

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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ACSSO NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE - DARWIN 2007

Final Opportunity to Secure Your Place!

Monday 22 to Tuesday 23 October 2007

A small number of places are still available at this major national education forum, where teachers, principals, parents, politicians, education leaders, researchers and academics from all sectors of education join in lively discussion about the strategic directions for education and the big issues bearing on the learning and development of all young Australians now and into the future.

Presentations and panel discussions are complemented by a range of information displays bringing you current information and resources in education.

For information and registration: <http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf07>

Themes & Presenters

Keynote Addresses: Future Directions for Education

Ms Margaret Banks, Chief Executive, Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education & Training

Ms Jennifer Branch, President, Australian Council of State School Organisations

Mr Stephen Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Education & Training

Better Deals for Indigenous Education

Mr Tony Mackay, President, Australian Curriculum Studies Association; Executive Director, Centre for Strategic Education

Mr Charlie King, Sports Commentator, ABC 'Territory Sport' Presenter

Ms Annarella Sebbens, NT Department of Health

Mr Dean Warren, National Participation Manager, Australian Football League

Rethinking Rural, Regional and Remote Education

Mr John Halsey, Executive Officer, Rural Education Forum Australia; Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Flinders University

Principal Autonomy

Mr Andrew Blair, President, Australian Primary Principals Association

Values in Education

Mr Angelo Gavrielatos, Deputy Federal President, Australian Education Union
Ms Deborah Cohen, Education Manager, Australian Children's Television Foundation

Leveraging Technology

Mr Chris Althaus, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association
Microsoft, Spokesperson yet to be confirmed
Meg Dennis, Marketing Officer, Leopard Laboratories

Music, Dance and Culture: Building Bridges and Opening Doors

Associate Professor Martin Jarvis, Charles Darwin University

Realising Australia's Language Potential in a Global World

Mr Rob McConchie, Director, Solved at McConchie Pty Ltd
Ms Anna Dall, Conducting International Research at University of the Sunshine Coast
Dr Philip Mahnken, Chief Curriculum Designer, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, USC
Dr George Quinn, Head & Senior Lecturer at the Southeast Asia Centre
Ms Fiona Mueller, Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
Ms Marlene Dingle, Regional Coordinator Languages, VIC Department of Education & Training
Professor Michael Clyne, Professorial Fellow, School of Languages, Monash University

Good Neighbours, Sharing the Future

Ms Kathe Kirby, Executive Director, Asia Education Foundation

Read more at <http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf07>

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RESEARCH & REPORTS

It's Crunch Time: Raising Youth Engagement and Attainment

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum & Australian Industry Group, 5 August

The Australian Industry Group and DSF believe that Australia has an unprecedented opportunity to make a major assault to improve levels of engagement and attainment for young Australians.

A unique combination of factors - strong economic conditions and growth, Australia's continuing need for a skilled workforce, and the forecast demographic squeeze facing the nation - mean it is now crunch time to open the doors to greater youth engagement in learning.

In May 2007 there were 526,000 15 to 24 year olds not in full-time learning or full-time work. Of these approximately 306,000 were unemployed, underemployed or were not in the labour force but wanting to work.

Each year approximately 45,000 to 50,000 early school leavers are not going into full-time work or learning or a combination of these.

Young Australians without basic educational attainments will not be adequately equipped to cope with the demands being made of them either in the workplace or in the wider society.

There should be simple and clear objectives driving federal and state policy. These are, that subject to their ability, every young person:

1. will attain Year 12, or a vocational equivalent at AQF Certificate III level
2. will be engaged in full-time work or learning, or a combination of these
3. will be provided with the resources, relationships and pathways needed to achieve these outcomes.

To download the report, go to <http://www.dsf.org.au/papers/198.html>.

Good Education Depends on Shared Values

ACER eNews 17 September

A shared moral purpose and a sense of community values are fundamental necessities for effective education, says Australian Catholic University academic Michael Bezzina.

Michael Bezzina presented the findings of his study into the connection between moral purpose and shared leadership at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) annual conference in Melbourne in August.

According to the study, an explicit, shared moral purpose is needed to bring about the kind of change and improvement that will deliver desirable student learning in schools.

The study reinforces the importance of a shared sense of purpose, and emphasises the need for this purpose to be clarified through a common conceptual framework and consistency in the use of language. There needs to be clarity and detail in the way the purpose is understood – and in particular about the values that underpin it.

