

# AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Number 14, 13 May 2008

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Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at [letters@acsso.org.au](mailto:letters@acsso.org.au)

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## ACSSO NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2008

### "Parents & Schools as Partners"

*20th and 21st October 2008*

*Royal on the Park, Corner Alice and Albert Street, Brisbane, QLD*

Recently there has been a renewed focus on building bridges between parents, schools and the community they serve. The National Conference will examine this development and provide advice and training about how to make it happen. We will also be posing key questions such as what parents, students and teachers want from our schools? Do our curricula and values meet those needs?

ACSSO is the peak body for all Australia's public school parent bodies. Its National Conference each year opens the doors to all education stakeholders to share and debate ideas about the future directions of Australian society. ACSSO's recent national Conferences have brought together key education administrators such as Departmental heads, principals, teacher and parent organisations from both the public and private sectors, psychologists, journalists, pollsters and the business world.

Our aim this year is to help provide advice, new research and workable ideas that busy parents and education can put into action in their own environments.

In the next few days the ACSSO National Conference Website will be set up at <http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf.htm> to bring you details of:

- Conference Program, Sessions and Workshops
- Speakers, Presenters and Panelists

- Accommodation arrangements in Brisbane
- Sponsors
- Online registration facilities

Further sponsorship opportunities are still available. And, as always, an integral element of the Conference will be a range of information stands to enable education suppliers to showcase their products and services. Interested organisations can find out more on (02) 6282 5150

Meanwhile, reserve these dates in your diary! Further details will also be published in our Newsletters through May and June

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## **HOT TOPIC: RESOURCING SCHOOLS**

*These articles were all written prior to the Federal Budget: by the time you read them they may be overtaken by events. Ed.*

### **Rudd revolution to start in schools**

*Sydney Morning Herald, May 9, 2008 (AAP)*

KevinO7's education revolution begins on Tuesday 13th for schools but the higher education sector will have to wait until 2009-10 to see any funding shake-up, analysts say.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made \$6 billion worth of education commitments exclusively focused on schooling during last year's election campaign.

Universities were promised a review, and until it's completed the status quo will be maintained.

The revolution isn't going to be televised but it will be beamed around the country on laptops connected to the internet.

Labor will invest \$1 billion over four years to ensure every student in Years 9-12 has access to their own computer.

The government has already invested \$100 million in the plan and will inject another \$400 million through the coming 2008-09 budget.

Also expect to see the first wave of funding towards the 10-year \$2.5 billion scheme to put trades training centres in high schools.

The prime minister has pledged a further \$2.3 billion worth of tax breaks for families purchasing education-related equipment, although that won't kick in until July 2009 when parents lodge their tax returns.

Australian Education Union (AEU) federal president Angelo Gavrielatos says these big-ticket items are "laudable" but fall short of meeting the immediate needs of public schools.

"The government's own research shows public schools nationwide are under-funded to the tune of \$2.9 billion per year," Mr. Gavrielatos said.

"Budget day is when the first assessment will be made as to whether the education revolution is more than just a slogan."

In particular the AEU wants to see an additional \$1.7 billion over five years to deliver high-quality education to indigenous children in the Northern Territory.

Labor promised just \$60.6 million over four years for 200 additional teachers.

Other expected budget measures are a four-year \$25.9 million commitment to build three new boarding secondary colleges in the Northern Territory; \$450 million over five years to give every four-year-old 15 hours of preschool per week; and \$84 million over four years to guarantee vocational students in Years 9-12 have access to one day a week of on-the-job training.

The cupboard will almost certainly be bare for the higher education sector - except for a promise of slightly more fellowships and scholarships.

That's because the government is waiting for the recommendations of a major review announced in March which will report at the end of the year. ANU higher education analyst Bruce Chapman says it would be "inappropriate" for Labor to make any funding changes before the review ran its course.

<http://news.smh.com.au/rudd-revolution-to-start-in-schools/20080509-2ckp.html>

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## **The Decline of School Libraries**

*Georgia Phillips, 5 May 2008*

Staffing and funding of school libraries in Australian government schools is in decline - at a time when ICT information use skills and literacy have never been more important to the national economy and our children's future.

