

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

\$1.7bn needed for Aboriginal education

AAP October 23

Almost \$2 billion is needed to ensure that Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory have the same opportunities as all Australian students, a new report has found.

The Australian Education Union (AEU) report was commissioned to examine the impact of the federal intervention in Aboriginal communities.

It found that as many as 7500 Aboriginal children students were missing from school or preschool, while up to 5000 students under the age of 18 had no access to secondary or vocational education services.

AEU president Pat Byrne said at least \$1.7 billion was required over five years to create high quality public education in remote communities.

"Now the Federal Government has taken the step of intervening it must show leadership and back up its actions with resources," she said.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,22633631-29277,00.html>

40 kids, no teacher: NT community demands answers

ABC News October 26

The Northern Territory Government has defended its decision not to allocate a remote community with 40 children a full-time qualified teacher.

The State Government was earlier this month explaining why only about a third of Northern Territory Indigenous children meet national benchmarks for reading writing and maths.

Now the Mapuru community, 500 kilometres north-east of Darwin, says it has been unable to get the Government to give its students a qualified teacher more than three days a week.

Jackie Nguluwidi says his children desperately want an education. "They are starving for English and they are starving for maths," he said.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/10/26/2070787.htm>

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TEACHER TRAINING

Teachers back training, but face many hurdles

The Age, October 29

With 35 years of experience behind her, Jenny Slusher represents a growing band of teachers going back to school to further their learning.

Ms Slusher, who teaches at Essex Heights Primary School is one of the first graduates to complete a vocational graduate diploma at the new Autism Teaching Institute. She is the only mainstream teacher to graduate from the two-year diploma, which reinforced her existing skills in teaching children with learning disabilities.

Her grade 4 class at the Mount Waverley school has six children with learning difficulties, including one with autism spectrum disorder.

Essex Heights, a mainstream school, has a history of successfully catering for and integrating children with special needs. "I have always done professional development (PD) and have tried to put into practice the new things that I have learned," says Ms Slusher. "We as teachers have the opportunity to do a variety of PD. Unfortunately finance is not limitless. This means that teachers cannot always do what they would like to."

She paid \$3000 for the part-time course, a portion of which can be claimed through tax, but says the experience has been priceless.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/teachers-back-training/2007/10/28/1193506344959.html>

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REBATE ON COMPUTERS FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Labor rebate a bonanza for giants

The Australian October 23, 2007

Technology industry experts have warned that the ALP's proposed tax rebate on computers and laptops bought for educational purposes could be open to exploitation.

Families are expected to upgrade home computers far more frequently if the ALP policy becomes law, potentially benefiting a range of sellers including Harvey Norman and Apple, which target the home and education sectors.

"It's going to be exploited heavily. The Harvey Normans of the world will be rubbing their hands," S2 Intelligence managing director Bruce McCabe said.

Families that already owned desktop and laptop computers were likely to upgrade to new systems more frequently than families without computers and would probably move quickly to take advantage of the tax break, he said.

The ALP has estimated that families with about 2.3 million children would be eligible for the concession, which grants a rebate of up to \$375 a year for primary school students and \$750 a year for those at secondary school.

The rebate could be claimed against laptops, desktop PCs, internet access, printers, education software and school textbooks, and a family with one primary and one secondary school child could receive up to \$1125 a year under the initiative.

Read more at <http://www.australianit.news.com.au/story/0,24897,22630716-15306,00.html>

SA SCHOOLS GOING GREEN

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith 24 October 30, 2007

The State's schools have saved the equivalent of 1200 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water over the past five years as students and teachers lead the charge to 'green' their schools.

Water use across South Australia's 602 State schools has been slashed from 5.06m kilolitres in 2000-01 to 3.8m kilolitres in 2005-06, a 25% reduction.

As all schools, preschools and education offices prepare to meet State targets for water and energy use next year, Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith has announced:

- GREEN kits with tips on saving energy and water are being prepared for distribution to schools and preschools during Term 4.
- SCHOOLS that use the largest amounts of water and energy will shortly undergo audits to find ways to reduce their consumption.
- \$1 MILLION of annual 'Green School' grants, awarded to 78 schools in June, are being used to implement initiatives that save on water and energy use. 624 grants have been awarded over the past five years.
- THE \$1.25m SA Solar Schools program will be contributing solar energy in 112 schools and preschools, which includes two schools that signed up to the program last month.

Read more at <http://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=2330>

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENTS

Australian books, poem push in schools

Daily Telegraph, October 23

First it was Australian history - now school students will be compelled to study more Aussie authors, playwrights and poets.

Education Minister John Della Bosca yesterday ordered Australian literature should be put on a pedestal in all primary and secondary schools across the state.

Mr Della Bosca will ask the Board of Studies to "strengthen" the study of Australian literature in the English curriculum.

