

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Number 17, 3 June 2008

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AWARDS & PRIZES

National Awards for Quality Schooling

Hon Julia Gillard MP 3 June 2008

Ms Nicolette Burraston, a science teacher from New South Wales, has been awarded the Medal of Distinction at the 2008 National Awards for Quality Schooling.

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, presented the science teacher from Cowra High School and 58 other teachers, principals, support staff and schools across Australia with awards today at a ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra.

Ms Burraston has made a significant contribution to future generations early in her career by motivating and engaging students in the study of science.

Enthusiastic and inspirational teachers like Nicolette are the key to students having rich and rewarding experiences in science classes.

The Rudd Government is committed to delivering an Education Revolution, and has invested over \$1.1 million in prize money for the awards.

A world class education system is crucial to ensuring our national prosperity into the future.

Research has shown that the most important factor in determining a child's likely performance at school is the quality of their classroom interactions.

These awards are important for building a better understanding and greater appreciation of the work done in our schools.

As part of the Education Revolution, the Rudd Government has directed \$400,000 to research in an effort to identify the best ways to reward quality teaching.

Australians need to encourage, support and recognise the important work of educators in our society.

More information will shortly be made available at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/scholarships_awards_prizes/national_awards_for_quality_schooling/default.htm

As at newsletter publication time, these details were not yet online, so we include them here:

2008 Australian Government National Awards for Quality Schooling

The seven major Award winners are:

Excellence by a Teacher

Carolyn Hayden, Lambton High School, NSW

Excellence by a Beginning Teacher, Recipient of Medal of Distinction

Nicolette Burraston, Cowra High School, NSW

Excellence in Teacher Leadership

Richard Nash, Ithaca State School, QLD

Excellence by a Principal

Peter Holcz, Mindarie Senior College, WA

Excellence by a Support Staff Member

David Simpson, Bonya School, NT

Excellence in School Improvement,

Owairtilla School - Canteen Creek, NT

Excellence in Family-School Partnerships

Kuranda District State College, QLD

The highly commended winners are:

Excellence by a Teacher - Highly Commended

Kevin Bennett SC, Kent Street Senior High School, WA

Rebecca Chapman, St Benedict's Catholic Primary School, WA

Ramona Elliott, Willetton Senior High School, WA

Kerri Furlong, Mitchelton State High School, QLD

Noel Gibson, Bracken Ridge State High School, QLD

Graham Herlihy, Robina State High School, QLD

Mark Howie, Penrith High School, NSW

Julie Lambert, Seaford 6 -12 School, SA

Sarah Long, All Saints Anglican School, QLD

Rebecca Lowe, Kingaroy State High School, QLD

Ken McBeath, Campbelltown Performing Arts High, NSW

Emma Medhurst, Salisbury High School, SA

Robert Pratt, Campus Kindergarten, QLD

Kerry Short, Wanganui Park Secondary College, VIC

Andrew Thomson, Balgowlah North Public School, NSW

Excellence by a Beginning Teacher - Highly Commended

Jennifer Bergstrum, St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School, QLD

Excellence in Teacher Leadership - Highly Commended

Deborah Gilbert, Bulahdelah Central School, NSW

Elena Hawkins, Australian Technical College North Queensland, QLD

Suzan Hirsch, St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Asquith, NSW

Leanne Randolph, Forest Lake State High School, QLD

Debra Turley, Salisbury High School, SA

Excellence by a Principal - Highly Commended

Amanda Bell, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, QLD
Cherie Lutton, Fraser Primary School, ACT
David Morris, Northern Beaches State High School, QLD
Gavin Power, Springfield Primary School, WA
Steven Salamon, Maylands Peninsula Primary School, WA
Gail Dyer, Belmore South Public School, NSW
Paul Erickson, Kingswood High School, NSW

Excellence by a Support Staff Member - Highly Commended

Maureen Bailey, Australind Senior High School, WA
Vicki Belletty, Kawana Waters State College, QLD
Helena Hewish, Seaford 6-12 School, SA
Desley Insall, Collingwood College, VIC
Trevor Muller, Murgon State High School, QLD
Margaret Papertalk, Aranmore Catholic College, WA
Karen Thomson, Blackwood Centre for Adolescent Development, VIC

