

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

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Having trouble reading this email? Read it on the web at <http://www.acsso.org.au/AED080701.pdf>
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HOT TOPIC: THE DRIFT TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

How John Howard shored up private education, by God

Michael Gawenda, Sydney Morning Herald, June 26, 2008

The continuing battle between creationists and the so-called godless believers in Darwin and evolution was one of the highlights - if it can be described thus - of my time in the United States. Across America, school boards and state education boards were at war over the teaching of creationism in science classes.

But in landmark court decisions, the creationists and their followers were vanquished. The courts ruled that it was unconstitutional to teach creationism as science. Creationism, the courts ruled, was a form of religious belief and to teach it in American schools violated the constitutionally enshrined separation of church and state.

That separation also means there is no overt state funding of "faith-based" schools, which means there is no overt funding of private schools in America.

There is no constitutionally enshrined separation of church and state in Australia. The great battle over state aid for non-government schools was fought and decided a half century ago and it was basically about state aid to the Catholic school system. The proponents of state aid won.

They continue to win. The former Prime Minister John Howard once told a group of newspaper executives at a dinner at the Lodge that one of his greatest achievements, looking back, would be his government's support for parents' rights to choose the sort of education they wanted for their children.

What he meant was that his government had significantly increased funding for non-government schools. This was designed to accelerate the trend away from the government school system.

It worked. Around 33 per cent of Australian children now attend non-government schools - and that percentage is even higher in NSW and particularly in Victoria where around 40 per cent of year 11 and 12 students attend non-government schools.

The Rudd Government has more or less abandoned any attempt to arrest this trend to private education. Howard has triumphed.

The notion that a secular liberal democracy is underpinned by a free and universal secular education for all children is now well and truly dead in Australia. The Rudd Government will do nothing to revive it.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/how-john-howard-shored-up-private-education-by-god/2008/06/25/1214073338065.html>

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HOT TOPIC: CHAPLAINS IN SCHOOLS

Queensland Schools Downgrade Women and Girls

Senator Lyn Allison, 25 June 2008

The Democrats said today the Queensland Government should stop promoting old style 'values' in religious instruction classes and in the Commonwealth's \$165m school chaplains program in its state schools.

"In the guise of pastoral care and religion, boys and girls in Queensland are being taught different and stereotypical sets of values," Senator Allison said today. "This is dangerous and demeaning, particularly for girls."

"Parents, particularly in Queensland, tell me they are worried that chaplains who have no training in education or youth support are taking religious instruction and counselling children based on their own narrow values set.

At Toowoomba State High School - a premier high school - girls are taught to be 'patient, flexible, obedient, gentle, punctual, dependable, sincere, orderly, resourceful, responsible and to have self-control and initiative', but boys are given nine mostly different values.

"The Queensland Government is effectively endorsing Hillsong's Shine for girls and Strength for boys programs in schools that are supposed to be secular.

"At a time when politicians are talking about a national curriculum, it is reasonable to ask what Queensland's contribution might be if this state school represents Education Queensland's highest-order thinking," Senator Allison concluded.

Source: http://www.democrats.org.au/news/index.htm?press_id=6605

The 'Chaplaincy Service and Religious Instruction In School Hours at Toowoomba State High School' program is available for download at <http://www.toowoombshs.eq.edu.au>

A local Toowoomba critique of Education Queensland's handling of RI and the NSCP chaplains program including a 'table of values' is available at <http://www.thefourthr.info/hallofshame.html>

Religious Education in State Schools

"Sunday Night" Program on Radio National, 15/06/2008

Over recent months a legacy program of the Howard government has been taken up by an increasing number of schools around the country. It's the National Chaplaincy program.

Traditionally Australian government schools have been guided by a settlement over issues of religion that took place in the 1880s. In order to avoid costly sectarian rivalries. Most protestant churches agreed that religion in state schools would be supplied by the churches for specific Religious Education periods, available on a voluntary opt-out basis as part of the normal curriculum. Hence religion was kept off the State payroll. Now, some are suggesting the guidelines of the Chaplaincy program are being interpreted in such a way as to subvert the intention of the Education Acts and to open students up to religious proselytization.