Curriculum boffins will investigate new ways of ensuring that Australian texts are studied "consistently across all NSW schools".

In high schools Peter Carey, Patrick White and David Malouf is among the required reading, while primary students study the likes of Mem Fox, May Gibbs and Colin Thiele.

"Australian literature is important in providing students with a sense of identity, insight into our diverse culture, historical contexts and our unique place in the world," Mr Della Bosca said.

"But, particularly in primary schools, the syllabus may need to be more prescriptive to make sure all students are reading Australian authors.

"Currently the English syllabus states that teachers will provide opportunities for students to develop a broad knowledge of a range of literature - including Australian literature."

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,22629729-5006009,00.html>

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TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Howard's technical school revival plan

The Age, October 30

JOHN Howard has promised a five-fold expansion of the Government's controversial technical colleges program, pledging to spend \$2.1 billion over 10 years establishing 100 campuses across the country.

Ten days after Labor leader Kevin Rudd labelled the laptop computer "the toolbox of the 21st century", Mr Howard has championed a return to traditional technical education as a way to push Australia's unemployment level down to 3 per cent within three years.

The launch came as the latest Newspoll, published today, gives a big boost to the Coalition, with the two-party gap closing from 16 points to 8 points in a week.

The poll showed Labor's two-party vote has fallen by 4 points to 54 per cent, while the Coalition has gained 4 to 46. On primary votes, Labor is down 3 points to 48 per cent, and the Coalition is up 4 to 42 per cent.

While the improved figures will be welcomed by Mr Howard, the Coalition would still be facing a big loss to Labor if they were repeated at the election on November 24.

The consistently poor polling for the Coalition has prompted a senior Liberal to urge a switch to a more positive advertising campaign. Bruce Baird, who is retiring from the safe Sydney seat of Cook, wants Liberal ads to concentrate on the benefits of the Coalition's proposed tax cuts.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/howards-technical-school-revival-plan/2007/10/29/1193618797571.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

Plan for Defence colleges

The Age, October 25

Two new "defence-focused senior high schools" will form part of a \$208 million plan to deal with critical skills shortages in the Defence Force and defence industries, the Government has promised.

The existing multibillion-dollar program to re-equip the ADF with everything from new warships to boots and toothbrushes is threatened by a shortage of skilled staff in hundreds of companies doing defence work.

These companies, which employ just over 20,000, need to find 3380 more engineers, managers and skilled tradespeople in the next two years. The ADF and defence industries need 7000 new staff over the next five years.

Yesterday, Prime Minister John Howard said the Coalition, if re-elected, would establish two technical colleges specialising in defence studies for year 11 and 12 students.

The colleges, in South Australia and Queensland, would accommodate 400 students who would be given preferential treatment when applying for ADF positions. If they change their minds, they will not

be obliged to sign up. The "Skills for Australia's Future Defence Plan" includes 2200 scholarships for school leavers planning to join the ADF. They will cover cadetships, traineeships and on-job training.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/plan-for-defence-colleges/2007/10/24/1192941157751.html>

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Raising the Stakes

Kalgoorlie (2 Nov), Perth (5 Nov), Adelaide (7 Nov)

Brian Caldwell and Jim Spinks present a national series of workshops on one of the most significant breakthroughs in efforts to achieve transformation in school education.

These one-day workshops are based on their fourth book, Raising the Stakes: From Improvement to Transformation in the Reform of Schools published for the international market in July 2007.

The Raising the Stakes Series marks the 25th anniversary of the collaboration of Caldwell and Spinks that has been instrumental in building the profession of leadership in school education in Australia and many other countries around the world.

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

Australia 2008 - "Imaginative practice, imaginative inquiry"

Rydges Lakeside Hotel, Canberra, January 29-31 2008

The Imaginative Education Research Group (IERG) and Learning Communities Research Area, University of Canberra invite you to join them in their aim to stimulate discussion of imaginative education and its applications in all sites of learning, and to ensure that educational experiences are imaginatively engaging for both teachers and learners.

The conference theme "Imaginative practice, imaginative inquiry" aims to connect a cross-section of educators and administrators from elementary & high schools, universities, professional organisations and work-place settings in a dialogue and exploration of imaginative and creative ways of teaching, learning and conducting educational inquiry.

Read more at <http://imaginativeeducation.org/conferences/index.php/2008/australia>

REMINDERS

21st Century Curriculum: Taking Bearings - Curriculum Corporation 14th Annual Conference - Sydney - 12 & 13 November

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/conference/2007/conference.asp?id=19468>

ACOSS National Annual Conference – Adelaide – 22 & 23 November

http://www.acoss.org.au/upload/events/3125_ACOSS%20Draft%20Conference%20Program.doc

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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