Excellence in School Improvement - Highly Commended

Bellaire Primary School, VIC
Birrong Girls High School, NSW
Boondall State School, QLD
Boulder Primary School, WA
Canberra College , ACT
Carroll College, NSW
Copperfield College, VIC
Eastwood Heights Public School, NSW
Keithcot Farm School, SA
Solomontown Primary School, SA
St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, NSW
St Thomas the Apostle Primary School, ACT
Torquay Primary School, VIC
Wallan Primary School, VIC

Excellence in Family-School Partnerships - Highly Commended

Greenwich Public School, NSW
Longreach School of Distance Education, QLD
St Michael's Parish Primary School, VIC

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HOT TOPIC: PUBLIC / PRIVATE

A Real Education Revolution: Revised

Tony Moore, Centre for Policy Development, 23 May 2008

The budget makes clear that Rudd Labor has honoured its promise to maintain funding to private schools, to the tune of approximately \$6.5 billion dollars, compared to \$3.5 billion for public schools.

While the Howard Government's seriously flawed funding formulae must ultimately be revamped to divide this money more fairly between non-government schools, and commonwealth investment in state schools will increase, there should be no doubt that Federal Labor will continue the provision of 'state aid' that it has supported since Whitlam.

While the debate about the right of non-government students to commonwealth funds appears to be over in the ALP, the new government should think laterally about what the community gets for its investment in private schooling - roughly equal to its funding of higher education.

Here's a thought. Rather than setting up competition between public and private as occurred under the Howard Government, why not use commonwealth funding of schools to bring the two rival sectors closer together, to encourage them to cooperate in the one 'public' system?

After all, both sectors receive public money and are regulated by government in terms of curriculum and standards in teaching.

Read more at <http://cpd.org.au/article/real-education-revolution>

Originally published on ABC Unleashed on May 22, 2008.

No more public v private debate

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May 2008

For too long in Australia debates about the quality of children's education have revolved around public versus private schools and which system deserves more government support. Over the decades, education advocates and groups have taken their place in one of these camps and outlined passionate arguments for their preferred system.

While we acknowledge their strong advocacy in support of education, it is time for all of us to recognise that the old-style education debates need to be updated.

We need a conversation about a transparent, high-quality, well-funded education system for the 21st century; one that focuses on the needs of each student, the quality of our education system and how we can guarantee every child, no matter how rich or how poor, gets the best education possible.

I want this conversation to focus on:

- The substance of our curriculum.
- The commitment to rigorous academic standards.
- The professionalism of our teachers.
- The quality of school leadership.
- The way we teach, including the way we use information and communication technology.

Our schools need to become more flexible and innovative in the way they teach. At the same time, the Rudd Government understands that all schools need certainty and stability. That is why we will deliver on our election commitment to spend \$42 billion on the 2009-2012 schools agreement.

To ensure we build the strongest possible platform for the long-term investment and improvement in education outcomes beyond 2012, the Government will review the funding model in 2010-11.

The aim of the review is to provide greater transparency in the funding process. It is not designed to favour one school system over the other.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/no-more-public-v-private-debate/2008/05/28/1211654120232.html>

HOT TOPIC: TEACHER TRAINING

Canberra urged to take charge

Caroline Milburn, The Age, June 2, 2008

Teacher training should be taken over by the Federal Government, says business.

AUSTRALIA'S top business group has urged the Federal Government to seize control of teacher training by introducing national standards because progress to improve teacher quality is too slow.

In a damning 52-page analysis of teacher training, the Business Council of Australia is calling for radical federal intervention in an area controlled by state education departments and university education faculties.

The policy paper, *Teaching Talent*, prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research, says although there is strong agreement that teacher quality is fundamental to lifting student results, "it is difficult to find evidence of coherent, concerted, co-ordinated policy efforts at state and federal levels focused on teacher quality".

"Accountability for ensuring quality teachers and school leaders is unclear and diffuse... State teacher registration bodies responsible for the quality of entrants to the profession have little power to implement rigorous, independent procedures for accrediting teacher education courses.