While our federal government does not collect the statistics we need, there is ample evidence through recent state surveys, collated in 2003 (Lonsdale, M, Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement: a Review of the Research, ACER <http://www.asla.org.au/research/>) which show that "there is

- a general shortage of teacher librarians (and other specialist teachers);
- the practice of schools using librarians rather than teacher librarians, or having staff with no library or teaching qualifications at all;
- teacher librarians being used in classrooms as subject teachers to fill gaps in staffing;
- an ageing profession, with retirees not being replaced by sufficient numbers of graduates; and
- added responsibilities for teacher librarians in terms of technology maintenance and student use of technology.

In addition, devolution of financial management to schools means that funding for school libraries relies on the resource allocation priorities established by the school community, which might or might not place a high priority on the need for a well-staffed library system."

Read more at <http://hubinfo.wordpress.com/background/>

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## **ACT Budget Covers Up Real Cuts in Govt. School Funding**

*Save our Schools, 7 May 2008*

Save Our Schools, the independent national advocacy group, today accused the Stanhope Government of cutting funding to government schools in real terms in its latest Budget. SOS spokesperson, Trevor Cobbold, said that, after adjusting for rising costs, funding for government schools will fall in 2008-09.

"There is no real increase in recurrent funding for government schools in 2008-09 despite the claims of the Minister for Education, Andrew Barr, about record levels of investment in education. At best, the funding increase in the Budget will only cover the costs of inflation and therefore is not a real increase in funding. More likely, funding for government schools will decline in real terms.

"Recurrent funding for government schools in 2008-09 will increase by 4.6% in dollar terms. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canberra is also increasing at 4.6% per year. This means that there will be no real increase in funding for government schools.

"Yet, education costs always increase by much more than the CPI because there is little capacity for productivity increases in such a labour-intensive service. Increasing education costs will outstrip the proposed funding increase in 2008-09 and, consequently, government school funding will decline in real terms.

"In contrast, government funding of private schools is due to increase by 13% in 2008-09. This is nearly three times the CPI increase and represents a very large real increase in funding. This is largely due to increased Commonwealth funding as the ACT Government increase is in line with inflation."

Read more at <http://soscanberra.com/media-releases>

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## **REMUNERATING TEACHERS**

### **Victorian teachers to be nation's best-paid**

*Farrah Tomazin, The Age, May 5, 2008*

The education union has hailed a deal that will make Victorian teachers the highest-paid in the country as the best deal for its members in more than 25 years.

The agreement between the State Government and the Australian Education Union (AEU) resolves a 14-month industrial row, which included three statewide teachers' strikes and weeks of rolling half-day stoppages.

The unions had threatened to walk off the job from May 13 to 15, disrupting during the first national literacy and numeracy tests. The resolution of the industrial dispute means those tests are now likely to go ahead without disruption.

AEU Victorian branch president Mary Bluett said it was the best enterprise bargaining deal for teachers that she had seen in 25 years with the union.

However, there appears to be some contention over the increases announced by Premier John Brumby and Education Minister Bronwyn Pike this morning.

The Government says the deal will equate to a 4.9% pay rise in the first year and 2.7% in the second and third years of the agreement.

But the union believes some of biggest beneficiaries of the deal will get between 8% and 11%.

"It's a complex arrangement, but the least any teacher is going to get out of this is somewhere between five and six per cent per annum," Ms Bluett said.

"This is the best outcome in terms of salary and career structure in my history as a union official of 25 years standing," Ms Bluett said.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2008/05/05/1209839508834.html>

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## Victoria's pay lure for principals

*Farrah Tomazin, The Age, May 8, 2008*

TOP school principals from Australia and overseas are to be offered lucrative performance-based contracts to take on jobs in some of Victoria's worst-performing state schools.

The State Government will head-hunt principals from private and public schools and offer them "executive contracts" in a bid to lift standards in struggling schools.

It is believed principals could be offered packages worth between \$150,000 and about \$200,000 a year to take on roles in poorly performing schools. The maximum now offered in public schools is about \$150,000.

Pay levels and contract renewal prospects for the "super" principals will depend on their ability to meet targets.

It is believed they could be offered bonuses of about 10% on top of their basic packages for achieving targets such as lifting VCE results and improving literacy and numeracy skills. "Soft" targets such as boosting staff morale will also be counted.

The size of base packages will vary according to factors such as the size of the school, whether it is primary or secondary and the qualifications of the principal.

It will be the first time that a performance-based pay system of this type has been offered in Victoria's public education system, and could spark renewed debate over whether teachers should also be offered financial rewards for performance.