The Chaplaincy initiative from the Howard government arose in response to widespread parental concern about the lack of moral and ethical guidance available to students in the state system. Undoubtedly the initiative reflected real concerns among parents about the need for ethical direction, and the realisation that such direction did not come 'value free'. So school councils have been given an active role in the selection of suitable candidates for Chaplaincy posts.

The guidelines have also been structured with the intention of avoiding the dangers of sectarian religious proselytising by particular groups.

After some months of operation, questions are now beginning to arise as to the nature of such Chaplaincies, firstly as to whether the old Free, Compulsory and Secular, boundary has been crossed and effectively eliminated from state school systems, and further whether the guidelines for the Chaplaincy program are adequate to protect students from proselytization by groups keen to impose their views on students using the authority of the school as a vehicle.

Guests in this discussion forum:

- Lyn Allison - Federal Senator (Democrats)
- Tim Mander - Scripture Union
- Hugh Wilson - The fourth R. Keeping Religion out of Queensland Schools
- Dr. Yvonne Paddison - ACCESS Ministries

Download the mp3 audio at <http://www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s2275210.htm>

FAMILY SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BUREAU

Launch Date Announced: 11 August

In February, Minister Gillard announced funding for a Family Schools Community Partnership Bureau, a joint venture between the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council (APC).

The co-operation of the two national peak bodies for parents of students in public and private schools respectively is in itself a recognition that the building of effective relationships between schools, parents and local communities does not emanate from funding models, curricular choices or educational theories.

Family, school and community partnerships are about people: students, parents, teachers, principals, school support staff and members of the local community, from those of the highest standing to those in need of the greatest support.

The Family School Community Partnership Bureau is being established to help seed, grow and nurture such partnerships, to provide constructive and meaningful support to those who seek to build better relationships around education, to inform all interested parties about best practice, and to harness the potential for community-based partnerships to lead to improved educational outcomes for our nation's most valuable asset: our young people.

The Bureau will be officially launched on 11 August, on which date the Family School Community Partnership Bureau website will also go online, providing a suite of online tools to invite and capture the experiences and points of view of stakeholders as well as offer assistance to those seeking resolution of difficulties in building and sustaining mutually beneficial partnerships between schools, families and their local communities.

Key staff have been appointed and are already engaged in research is being undertaken on best practice in this area and on practical tasks such as the promotion of the national Family-Schools Partnerships Framework, the development of a major Annual Parent Survey to provide comprehensive information about the needs and views of parents, and the establishment of a 24/7 online help facility to provide practical, relevant advice to parents, principals and teachers about any matter that involves relationships between schools and families.

Look for more information about the Bureau as we approach the 11 August 2008 launch date, by which time we will be in touch with all schools to draw attention to the Bureau's work and invite schools and parents to share with the Bureau their experiences and expectations.

For more information in the meantime, email the Bureau's Research and Communications Officer by email at <mailto:brenton.holmes@familyschool.org.au>.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

It saddens me to see Julia Gillard trying to side step the fundamental inequity in education funding in Australia.

I have been a local councillor in Woollahra [in eastern Sydney] for four years now. In that time there has been a constant stream of large development applications from local private schools such as Cranbrook, Scots College, Kambala and Kincoppel.

These schools have seemingly endless resources to spend on grand building schemes giving them bigger and better indoor pools, improved performing arts centres, world class computer laboratories, olympic sized gymnasiums and a whole new junior campus.

In the same time the one and only development application I have seen from a public school has come from Rose Bay Public. Poor old Rose Bay wanted us to rezone part of their playground so they could sell it off to a local property developer to try and get some funds to build a bare bones school hall.

They don't have one, and neither the state nor federal governments will fund one for them in the foreseeable future.

Now I don't begrudge private schools delivering top class educations or building top class facilities. Good luck to them.

But to my untrained eye scarce commonwealth funds should be building the first school hall at Rose Bay Public, or fixing the leaking demountables at Marrickville High before they go to schools building their second indoor swimming pool.

You can't just wish inequity away, Julia; to really make it happen you have to make some hard choices.

[Name & Address supplied]

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TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

National Curriculum first round consultation begins

Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, 27 June 2008

Acting Minister for Education, Brendan O'Connor, today welcomed National Curriculum Board's first consultation forum on development of national curriculum.

More than 200 participants including teachers, universities, community members, business and industry representatives attended today's first forum in Melbourne.