"Teacher registration is a key quality-assurance mechanism, but is merely a rubber-stamp operation in most states and territories."

The BCA paper says more than 100 inquiries and reviews of teacher education have been done in Australia since the '70s, with many courses being criticised for being overly theoretical, fragmented and having little connection to classroom practice.

Despite the findings and recommendations of the inquiries often being consistent, teacher education has hardly changed as a result.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/canberra-urged-to-take-charge/2008/05/30/1211654321605.html>

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INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Teaching for the Digital Age

Hon Julia Gillard MP 3 June 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced new opportunities for Australian teachers to develop their proficiency in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning.

Today the Minister for Education committed \$650,000 to initiate and fund professional development activities over the next 12 months, including:

- Two day workshops on using ICT in maths, English and the sciences in 50 urban, rural and remote locations;
- Creating on-line professional learning resources for teachers; and
- Leveraging the experience of people like you in this room by supporting ICT-related master classes to be run by present and past national award winning teachers.

In addition, \$11.25 million will be directed, through States and Territory Governments, to professional development in information and communication technology.

The Rudd Government is also providing \$32.6 million over two years to supply students and teachers across Australia with online curriculum tools and resources for the classrooms of the 21st century.

Assistance will be available to schools to make the best use of ICT with the development of support mechanisms, with funding of \$10 million over three years.

Under the \$1.2 billion National Secondary School Computer Fund the Rudd Government will be working with universities and educators to ensure the next generation of teachers is equipped to maximise the potential of computers as a learning tool.

This partnership will provide professional development for teachers to make effective use of ICT in how and what students are learning in our schools.

Read more at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/0608/msed030.php>

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FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION

Minister Launches Financial Literacy Package for Teachers

Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, Minister for Superannuation & Corporate Law 3 June 2008

Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law and Mr Paul Clitheroe, Chairman of the Financial Literacy Advisory Board, today launched a package of support materials and resources to help teachers deliver consumer and financial literacy education in schools.

"Financial literacy is an absolutely vital life skill for young Australians. The Rudd Government recognises that it's critical that young people get the chance to learn money skills at school so they're better equipped to make informed consumer decisions," Minister Sherry said.

"It's important that young Australians have the knowledge to deal with financial issues from an early age. With mobile phones, credit cards and internet banking, there are a wide range of financial issues young people have to contend with," Mr Clitheroe said.

Over 2008, consumer and financial literacy will be incorporated into core subjects, including English and maths, and across all years from Kindergarten to Year 10. Topics for study include basic budgeting, banking, credit cards and mobile phone plans.

"I would like to congratulate the public, independent and Catholic school sectors for their collaborative efforts to integrate consumer and financial literacy into the school curriculum," said Minister Sherry.

The groundbreaking new package includes training modules for facilitators, a teacher's guide and a DVD showing how consumer and financial literacy has already been introduced across primary schools in the Maitland region in NSW. The online package and support materials and resources for teachers are available at www.financialliteracy.edu.au.

From next month, teachers in primary and secondary schools nationally, will also receive professional learning on how to integrate consumer and financial literacy into core subjects through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' Australian Government Quality Teaching Program.

"Teachers must receive the support they need to teach financial literacy in our schools. I would also like to acknowledge the important role parents can play in fostering these skills in their children - today's package will further assist these grass roots champions of learning," Minister Sherry said.

Read more at <http://www.understandingmoney.gov.au/content/education>.

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HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Time to end tobacco promotion to children

Media Release, Action on Smoking & Health, 29 May 2008

40 groups in World No Tobacco Day call for "out of sight, out of mind" policy

Australian health, child welfare, parent, school, church and community organisations have called for strong measures to end tobacco promotion to children, on the eve of World No Tobacco Day (May 31).

40 organisations endorsing a national campaign to protect children from tobacco said that in supporting the World Health Organisation's call for a ban on all tobacco advertising and promotion, and to end tobacco sales to and by children, all Australian governments should legislate to:

- remove tobacco products totally from view in all retail outlets, with no exceptions;
- ban child (under 18) staff from selling tobacco; and
- implement an effective licensing scheme for tobacco sellers.