The initiative was negotiated as part of the \$2 billion teachers' wage deal announced this week.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/pay-lure-for-principals/2008/05/07/1210131069591.html>

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## TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION

*As the peak council for Australia's public school parent communities, ACSSO is working with Australian Mobile Telecommunication Association (AMTA) to help parents and young people to get the best out of emerging new technologies. Mobiles create opportunities to link young people, families and communities in positive, inclusive and productive ways. We particularly want to ensure that the new technology is not abused through bullying or accessing unacceptable content. This article by AMTA highlights the avoidable risks of misuse.*

## Sending offensive material via SMS is against the law and you will be caught

Young people should be aware that sending inappropriate material that is offensive to school students could be in breach of the law and potentially result in heavy penalties, AMTA has warned. following a reported incident in Tasmania.

The Hobart Mercury reported this week that a primary school student had received "shocking" and explicit material via SMS from a local high school student.

AMTA Chief Executive Officer, Chris Althaus, said young people should be aware that some people who used mobile phones to send offensive material believe their actions are anonymous.

"That is not correct. These things are traceable and they will be caught.

"It's a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The offence carries very heavy penalties"

Mr. Althaus said it was important for parents to talk with their children about their mobile phone use. "Listen to your child and encourage them to discuss issues with you," he said.

He said there were a range of preventative measures that could be adopted to help protect young people from receiving inappropriate material, whether it be pornographic or threatening messages.

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

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## **National E-Security Awareness Week**

***6-13 June 2008***

*Australian Council of State School Organizations (ACSSO) is proud to partner with the Australian Government for National E-security Awareness Week, on June 6-13. We share a commitment to helping you to be secure online so that you can get the most out of what the internet has to offer.*

You don't need to be a computer genius to keep yourself, your family or your business secure when you're on the internet. It's mainly simple and logical. There are some things you need to have on your computer, like security software. Then there are some things you need to do, like setting strong passwords and being cautious online.

The online environment is constantly changing so make sure you're keeping up to date - with your software, your passwords and the latest risks. Follow these simple steps:

- install, update and use your security software
- use strong passwords and change them regularly
- use common sense when sharing personal information online
- think before you click - if it looks too good to be true it probably is!
- be very careful of emails from odd or unknown addresses or organisations you don't normally have online contact with - especially if the text looks a bit wrong or they have unexplained attachments you might be encouraged to open ...
- be smart and stay informed.

Read more at <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au>

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## **Low-cost laptop group lands in Australia**

***Asher Moses, The Age, May 7, 2008***

The One Laptop Per Child initiative has set up shop in Australia with a local board planning to lobby State and Federal governments to fund a roll-out into local communities.

OLPC is a global non-profit organisation that aims to distribute low-cost laptops to poor children around the world.

Based in Sydney, the OLPC Australia board will also co-ordinate efforts to bring the organisation's low-cost XO laptops - designed for needy children aged six to 11 - into other Pacific territories such as Papua New Guinea.

About 600,000 units have been sold around the world to countries including Uruguay, Peru, Mexico, and even to the US city of Birmingham in Alabama. Pilot programs have also run in countries such as Nepal, Thailand, Nigeria, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Mongolia and Haiti.

A "digital education revolution" was one of the Rudd Government's most high-profile election promises, aiming to give every high school student a computer. It is not clear how primary schools, which are the target of the OLPC XO laptop, fit into this plan.

The Education Minister, Julia Gillard, and the Communications Minister, Stephen Conroy, did not respond to calls requesting comment.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/technology/lowcost-laptop-group-lands-in-australia/2008/05/06/1209839632113.html>

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## **TEACHING IN PRACTICE**

### **Results back principal's return to instruction**

*Bridie Smith, The Age, May 10, 2008*

PRINCIPAL John Fleming advocates a dramatic shift in the way primary school children are taught. And educators are listening because his results are impressive.

Mr. Fleming supports a teaching method called explicit instruction, in which teachers closely direct student learning. It differs from the dominant inquiry model, where teachers guide students and encourage them to discover answers for themselves. Mr. Fleming, head of Haileybury's Berwick campus, has a track record that suggests explicit teaching works.

Last year, his year 3 students recorded results well above the state average in literacy and numeracy - they were about two years ahead of their peers in reading and three years in maths. Two years earlier, when Mr. Fleming arrived at the school, the year 3s were six months ahead of state benchmarks.

