO National Education Conference - Darwin - 22 & 23 October
www.acsso.org.au/natconf

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RESOURCES

Fundraising Directory - www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au and www.fetesandfestivals.com.au

Drug Awareness Website - www.drugawareness.com.au/

Australian Schools Directory - www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au

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