Read more at http://www.acer.edu.au/enews/0709_bezzina.html

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Education Reform Requires Increased Resources

ACER eNews 17 September

High expectations for the reform of school education can only be met if there is a dramatic increase in resources, according to former University of Melbourne Dean of Education Professor Brian Caldwell.

Professor Caldwell called for leadership for radical transformation in schools education at the annual ACER research conference held in Melbourne last month.

According to Professor Caldwell, there are high expectations in Australia and comparable countries for the reform of school education — but significant, systematic and sustained change is required if these outcomes are to be achieved.

Success for all students in all settings can only be achieved if there is a dramatic increase in resources.

This does not mean an exclusive reliance on more money, however: while financial capital is vital, intellectual capital, social capital and spiritual capital are also important.

Some schools are in more challenging financial circumstances than others, but may be rich in other areas, such as having a highly skilled staff, strong community links, or a clear whole-school vision, all of which should be valued.

Read more at http://www.acer.edu.au/enews/0709_caldwell.html

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TEACHER ISSUES

Poor Teachers Blamed for Low Scores

The Age 17 September

Every parent fears that their child will get the school's dud teacher. Latest international research indicates that there is cause for concern.

While Australian students are in the top third of OECD nations for performance in reading and mathematics, Australia has one of the widest gaps between its top and bottom students.

Harvard University professor Richard Elmore, who has visited Victoria three times in recent years to evaluate the education system, attributes this difference primarily to a disparity in the quality of Australian teachers rather than factors such as a student's disadvantaged background.

In Victoria recently to work with the state education department to help improve teacher standards, Professor Elmore says the quality of the teacher is the most important factor in determining a child's success.

"Your child's measured performance in reading and maths is influenced in the order of four to five times more by which teacher he or she gets than which school he or she goes to," he says.

Read more at <http://www.acsso.org.au/age070917.pdf>

Teacher Failures Spell Student Trouble

The Australian 17 September

Teenagers could be forgiven for misspelling words such as subterranean and miscellaneous, but what about primary school teachers?

A spelling test of about 40 Victorian teachers, conducted in April this year, provides no grounds for confidence. Not one of the teachers could correctly spell all 11 words, ranging in difficulty from substitute to adolescence.

The test was set at the level expected of 14-year-olds but the average score among the 39 teachers was just seven correctly spelled words.

Five teachers correctly spelled 10 words, putting their level at 13 years and nine months. One teacher was unable to spell any of the words while two teachers got only two of the words correct.

Overall, 22 teachers misspelled subterranean, 17 couldn't manage embarrassing or miscellaneous and 16 had trouble with adolescence.

Read more at <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian070917.pdf>

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RESOURCES

Do You Subscribe to Youth Studies Australia?

This quarterly journal is essential for anyone working with young people. Each issue of Youth Studies Australia features articles by Australian youth work practitioners and researchers, as well as summaries of press reports on youth topics, and abstracts of research from around the world.

Youth Studies Australia will keep you up-to-date on current issues affecting Australian youth - it's like having your own research assistant! For example, the latest issue has controversial new research on hooning ('Young people, dangerous driving and car culture') and on the employment concerns of young workers ('Underpaid and exploited'), plus articles on citizenship and youth work training.

A subscription costs just \$88 per year, including postage and GST. Individual subscribers and schools can also access the journal online as part of their print subscription.

Read more at <http://www.acys.info/journal>

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REMINDERS

Australian Government's 2008 National Awards for Quality Schooling

Nominations Close 15 October 2007

Who have you nominated?

Teachers invest much of themselves in their teaching and make a genuine difference in the lives of students.

Play a part in recognising and rewarding teacher achievement by nominating an inspirational teacher, principal, support staff member or school for a 2008 national award.

Nominations close 15 October 2007

Further information: <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au> Free call: 1800 131 323

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 - <http://www.ciwf.org.au>

Australian International Education Conference - Melbourne - 9 to 12 October <http://www.idp.com/aiec/>

2007 ACEL International Conference - Sydney - 10 to 12 October <http://www.aceconference2007.com>

Anti-Poverty Week - 14 to 20 October - <http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au>

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

ACSSO National Education Conference - Darwin - 22 & 23 October <http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf07>

RESOURCES

Fundraising Directory - <http://www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au> and <http://www.fetesandfestivals.com.au>

Drug Awareness Website - <http://www.drugawareness.com.au/>

Australian Schools Directory - <http://www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au>

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