Before Haileybury, Mr. Fleming was principal at one of the state's most disadvantaged schools, Bellfield Primary School in Ivanhoe West. Its students were drawn largely from single-parent families and homes where English was not the first language. More than 80% of parents did not work and more than half were illiterate.

In 1996, 80% of Bellfield students were performing well below the state average in literacy and numeracy. By the time Mr. Fleming left in 2005, the school was one of the best performing in the state. "It's about taking the kids through whatever it is they need to do, step by step, so that they understand," Mr. Fleming says. "Give them the tools to learn. Otherwise, if there is not a solid foundation and you try to build on that, then things come tumbling down."

Haileybury's Brighton and Keysborough campuses introduced the explicit instruction model last year and other schools are taking note.

Carey Baptist Grammar in Kew sits in the inquiry-based teaching camp. But principal Phil de Young wants to know more about the method. "We'll have a good look at the outcomes that are being achieved through explicit instruction and we'll have a close review of what we're doing and then out of that we will possibly introduce some changes," he said.

The Australian Council for Educational Research suggests it would be a smart move. "The evidence is pretty much overwhelming," said Steve Dinham, the council's research director for teaching, learning and leadership. "Direct instruction and explicit teaching is two to three times more effective than inquiry-based learning or problem-based learning."

Professor Dinham said the inquiry model had dominated since the mid-1960s, but it was largely a "romantic concept" no longer suited to an information-rich age, through which children needed structured, directed teaching "more than ever". Explicit teaching was time-efficient and gave students skills, knowledge and cognitive ability, he said. However, "the swing to explicit teaching is just getting started".

Source: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/results-back-principals-return-to-instruction/2008/05/09/1210131265814.html>

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## **Larger classes not the answer**

*Geoff Maslen, The Age, May 5, 2008*

ONLY an academic, safe in his book-lined office on La Trobe University's green campus, could argue that class sizes in schools should be enlarged almost 50 per cent and that teachers should confront 35 hormone-charged and often obstreperous teenagers for six or more hours every day.

You have to wonder whether Dr John Hirst (as reported in *The Age*, 23/4) has ever taught in a school or been in a classroom since he left one 50 or more years ago. To suggest that children's education would be improved by cramming 35 big or even little children into a room, just to increase teachers' salaries, ignores the effect this over-crowding has on teacher and taught.

Dr Hirst argued that class sizes were not a "strong determinant of good education: the key factor is the quality of the teachers". He said the importance of good teachers was now generally acknowledged, as was the need to pay them much more; so he proposed that if class sizes were increased from 25 to 35, teachers could be paid 50% more from existing funds, without any strain on the state budget.

But no adults, outside the military or prison, would tolerate being forced to squeeze behind a desk and told to be quiet and get on with their work for hour after hour each day. Only because children are not grown-ups and have no rights can society condone them being incarcerated in school for 40 weeks a year for 13 long years.

That more young Australians don't rebel against the restrictions school places on them - the demand that they wear uniforms, to line up before going into class, to sit in not always quiet, ordered rows, to accept the knowledge meted out to them in steady doses by their teachers - is because they have been taught passivity. They have come to accept that being there is part of the business of stepping across childhood's threshold, even if the relevance of school to their present needs or their future aspirations remains obscure.

Dr Hirst backs his argument for bigger class sizes by claiming research shows class sizes are not a strong determinant of a good education. That depends on what a "good" education means and how it is assessed; if the measure is success in tests or examinations, then it ignores the effect of a crowded classroom on children's emotions, on their creativity and spontaneity, on their capacity to grow and develop as individuals, to become independent learners and thinkers.

More than 20 years ago, the then Australian Schools Commission called for more effective schooling, not approaches that were aimless or lacking in concern for excellence, or which might be regarded as soft options. The commission rejected the idea of students as empty vessels to be slowly filled with knowledge, instead noting that people - not just children - learn only when they are actively engaged by what is being taught.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/larger-classes-not-the-answer/2008/05/03/1209235170678.html>

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## Myths drive 'failing schools' ploy

*Graeme Smithies, the Age, May 12, 2008*

A RECURRING theme of current educational debate is what should be done about "underperforming" or even "failing" schools. Schemes to pay higher wages to "high-performing" teachers to work in such schools - as well as regular calls by politicians for improved "accountability" - reinforce the view that a number of schools fit this "underperforming" category. The latest State Government blueprint seems to be based on this same assumption.