The WHO has made the theme of World No Tobacco Day 2008 on May 31 "The tobacco industry catches you young."

Says Anne Jones, Chief Executive of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Australia:

"The tobacco industry has long targeted children as 'new smokers' to be recruited. Nine out of ten new smokers are children."

Read more at <http://www.ashaust.org.au/mediareleases/080529.htm>

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Preschool comes to SA Child Care Centres

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith, SA Minister for Education & Children's Services, 30 May 2008

More South Australian four year-olds will benefit from preschool education under a ground-breaking new Rann Government program that brings kindergarten into child care centres.

Children's Services Minister Jane Lomax-Smith today announced details of a two-year trial to give children access to kindergarten without having to leave their child care centre.

The trial is part of the Rann Government's far-reaching reforms to put the first five years of a child's life at the forefront of education, health and families policies.

"We want South Australia to become a family friendly State with child care, preschool and school services that work for families," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"We have taken the lead nationally on early childhood development initiatives to give young South Australians the best possible start to their life.

"Our per-child investment in children's services is nearly double the national average, and 93.1% of children are enrolled in preschool in the year before full-time school compared to 87.2% nationally.

"However, we want more children to have access to high quality preschool services to give us a better skilled workforce, lower crime rates and a healthier community in the future.

"For many working parents, taking their child out of child care to attend four half-day preschool sessions each week in a different location is just not possible.

"As a result, many children in child care miss out on a preschool program delivered by a tertiary trained teacher before they start school."

Read more at <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=3209>

In the beginning ...

Elisabeth Tarica, The Age, June 2, 2008

Four, five, six or seven? Many parents face a dilemma in deciding when to send their children to school.

KATHLEEN O'DWYER was as misty-eyed as any mother when her "baby" - George MacDonald - started prep this year. As he walked through the school gates for the first time, proud to be joining the big kids in his full uniform, she felt comforted by the knowledge he was ready to take the plunge into school life.

At 6, and with two years of four-year-old kindergarten behind him, George was mature, confident and excited about starting school.

It was proof, she believed, that keeping him home for an extra year was the right thing to do. The alternative, starting in the previous year, could have made him one of the youngest in the class.

George is part of an emerging trend that sees parents err on the side of caution by choosing to keep their children - particularly those born between October and December - out of school for another year.

An experienced secondary teacher, Ms O'Dwyer is a firm believer in the benefits of delayed entry. "Teaching high school I see the kids at the other end, I see how kids who are a bit older are more confident, especially the boys, and it just means that George will be more on an even level when he gets there," she says.

Her daughter Mia, now in grade 3, also started school aged 6. Ms O'Dwyer feels keeping both children at home for an extra year of play was, educationally, the best thing she has done. "George could have gone the year before and he would have been OK but waiting another year, even though he was a little bit impatient towards the end of last year, was just brilliant," she says.

"I did not have any doubts that he might not be ready, he was firing on all cylinders and it was definitely a maturity issue because he wasn't worried about leaving Mum. It was just 'bye' and I was the one left behind."

The extra time at home, she says, made a big difference to how George has coped and, although he turned 6 last October, he didn't stand out from his classmates. In fact, some were older.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/in-the-beginning/2008/05/30/1211654321611.html>

School adapts to a new age trend

Elisabeth Tarica, The Age, June 2, 2008

Lauriston Girls' School has had to abandon its popular transitional prep year as a result of the trend to hold children back from starting school.

The buffer program was introduced about 10 years ago in response to parent demand for an alternative to the full-blown prep year. It was designed for prep-age children who were developmentally very young to help develop self-esteem and confidence skills.

The children learnt to hone skills such as sitting still, listening quietly and socialising while they worked on a modified version of the prep curriculum.

"We just couldn't get the numbers for next year because we are finding that kids are older starting school and older starting kindergarten," says Lauriston's director of admissions and marketing Di Bambra.

"There's certainly a trend here as parents are now more aware of the long-term implications if children start too young and for schools there's obviously implications because programs are changing to reflect that."