The board also released a National Curriculum Development Paper as a basis for discussion.

The Rudd Government in co-operation with the States and Territories is committed to a national curriculum delivered within three years.

The first four subjects to be implemented in this co-operative approach are English, mathematics, science and history.

Mr. O'Connor said it was important for to canvass wide ranging views on student learning to ensure that future curriculum development is world class and is based on Australia's future needs.

The Board is also examining curricula considered the best nationally and internationally to ensure every child has access to the highest quality learning and drive up school retention rates.

Source:

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/oconnor/releases/nationalcurriculumfirstroundconsultationbegin.htm>

Read more about the NCB at <http://www.ncb.org.au>

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FEDERAL STATE FOCUS

School results lacking details

Lenore Taylor, National correspondent | June 27, 2008

THE federal Government should demand more detailed information about how well the states are meeting national goals for schooling in return for the \$9.3 billion handed over by the commonwealth each year to be spent on schools.

A report from the National Audit Office, released yesterday, said information provided by the states "casts little light on performance variability across the schooling system" or on "areas in which performance can improve".

"Most published performance information takes the form of system-wide aggregates or averages, which provides no information on the dispersion of performance or results," the audit office said in a report tabled in parliament last night.

"No information is currently available publicly (or to the Australian Government) on the performance of the government school system in its own right; on how performance varies within the government (and non-government) school systems; on the margin by which students do not meet benchmark levels of performance."

Read entire article at: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23929702-5013871,00.html>

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DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Reading, writing and virtual reality

Harriet Alexander, Sydney Morning Herald, June 26, 2008

STUDENTS grasp concepts better and are more engaged in lessons when teachers use digital technology such as interactive whiteboards, teachers involved in a professional learning project say.

Teachers from six schools in northern Sydney were given special training in the equipment, which is being distributed to 2900 NSW schools over the next year and includes electronic whiteboards, video conferencing and digital resources.

Gretel Watson, one of two teachers from Curl Curl North public school who took part in the project last year, said the students were so excited about their lessons when they used the technology that they were willing to skip part of their lunch hour.

"I had a visitor to my classroom and the kids were showing them what they were doing and the bell rang, and I said, 'Who wants to stay?' and 17 kids out of 24 stayed," said Mrs. Watson, who addressed an interactive classroom conference in Sydney on Monday.

"They're hugely engaged."

Students can touch the whiteboards to move objects on them. Other resources had allowed classes to "grow" virtual tomatoes that responded to watering and fertiliser, and develop games that helped students with maths, she said.

The School of the Air and remote schools have been using video conferencing to share lessons and resources for years; the technology is now becoming mainstream. The NSW Department of Education will distribute it to 200 schools by the end of this week and 400 by the end of the year as part of its Connected Classrooms program.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/reading-writing-and-virtual-reality/2008/06/25/1214073342114.html>

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EDUCATION TAX REFUND 2008-2009

Keep Your Receipts!! Education Tax Refund Starts 1 July

Hon Wayne Swan MP 30 June 2008

Parents across Australia should keep their receipts for education expenses from 1 July to make the most of the benefits available under the Rudd Government's \$4.4 billion Education Tax Refund.

The Education Tax Refund will provide parents with much-needed help for education expenses, with refunds of up to:

- \$375 per primary school student; and
- \$750 per secondary school student.

Parents bringing up the next generation of Australians are doing perhaps the most important job in Australia.

But it can also be an expensive job, with education expenses adding to financial pressures at a time when many family budgets are already stretched by high petrol, grocery and mortgage costs after eight interest rate rises in three years.

That's why the Rudd Government is delivering the Education Tax Refund - as a part of the Government's \$55 billion Working Families Support Package designed to tip the scales back in favour of working families.

It is also a central part of the Rudd Government's Education Revolution aimed at giving our kids the best possible start in life and making Australia's workforce the best educated and trained in the world.

How much can you claim?

By keeping their receipts, eligible families will be able to claim a 50 per cent refund every year for key education expenses up to:

- \$750 for each child undertaking primary studies (maximum refund of \$375 per child, per year); and
- \$1,500 for each child undertaking secondary studies (maximum refund of \$750 per child, per year).