I have never seen a definition of what constitutes an underperforming school, but those who use the term generally imply that the academic performance of its students, as measured by VCE results or literacy and numeracy testing, is below expected standards, or the standards achieved by schools in different suburbs.

The implication is that teachers at such a school are not doing their jobs well enough - and if they work harder, improve their methods or are replaced by better teachers, the problem will be solved.

The concept of the underperforming or failing school is based on a number of myths. The first is that student performance is entirely dependent on what happens in school, and that it is a consequence solely of the activities of teachers and principals and not of any factors outside the school.

The second myth is that all students come to school equally prepared, with equal ability and with equal levels of motivation, so that all they need is excellent teaching to excel.

At the end of 2006, I retired after 35 years as a teacher and administrator, mostly in schools in the so-called "disadvantaged" northern suburbs. After the school at which I was vice-principal was closed in 1992, I spent the next 11 years attached to the Northern Metropolitan Office of the Education Department, relieving in principal-class vacancies, mostly in the northern suburbs.

In all I worked in almost half the secondary schools in the north, for periods varying from one term to a full year. In that time I did not see one instance of a school I would describe as "underperforming", let alone "failing".

I did see many students who could be described as "underperforming" and as educationally disadvantaged, but this "underperformance" was almost entirely due to factors outside the school. For more than 40 years researchers have identified a variety of socio-economic factors that can influence a child's educational performance. Proponents of the underperforming school fallacy seem to ignore these factors.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/myths-drive-failing-schools-ploy/2008/05/10/1210131279878.html>

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## STUDENT RETENTION

### The big trade off

*Caroline Milburn, The Age, May 12, 2008*

BROADENING the curriculum to try to stop teens from dropping out of school has not been as successful as governments had hoped.

A national study shows that over the past 10 years policy efforts to lift low school-retention rates have focused on expanding trades and vocational education at senior secondary level. But the study says the approach needs questioning because schools are not having a big effect in improving the number of students who complete year 12. About 75% of Australia's students finish secondary school, a figure below that of many European countries.

"Despite substantial increases in participation in vocational education in schools and other policy initiatives, school retention has increased only marginally by about three percentage points since the mid-1990s," reports the study by Dr Gary Marks, a senior research fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research.

The study, published recently in the international education journal *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, is the latest and most comprehensive examination of the factors that influence when a student leaves school. It analysed interviews with 8905 students aged 17 and 18 in 2005 who had sat Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests in reading, maths and science when they were 15. They came from 315 schools in the government and independent sectors.

The study's findings reveal a student's academic performance is by far the most important influence on whether he or she leaves school before completing year 12. It is four times more important than the next most influential factor - a student's socioeconomic background.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/the-big-trade-off/2008/05/10/1210131279866.html>

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## **ASSESSMENT & REPORTING**

### **Gillard hails start of new schools tests**

*The Daily News, May 11, 2008 (AAP)*

New literacy and numeracy tests being held in schools across the country next week for the first time will be good news for parents and government, Education Minister Julia Gillard says.

Students in years three, five, seven and nine will all take the test.

"It is going to be the first time that we have got one national test happening on the same day," Ms Gillard told Sky News.

"So you will be in the situation to know how your child is going, not only in their own school, but in a national test.

"That is very important information for parents, and it's also important information for government to see how the education system is going and see what differences in attainment are, and who might need extra assistance."

Source: <http://www.thedaily.com.au/news/2008/may/11/aap-gillard-hails-start-of-new-schools-tests/>

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### **We're teaching children, not fattening pigs**

*Maureen Douglas, The Age, May 12, 2008*

IF YOU want to fatten a pig, you don't keep weighing it. This analogy for what is happening in American schools was made by Jon Scieszka, a highly regarded children's author and US ambassador for children's literature.

Now it's time for us in Australia to be mindful of what has happened to teaching and learning in American and English schools since the introduction of national curriculum and high-stakes standardised testing.

This week, as children in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 face national literacy and numeracy tests, I think it's time to stop and ask what we want for our students. Of course we want our students to be literate and numerate, but I think we want a lot more.