Ms Bambra says parents tend, when making their decision, to use a December to December cut-off date rather than the April 30 minimum entry date set by the State Government.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/education-news/school-adapts-to-a-new-age-trend/2008/05/30/1211654321608.html>

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STATE EDUCATION BUDGET ROUNDUP 2008

ACT Minister for Education Disowns Budget Figures

"Save our Schools" Independent Advocacy Group Release, 29 May 2008

At the Budget Estimates hearings last week on education, the ACT Minister for Education, Andrew Barr, effectively disowned the Chief Minister's budget figures. The Minister resorted to producing 'rubbery' figures not reported in the Budget Papers in order to give the appearance of a real increase in government school funding for 2008-09.

Budget Paper No. 4 [p. 360] shows that funding for government schools will increase from \$371.7 million in 2007-08 to \$388.9 million in 2008-09. This is an increase of 4.6%.

The Consumer Price Index increase in Canberra for the year ending March 2008 was 4.6% and could well increase by more over the next financial year.

Such a cost increase would offset the current dollar increase of 4.6%.

It would mean that there is no net addition to the real resources, such as the number of teachers and classroom resources, available to government schools as a result of the Budget.

Read more at <http://soscanberra.com/act-issues/sos-briefing-paper-minister-for-education-disowns-budget-figures>

Note: ACT's education budget is "first cab off the rank" - commentary on each of the other states' education budgets will be highlighted in subsequent editions - ED

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

International Consortium for Experiential Learning

8-12 December 2008, University of Technology, Sydney NSW

Keynote Speakers for the conference will be David Boud (University of Technology Sydney Australia) and Tara Fenwick (University of British Columbia Canada).

The conference theme - The Identity of Experience - focuses on current and future challenges for experiential learning.

These themes will be explored by a team of symposium keynote speakers and presenters.

Early Bird Registration is now open at <http://www.education.uts.edu.au/icel/register.html>.

Closing date for submission of refereed papers is 20th June 2008.

More information on the keynote speakers and the conference program as well as how to submit proposals for papers workshops and poster presentations can be found on the conference website.

Read more at <http://www.education.uts.edu.au/icel/index.html>

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REMINDERS

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

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/AEE/>

10-12 July - Outdoor Education Association of Queensland State Conference - Rockhampton - <http://www.oeq.org.au/events.asp>

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/>

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18-20 September - English Australia Conference - Canberra - <http://www.eaconference.com.au/>

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

29 September-2 October 2008 - Australian Computers in Education Conference - Canberra - <http://www.acec2008.info/default2.asp?orgid=1&suborgid=12>

30 September-2 October - ACEL International Conference - Melbourne - <http://www.acec.org.au/index.php?id=225>

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

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/>

18-21 January 2009 - Summer School For Australian Teachers - Canberra - <http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/freilich/>

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RESOURCES

Educational Experience

Educational Experience began its operations in Newcastle NSW in 1977 and today is Australia's leading supplier of educational resources and equipment to child care centres, preschools, OOSHs and primary schools. We remain dedicated to the supply of creative and practical ideas to help children learn and develop and are the Teacher's choice for variety, quality and customer service.

At present Educational Experience's product range consists of over 8,500 product lines showcased in our annual Teachers Catalogue. Our speedy delivery is recognised as being the most efficient and reliable service offered in the industry. The products sold by Educational Experience are sourced from Australian suppliers where possible or imported from reputable international suppliers. To ensure all our products are of the highest quality and meet safety standards, our suppliers must show product compliance testing to Australian standards.

To view our product range please visit www.edex.com.au

Educational Experience initiated our generous Toys and More fundraiser to help Australian children's education. Early childhood centres and schools who participate in this fundraiser, are rewarded with a credit voucher valued at 20% of the total value ordered by parents and friends and may qualify for additional resources. For more information please visit www.toysandmore.com.au

Educational Experience remains committed to the educational needs of all Australian children.

Educational Experience, PO Box 860, Newcastle NSW 2300

Telephone 02 4923 8222 Fax 02 4942 1991 Toll free 1300 134 211 Email <mailto:hotline@edex.com.au>

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

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

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