Read more at

<http://www.treasurer.gov.au/DisplayDocs.aspx?doc=pressreleases/2008/077.htm&pageID=003&min=wms&Year=&DocType=>

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AWARDS & PRIZES

2008 Australian Agricultural Industries Young Innovators & Science Awards

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy is proud to be a sponsor of the 2008 Australian Agricultural Industries Young Innovators and Science Awards.

These annual awards are run by the Bureau of Rural Sciences and are for young people (18-35 years) working or studying in an agricultural, fisheries, forestry, food or natural resource industry.

Winners will receive up to \$20 000 each to explore an emerging scientific issue or innovative activity over a 12 month period. One winner will also be recommended to receive the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Award, valued at an additional \$30 000, to advance their research outcomes and career.

We are hoping for some strong entries from the animal welfare sector because as the conference has revealed there are some terrific young scientists doing amazing work to improve welfare across multiple industries and sectors.

Projects can relate to agriculture, fisheries, forestry, food and natural resource management industries, and funding may be used for a research project, an industry visit, further study into a specific area or attending a conference.

Applications close 14 July 2008.

Read more at <http://www.daff.gov.au/brs/science-awards>

P & C AWARDS 2008

Prize Pool of More than \$60,000 to Honour Australia's Dedicated Parents Groups

Paradise Foods and The Australian Women's Weekly are calling for entries for the 2008 P&C Awards to showcase this invaluable role of parents in schools.

In its second year, the national awards program celebrates the vital work of Parents and Citizens associations and their equivalents that help deliver quality education facilities and resources to students.

One award will be made to the best entry from each state and territory in Australia. Each of the eight winners will receive a crystal trophy, \$2000 prize money, \$1000 voucher from Rebel Sport, a Tefal Quick Cup and airfares for a representative to attend a special awards ceremony hosted by Paradise Foods and The Australian Women's Weekly and Paradise Foods at the Sydney Harbour Marriott on Tuesday January 27, 2009.

A national winner will be chosen from the state and territory winners and will receive The Australian Women's Weekly Paradise Foods P & C Award for 2007 plus a further \$10,000 and \$2000 voucher from Rebel Sport.

The first 100 entries will receive a Paradise Foods hamper filled with cookies, crackers, family favourite biscuits and other goodies. Valued at \$150, this basket makes a great prize for fundraising events and celebrations.

Submissions must be received by 31 August 2008.

For information on how to enter the awards see the July issue of The Australian Women's Weekly.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

New Physical Activity Campaign Starting Soon

National student health & well-being initiative "The Parents Jury" has announced they will be launching a new campaign for Activity Friendly Communities in early July.

The full campaign kit will be online by Monday 7th July.

There will be lots of information about issues relating to active communities and plenty of suggestions to get your whole family active every day.

The Parents Jury will also provide tips and downloadable resources to enable you to become a local champion and advocate for change in your community.

Their website will provide more information about this initiative and all the many ways in which they provide support for parents and school communities to encourage healthy eating and healthy lifestyles for all young people.

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

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Funding for Indigenous boarding school infrastructure

Hon Brendan O'Connor, A/g Minister for Education, 24 June 2008

The Rudd Government today announced \$11.9 million to improve the quality of education for Indigenous students at boarding schools through refurbishing and improving facilities.

Acting Minister for Education, Brendan O'Connor said the Indigenous Boarding Infrastructure Program provides funding to improve boarding facilities at non-government schools which have a significant number of Indigenous students.

The infrastructure funding is part of a \$50 million commitment to enable boarding schools with a history of quality education and 20 or more Indigenous students to upgrade accommodation facilities and to expand facilities to accommodate more Indigenous students.

Mr. O'Connor said the funding was part of the Australian Government's commitment to providing educational opportunities for Indigenous students to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous education outcomes.

A quality education is a critical foundation for enabling all Australians to participate fully in economic and social opportunities in life.

The boarding schools funded under the program have strong records of providing high-quality educational experiences for their Indigenous students.