At Spensley Street Primary School, we have used Terry Johnson's "traits of a successful learner" to describe the characteristics we want our students to develop over seven years of primary schooling. These include encouraging students to be thoughtful, industrious, generative, empathetic, strategic, to be prepared to take risks, to have knowledge and self-esteem.

Primary school is a unique and important time in our children's lives, a time when they are developing an understanding of themselves as learners and as friends. We want to give them time to develop; we don't want them labelled as "successes" or "failures" so early in their formal education. We want to respect and nurture this unique time in their lives.

We know that students learn in different ways, at different rates and have differing strengths and skills. In a primary school we want to acknowledge this diversity and cater for the whole child.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/opinion/were-teaching-children-not-fattening-pigs/2008/05/11/1210444242979.html>

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## **STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY**

### **UN disability pact comes into force**

*SBS News, May 4, 2008 (AAP)*

A UN convention aimed at ensuring equal rights for the world's 650 million disabled people in work, education and social life went into force on Saturday.

The pact, the first of its kind and billed by the UN as the first new human rights treaty of the 21st century, took effect 30 days after being ratified by 20 countries that have signed it. That figure has since risen to 25, but does not include the US and Russia.

In a statement last month, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon called the implementation of the pact less than two years after its adoption by the General Assembly - a short time by UN standards - a "historic moment".

Ban said it showed the world was committed to combating "the egregious neglect and de-humanising practices that violate the human rights of persons with disabilities".

The 32-page UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlaws all forms of discrimination at work on the basis of disability, including in hiring, promotion and working conditions. It requires equal pay for work of equal value.

It also calls on signatory states to promote the employment of disabled people, including through "affirmative action" programs that favour them.

The pact stipulates the disabled may not be excluded from mainstream education systems. It demands that governments provide them with physical access to transportation, schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces.

Read more at [http://news.sbs.com.au/worldnewsaustralia/un\\_disability\\_pact\\_comes\\_into\\_force\\_546218](http://news.sbs.com.au/worldnewsaustralia/un_disability_pact_comes_into_force_546218)

Download the text of the Convention at [http://untreaty.un.org/English/notpubl/IV\\_15\\_english.pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/English/notpubl/IV_15_english.pdf)

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## **INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH 2008**

### **A climate of opportunity: Victorian climate change summit paper**

*Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victorian Government 06-05-2008*

Australia is rapidly entering a new phase in its response to climate change with the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the introduction of an emissions trading scheme by 2010.

The Victorian Government is taking this opportunity to be part of the more proactive national emissions reduction effort in Australia by reviewing and updating its climate change policies and programs. In doing so, the government seeks to exemplify the way in which Victoria can continue to lead the national agenda on climate change by harnessing the opportunities that this economic and environmental shift will bring.

The Victorian Government takes seriously the challenge of climate change and its responsibility to lead Victorian efforts to reduce our greenhouse emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 compared to 2000 levels. The challenges are to:

- drive significant greenhouse gas emission reductions;
- build on Victoria's skills and knowledge base to make our cities, towns and critical infrastructure more resilient to climate change;
- support all Victorians prepare for the impacts of climate change and contribute to the solution;
- support the take-up of new technologies and products to smooth Victoria's transition to the low carbon economy and encourage the export of new skills and products to the world; and
- ensure the costs of climate change are distributed equitably.

Download the Paper at <http://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/summit/Resources/SummitPaper.pdf>

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## **Container Deposit Scheme Proposed for the ACT**

*ACT Greens, 7 May 2008*

MLA Deb Foskey introduced into the Assembly today a Bill to establish a container deposit scheme in the ACT.

"Governments around Australia have resisted the re-introduction of container deposit schemes for many years" Dr Foskey said today.

"But the increase in the waste we produce and the generally inadequate level of recycling show that it's time to change course."

"Reducing the production of single-use containers minimises land fill space as well as energy use and greenhouse gas emissions from mainly fossil fuel generated power stations, mining activities, metal smelters, canneries, pulp and paper and bottle production facilities."

"Container deposit legislation plays a key role in reducing that use in SA. And while a national scheme is preferable, the recent plastic bag debacle shows yet again how hard it is to get any environmental action on a national scale."

"The Greens are introducing a model container deposit scheme in several State and Territory Parliaments with the intention of getting things moving now."

Read more at <http://braidwood.nsw.greens.org.au/2008/05/07/container-deposit-scheme-for-the-act/>

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## **SA Schools go green via \$1M bonanza**

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP, 8 May 2008

When it comes to helping the environment, South Australia's schools are going green with enthusiasm thanks to a \$1m funding boost from the Rann Government.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith today announced that 97 schools would receive Green School Grants in this year's round.

The State Government provides \$1m in grants each year to support schools to introduce initiatives that reduce their use of water and energy. Grants range from \$5000 to \$70,000.

"For many years now, our schools and preschools have shown great enthusiasm for introducing sustainability measures," Dr Lomax-Smith says. "Not only does it lessen their impact on the environment and save funds on utilities bills, but it teaches the State's young people about the importance of living in a sustainable manner."

"Every school in the State has been set green school targets for reductions in energy and water consumption, and these grants will help them to meet this requirement."

Schools will help the State to reach targets set in South Australia's Strategic Plan to improve water conservation, and energy efficiency in government buildings."

Read more at <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=3098>

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## **FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS**

### **Busy parents sending children to board**

*Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald 7/05/2008*

TIRED of fighting the Sydney traffic and with little spare time, busy working parents are sending their children to boarding schools despite living in the same city.

Up to a third of students boarding at Sydney Church of England Grammar School are weekday boarders and include the children of busy working Sydney families, the senior boarding house master at the

exclusive North Sydney school, David Anderson, says. The pressures of city living had led to an increase in part-time boarders at the school, Mr. Anderson said yesterday.

His comments follow concerns voiced by the head of PLC School at Croydon, William McKeith, in yesterday's Herald that busy parents were missing out on quality time with their children. Dr McKeith said some students from overseas could go years without seeing their families and many others relied on the telephone and the internet for regular contact. He called for a community and government rethink about employment and trading hours to improve the quality of life for modern families.

Yesterday Mr. Anderson told ABC radio that 20 years ago Shore's 200 boarders were full-time and mainly from the country. He said vacancies created by rural recession had been filled by Sydney students, who took advantage of extended library hours, after-school tuition and sporting activities. "We would have about 35 per cent of our boarders on a weekly basis and they just love it," he said. "Mum and dad both are working and working very hard. Obviously traffic in Sydney is becoming a little harder to get through.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/05/06/1209839649455.html>

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## **TERTIARY EDUCATION**

### **PhD scholarships 'below poverty line'**

*David Curry, Canberra Times, 1 May 2008*

The dollar value of PhD scholarships is "in freefall" and projected to drop below the poverty line later this year, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations says.

Figures released by the council yesterday show that the weekly stipend rate for Australian Postgraduate Awards projected for the December quarter of this year \$385 will fall below the projected Henderson poverty line for the same period. And that figure is for a single person with no dependents. The stipend, which does not vary according to circumstances, is well below the poverty line of \$581 for a person with two dependents.

The standard annual stipend for a PhD student is \$20,007.

The council said the dollar value of the PhD scholarship had fallen, in real terms, from 47 per cent of average earnings in 1992 to just 35 per cent in 2007. "These figures spell out what research postgraduates already know that the basic stipend rate for the APA is, by itself, simply not enough to live on," council president Nigel Palmer said.

Read more at <http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/news/local/news/general/phd-scholarships-below-poverty-line/402962.aspx>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **National Conference on Volunteering**

*3-5 September 2008 Radisson Resort on the Gold Coast, Queensland*

Volunteering Australia is pleased to invite you to the 12th National Conference on Volunteering to discuss, debate and exchange ideas and information on the issues that impact the 5.4 million Australians who volunteer.

The theme for this year's conference is 'Catch the New Waves' which offers the opportunity to explore current and emerging trends in volunteering.

Early Bird registrations now open.

Read more at <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/conference>

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## Back to School 2008

Now in its 6th successful year of operation, the Education Foundation's "Back to School" initiative is the nation's biggest celebration of public schools and the inclusive values-driven learning and development experiences they provide for today's young people and tomorrow's citizens.

Everyone who has gone on to a fulfilling career knows that our public schools are well worth celebrating and supporting. A fantastic way to show your appreciation is to go back to your school, spend the time to tell your story and share your insights with staff, students and parents.

Back to School also encourages schools and teachers to keep in touch with their alumni, and let them know that their achievements are valued and celebrated by their school and its community.