The successful schools are:

- St John's College, Stuart Park, NT
- Yirara College, Alice Springs, NT
- St Phillip's College, Alice Springs, NT
- Wongutha Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School, Gibson, WA
- Djarragun College - Wangetti Campus, Clifton Beach, QLD
- St Joseph's College, Gladesville, NSW
- Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes, NSW
- St Scholastica's College, Glebe, NSW
- Rostrevor College, Woodforde, SA

Source: <http://www.brendanoconnor.com.au/news-&-media-releases/ministerial-media-releases/funding-for-indigenous-boarding-school-infrastructure/>

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EDUCATION BUDGET ROUNDUP TAILPIECE

Tas High Schools miss out again

Sue Napier MP, Shadow Minister for Education 26 June 2008

The Shadow Minister for Education, Sue Napier, today raised concerns that the Premier is ignoring his own Department's advice.

This afternoon, in Budget Estimates, Mrs Napier read from a Tasmanian Literacy Brief, obtained by the State Opposition from the Department of Education, through a Freedom of Information request. The Literacy Brief identified "that our high schools do not add value in the same way as national schools."

This was one of the reasons offered for the drop in reading and writing skills from Year 3 (where Tasmanian students are 2nd nationally for reading and 4th for writing) to Year 7 (by which time our students are nationally 4th and 7th respectively).

This Literacy Brief confirms other research that our children's reading and writing skills drop off considerably between Years 3 and 7.

'This is a real concern so the State Opposition is disappointed that only 2 High Schools, out of a total of 26 schools, are identified as being part of the literacy initiatives in this year's Budget and, therefore, eligible for extra funding.

'If the Premier has advice specifically highlighting a significant drop in reading and writing performance between Years 3 and 7, why does this year's Budget ignore the recurrent funding needs of the vast majority of our High Schools?

Read more at http://www.tas.liberal.org.au/default.cfm?action=news_detail&ID=8230

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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH 2008

Bright idea wins 600 light globes for Canberra Primary school

Nathan Dukes, Canberra Times, 27/06/2008

A commitment to go green has landed one Canberra school \$10,000 and 600 energy-saving light globes.

St Monica's Parish Primary School, in Evatt, won the money as part of the Fairfax Earth Hour Generation Green Competition for 2008.

The competition was designed to support schools in their efforts to adopt more environmentally friendly practices.

Year 6 pupils Eloise and Oliver entered the competition on behalf of St Monica's, with their project, Green Canteen. The pair conducted an environmental audit and found their canteen could benefit from solar hot water and a vegetable garden.

St Monica's principal, Lyn Smith, said the initiative was driven by the pupils.

When support for the project grew, the whole class became involved.

Mrs. Smith said the prize money would go towards the solar hot water facilities and a vegetable garden.

Read more at <http://www.stmonicas.cg.catholic.edu.au/>

School to sow seeds of learning

Emily Sherlock, Canberra Times, 29 June 2008

Students at Kaleen Primary School could soon be tending their own kitchen garden after being awarded a community grant of nearly \$47,000 by the ACT government.

A parent of one student at Kaleen Primary, Kathleen Hughes, pioneered the idea for the garden and said she was still in shock to learn the application had been successful. "It is fantastic. We are all very excited. A lot of kids these days don't have a lot of knowledge about gardening or where their food comes from.

"The students will be able to learn all aspects of gardening from planting, harvesting, water conservation, to food preparation and food hygiene."

School Principal Grace Dunlop said the garden would provide students with an incredible range of learning opportunities. "It will become integral to our curriculum in the areas of health, science and social science."

Kaleen Primary School Website: <http://www.kaleenps.act.edu.au/home>

Growing the Green Collar Economy

Skills and labour challenges in reducing our greenhouse emissions and national environmental footprint.

Dusseldorp Skills Forum and the Australian Conservation Foundation are pleased to introduce a significant new CSIRO report on the major skill and labour challenges involved in reducing our greenhouse emissions and national environmental footprint.

The report, released by DSF and the ACF, finds that:

- If Australia takes significant action to cut greenhouse gas emissions, national employment will still increase by between 2.6 million and 3.3 million over the next two decades.
- Jobs in sectors that are currently high carbon emitters, like transport, construction, agriculture, manufacturing and mining are forecast to grow strongly in the next decade.
- It will be essential to identify and provide the green skills needed by the 3.25 million workers in industries that currently have 'high environmental impacts'.

New approaches to education, training and job design will be needed to ensure we have the human capacity and skills to achieve the transition to a low carbon economy, and to take advantage of the economic opportunities that will emerge.

Read more at http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001EfBqkIEWgOqRnraW3JZGnN6LGx6tIPGggNo4QXSML59FRUST-Qxng7cIZo8Cs-8nItMysuqxo8i9P19sX8Te5ZRbQjzz7Vlq9ER_QNKfSrEWkU-JL0UhQCrbg-ljOMluCioFwoaQTY=

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FROG 2008

2008 to mark 'The Year of the Frog'

Patrick O'Driscoll, USA Today

Up to half of the world's 6,000 amphibian species are so threatened by disease, pollution and climate change that the globe's zoos and aquariums have declared 2008 "The Year of the Frog" to rally international support.

This effort casts light on the plight of frogs, toads, salamanders, newts and worm-like caecilians, an amphibian order found mostly in the tropics.

"Between one-third and one-half of those 6,000 species will go extinct in the wild in our lifetime," says Jeffrey Bonner, chairman of Amphibian Ark, a U.S.-based effort to raise \$50 million for the rescue of species from extinction. "Each time you lose a species it's like popping a rivet on an airplane. Who cares? If you lose too many rivets, the wing falls off."

Read more at http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2007-08-26-frogs_N.htm

Amphibian Ark

During 2008, AArk is leading zoos, botanical gardens and aquariums in a globally coordinated public awareness campaign "The Year of the Frog."

The main goal of this campaign is to generate public awareness and understanding of the amphibian extinction crisis which represents the greatest species conservation challenge in the history of humanity. The money raised from this global campaign will help fund initiatives such as training courses, technical guidance, taxon survival efforts, fostering partnerships, capacity building, and communication activities. All these activities will ensure sustainability of survival assurance populations of amphibians by creating a cash fund for this conservation work that will extend for beyond 2008.

Each institution that is a member of World Association of Zoos & Aquaria (WAZA) or any of the regional associations of zoos and aquariums, is invited to participate in the campaign by organizing zoo activities and amphibian displays, and/or using your websites, zoo graphics, education materials, and media releases. Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums play a very important role in this campaign since they can provide the ex-situ breeding grounds for the immediate conservation action so much needed in order to save amphibians.

Find out more on their website at: <http://www.amphibianark.org/yearofthefrog.htm>

Also the WASA web-page: <http://www.yearofthefrog.org/>

A Message from Sir David Attenborough

Almost everyone can recognise frogs and toads. They are those extraordinary vertebrate animals which change from egg to adult by undergoing metamorphosis. This remarkable process played a crucial part in these animals' pioneering invasion of the land. It demonstrates evolution compressed into just a few weeks and it sparks our imagination.

Today, amphibians can be found in enormous variety and occupy a wide range of water and land habitats - except for the oceans and the frozen Polar Regions. They are so familiar to most people that they have become part of the myths, legends, and folk tales of many cultures. And there is still much more for us to learn about them for new species are being discovered even today.

Yet their habitats are being destroyed at such a speed that now many species may disappear before we even discover that they exist.

Read more at

<http://www.amphibianark.org/Global%20InfoPack%20CD%20Aark/Media%20Kit/DavidAttenboroughLetter.pdf>

Zoos Victoria

Hundreds of zoos around the world are focusing on frogs this year, because right now the planet is facing what could be the largest mass extinction since the dinosaurs disappeared.

About one-third of all amphibian species are at risk of extinction, so we are facing a global amphibian crisis.

Frogs are extremely sensitive creatures, with permeable skins that can absorb toxins from both the air and water around them.

Frogs and other amphibians are also losing habitat, due to human expansion into previously wilderness area, and wetlands are being affected by climate change in some parts of the world.

A contagious fungal disease is also affecting population numbers, so a combination of factors is making amphibian survival a major challenge.

The World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA) has declared 2008 to be the International Year of the Frog so the hundreds of member zoos can provide information about frog research and conservation to their millions of visitors and their wider communities.

Zoos Victoria is offering a variety of programs this year, for school groups and other visitors, all about frogs. Further details here.

Read more at <http://www.zoo.org.au/Events/YOTF>

Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks & Aquaria

This association includes 25 member organisations across Australia and New Zealand.

Provides links to those organisations and their activities for the Year - also links to a range of materials, information kits, logos, posters etc.