Students and teachers love to hear from people who went to their school. Graduates of the public school system, can add real value by sharing their reminiscences, career choices and experiences. This gives young students a living perspective on life beyond the school, helping to fuel their ambitions and give them the confidence to find their own way forward at a crucial time of their lives.

Find out more at <http://www.backtoschool.org.au>

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## REMINDERS

14-15 May - National Conference on Children & Young People with Disability and their Families - Melbourne - <http://www.nds.org.au/conferences/CYF2008/home.htm>

16 May - Marketing Seminar for Schools - Sydney - <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/schoolsseminar>

28-30 May - Council of Education Facility Planners International Conference - Melbourne - <http://australasia.cefpi.org/>

30-31 May - Early Childhood Education Conference - Melbourne - <http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/index.shtml>

1-30 June - MS Readathon - <http://www.msreadathon.org.au>

2 June - entries close for Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards - <http://www.dorothea.com.au/>

3-6 June - International Conference on Learning - Chicago, USA - <http://www.LearningConference.com>

11-12 June - National Conference on Climate Change - Canberra - <http://www.manningclark.org.au/events/conference2008/index.html>

26-28 June - World Education Forum SA International Conference - Adelaide - <http://www.infront.com.au/evt/wef/>

28 June - Early Childhood Teachers Association National Conference - Brisbane -

[http://www.ecta.org.au/01\\_cms/details.asp?ID=17](http://www.ecta.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=17)

6-9 July - National Conference for Teachers of English Literacy - Adelaide -

<http://www.englishliteracyconference.com.au>

6-9 July - Annual Conference of the Australian Science Teachers Association - <http://www.asta.edu.au>

9-12 July - Environmental Education Up The Track - Darwin - <http://www.cdu.edu.au/ehs/AAEE/>

17-19 July - International Conference on Education, Economy & Society - Paris, France - <http://education-conferences.org/default.aspx>

25-27 July - NSW Federation of Parents & Citizens Associations State Conference - Albury -

<http://www.pandc.org.au/>

31 July-1 August - Isolated Children's Parents Association Annual Conference - Hobart -

<http://www.icpa.com.au/Conference.asp>

16-24 August - National Science Week - <http://www.asta.edu.au>

18-31 August - ANTSEL Video Online Conference - <http://www.cybertext.net.au/antssel2008.htm>

27-29 August - Society for Provision of Education in Rural Australia Conference - Melbourne -

<http://www.spera.edu.au>

28-29 August - Professional Development Network 12th Annual School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast -

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/education/centre-leadership-management-education/events/leadership-conference-2008>

9 September-2 October - Australian Computers in Education Conference - Canberra -

<http://www.acec2008.info/default2.asp?orgid=1&suborgid=12>

10-12 September - World Conference on Mental Health Promotion - Melbourne -

<http://www.margins2mainstream.com/>

19-20 September - AASE/AJCPTA National Conference - Fremantle - <http://www.gemspl.com.au/aase/>

30 September-3 October - National History Teachers' Conference - Brisbane -

<http://www.qhta.com.au/conferences.htm>

1-3 October - VETnetwork Australia National Conference - Sydney -

[http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/01\\_cms/details.asp?ID=47](http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=47)

7-10 October - Australian International Education Conference - Brisbane - <http://www.idp.com/aiec/>

20-21 October - ACSSO National Education Conference - Brisbane - <http://www.acsso.org.au>

22-25 October - Frontiers in Education (FIE) Conference - Saratoga Springs, USA -

<http://fie.engrng.pitt.edu/fie2008/>

25-28 October - International Research Conference on Service-learning and Community Engagement -

New Orleans, USA - <http://www.researchslce.org/2008conference.html>

7-11 December - World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education - Melbourne -

<http://www.wipce2008.com/>

4-7 January 2009 - Hawaii International Conference on Education - Honolulu, USA -

<http://www.hiceducation.org/>

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## RESOURCES

### New Range of Free Student Diaries for 2009

A new range of free Student Diaries is being launched to assist secondary schools in their forward planning for 2009. The diaries are customised to your school, and will carry a personalised cover - designed by one of your students, who is then automatically entered into a nationwide cover artwork competition

These diary ranges are produced by Academy Publishing, who have been actively involved in the education sector in Australia for the past seven years, and have produced secondary and tertiary sector diaries in New Zealand for many more years.

For more information and contact details: <http://academypublishing.com.au/>

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Fundraising Directory - [www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au](http://www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au) Also: [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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