Read more at <http://www.arazpa.org.au/Year-of-the-Frog/default.aspx>

Frogs Australia Network

Frogs Australia is a national network about:

- 1) Increasing the knowledge and awareness of Australian frogs and their conservation.
- 2) Linking groups and individuals interested in frogs across Australia.

- 3) Improving the sharing of information between science and community.
- 4) Generating a comprehensive database on the distribution and occurrence of Australian frogs.

Read more at <http://www.frogsaustralia.net.au/>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Association for Teacher Education in Europe Annual Conference

23-27 August 2008, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium

Teacher Education: Facing the Intercultural Dialogue

An intercultural dialogue can contribute towards that coexistence, promoting mutual respect and understanding, recognition of values and identities, but also discovering common and shared belongings.

Therefore, institutions providing initial and/or inservice teacher education should consider that they themselves become more and more embedded in this intercultural context, and that the personal development of their student teachers as well as their employability and professional functioning should be reconsidered consequently.

Building multilinguism into the curriculum, organizing staff and student exchange and participating in learning community based projects are only a few examples of approaches that could stimulate the intercultural dialogue.

Read more at <http://www.atee2008.be/>

Scottish Learning Festival

24-25 September, Glasgow, Scotland

Free to all teachers and educationalists, the Scottish Learning Festival 2008 is the largest annual conference and exhibition on the Scottish education calendar.

Now in its 9th year, the Scottish Learning Festival continues to cover key educational issues and initiatives, contribute to continuing professional development, share innovative practice for the classroom and showcase new teaching resources for the 21st century.

With 170 keynotes, spotlights and seminars, there's something for everyone.

Read more at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/slf/index.asp>

International Conference on Distance Education

24-26 November, University of the Caribbean, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Current Challenges of Virtual Learning

This conference is an opportunity to consolidate or to begin strong institutional relationships, discover new opportunities for cooperative work, and to learn about new practices and research in the field of education and technology.

It is a great occasion to exchange knowledge, experiences and views with different experts present at the meeting.

Experts in the field will meet and reflect on the main contemporary problems in Distance Education, and generate proposals oriented toward researchers, educators and administrators interested in our field.

The aim is to gather knowledge, experiences, opinions and positions of experts in the field, and discuss the following sub-themes:

- * Distance Education as an element of Social Inclusion and Civic Participation
- * Research and Development in Distance Education
- * Construction and Knowledge Management through Distance Education
- * Contributions from Distance Education in their different fields of application

Read more at

<http://www.icde.org/oslo/icde.nsf/id/05C3211E27B0737DC12573E100405E7F?OpenDocument>

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REMINDERS

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 - Gold Coast -

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

9-11 July - Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference - Melbourne -

<http://www.aifsconference08.com/>

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

10-12 July - Outdoor Education Association of Queensland State Conference - Rockhampton -

<http://www.oeaq.org.au/events.asp>

11-12 July - Working in Partnership Conference - Hobart - <http://www.workinginpartnerships.com.au/>

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>

18-20 August - Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies Conference - Sydney - <http://www.acwa08.com/>

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/>

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.ancel.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/O1_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/>

8-12 December - International Consortium for Experiential Learning - Sydney - <http://www.education.uts.edu.au/icel/index.html>

4-7 January - Hawaii International Conference on Education - Honolulu, USA - <http://www.hiceducation.org/>

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

15-18 April - International Outdoor Education Research Conference - Beechworth, Vic - http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/research_conf_2009.htm
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RESOURCES

Learning for Leadership

Learning for Leadership by Michelle Anderson and Christine Cawsey, published by ACER Press was launched by ACER's chief executive Professor Geoff Masters on 12 May.

Part of the Educational Leadership Dialogues series, Learning for Leadership explores how school principals can initiate and maintain programs and practices to develop the leadership potential of teachers in their school.

It explains the theory behind the concept of educational leadership and then it tells the story of a school much admired for its leadership development. Together, the research and the case study present a strong argument for the introduction of similar programs in schools throughout Australia.

The book can be purchased through ACER Press online at www.acerpress.com.au or contact customer service on 1800 338 402 or via email on sales@acer.edu.au

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 hotline@edex.com.au

Fundraising Directory - www.fundraisingdirectory.com.au Also: www.fetesandfestivals.com.au

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

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