

# AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

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## HOT TOPIC: LITERACY AND NUMERACY

### National Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Results Released

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, 19 September 2008*

The 2008 National Literacy and Numeracy Assessment results released today show that the majority of Australian students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are reaching the national minimum standard for their year level. However, the results indicate more needs to be done to ensure all Australian students are getting the basics right.

These results set a new benchmark in Australia for understanding student achievement. In May this year, for the first time, all Australian school students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 undertook the same assessment in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and numeracy.

The results show that more than 90 per cent of students in Australia are performing at or above the national minimum standard in each of the key areas and around 80 per cent of students achieved above the minimum standard.

The 2008 National Literacy and Numeracy Assessment results provide an unprecedented level of information for parents, teachers, schools on individual student performance. It provides a national picture for years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the crucial areas of literacy and numeracy, showing the full range of student achievement.

Read more at <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/>

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## Joint Press Conference

*Julia Gillard, Verity Firth, Jane Lomax-Smith, Bronwyn Pike, Lisa Singh, Rod Welford, 12 September 2008*

JULIA GILLARD: Well it's a great pleasure to join my education ministerial colleagues for the Ministerial Council today and for the important release of the NAPLAN results. I am joined today by the ministers for education from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and we are joined by the parliamentary secretary from Tasmania, so it's great to be here with them.

Of course, 2008 marks a new stage in the development of Australian education. 2008 was the first year that students around the country sat down and did the same tests - the same tests to measure how they're going in reading and writing, spelling, grammar and in numeracy. Tests were done by students in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9.

And from Monday on, Australian parents will get a report on how their child went in those tests. The report shows how their child is achieving against ten bands of achievement - bands of achievement that go across the grades - grades 3, 5, 7 and 9. Parents will be easily able to identify from the report how their child has gone compared with the average result of students, and also how their child has gone compared with the minimum standard. This information is going to be very important to Australian parents; the first time ever that they've had a nationally consistent outcome to look at and to see how their child fits in.

It's also vital information for teachers. It will enable teachers in classrooms around Australia to identify the children who are going well, but also, very importantly, the children who are going to need an extra helping hand in order to reach the minimum standard required to make sure that they progress through the rest of their schooling with the skills that they need.

Read more at <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/>

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## **Remote-area pupils weakest in school skills tests**

*Justine Ferrari, The Australian, September 13, 2008*

ABOUT one in four Year 9 students are reading at the level of the brightest 20 per cent of children in Year 3.

The results of the first nationally consistent literacy and numeracy tests, released yesterday, reveal the spread of achievement across the school years for the first time, showing an increasing proportion of children fall behind as they progress through school.

About one in 10 students nationally fail to meet minimum literacy standards for their year and 5 per cent fail to meet minimum standards in maths, with only students in NSW, Victoria and the ACT performing above the national average in all areas.

The Northern Territory, with its large population of indigenous and remote students, continues to lag far behind the rest of the nation, with about one-third of its students failing to achieve minimum literacy and numeracy standards. While the majority of students in Western Australia and Queensland met minimum standards, the states' results fell below the national average in all the areas tested.

Students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat uniform tests in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and maths in May, with the state-by-state results released yesterday by the nation's education ministers meeting in Melbourne. Previously, each state and territory set its own tests and the results were moderated to calculate national averages against a minimum benchmark. Students were assessed as either above or below the benchmark, with no assessment of the different levels of proficiency.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24338192-2702,00.html>

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## **HOT TOPIC: DIRECTIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING**

### **Draft National Declaration Released for Public Comment**

*Suzanne Northcott, DEEWR, 15 September 2008*

On Monday, MCEETYA released a draft National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians for public comment. See the message from Premier Bartlett, MCEETYA Chair, and the draft Declaration, on the MCEETYA website at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/natgoals,24767.html>.

The draft Declaration sets goals that seek to ensure that all Australian school students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in society and employment in a globalised economy.

The new Declaration will be released on 5 December 2008 at the Biennial National Forum in Melbourne and will replace the current Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century of 1999, available at [http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/adelaide\\_declaration,11576.html](http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/adelaide_declaration,11576.html).

The draft has been developed by a MCEETYA working group consisting of representatives from each of the Commonwealth, state and territory education departments, the National Catholic Education Commission, Independent Schools Council of Australia and National Curriculum Board. It is based on the findings of the review of the Adelaide Declaration conducted by the Council for the Australian Federation in 2006-07 and feedback received during consultations in each jurisdiction and sector in July-August.

The Declaration complements the COAG framework and agenda without duplicating its objectives and outcomes and is a powerful document to focus the activity of the education community over the next decade.

It will be supported by an Action Plan that outlines the activities governments will undertake to support achievement of the goals. It is intended to be reviewed and renewed regularly. The Action Plan has not yet been drafted.

The Declaration is open for comment until 3 October. I encourage you to familiarise yourself with the draft and to make any comments or suggestions via a submission through the MCEETYA website at the above address.

See also Minister Gillard's media release at <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/Speakupforeducationinthe21stcentury.htm>

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## **HOT TOPIC: OECD REPORT CARD**

### **Report shows 'Howard's education legacy'**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP 10 September 2008*

JA report that shows Australia's education spending sits at 19th out of 28 nations is the Howard government's fault, Education Minister Julia Gillard says.

Ms Gillard said the new OECD Education at a Glance report, released overnight, showed Australia's education standards have slipped dramatically behind the rest of the world.

"This is an international report card on the education legacy of the Howard government," Ms Gillard said.

The information contained in the report was gathered in 2005.

Spending on early childhood education showed Australia had "fallen to the back of the class" and not enough is being invested in vocational education and training, in schools and in universities, she said.

Ms Gillard believes it's a clear sign the Rudd government's much-hyped "education revolution" is essential.

Read more at <http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/Report-shows-Howards-education-legacy-JC7KX?OpenDocument&src=is>

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## **Education spending falls way behind**

*Alex Tibbitts and Mark Davis, Sydney Morning Herald, September 10, 2008*

AUSTRALIA'S government spending on public education is the second lowest among developed nations and students are bearing the brunt of the shortfall, a new report has found.

The OECD's Education at a Glance, published in Paris yesterday, notes Australia's small secondary school class sizes, but says its teachers have to work longer hours and more weeks a year than the average in developed nations. And experienced teachers here are paid significantly less than the average.

It shows the rate of tertiary education in the OECD has increased by nearly 50 per cent in 10 years, and Scandinavian countries accept that high public spending on education is an investment in society. But Australia has lifted its tertiary numbers by making students pay a larger share of the cost through HECS and full-fee courses.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/education-spending-falls-way-behind/2008/09/09/1220857547462.html>

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## **Julia Gillard interview**

*9am With David & Kim, Channel 10, Wednesday, 10 September 2008*

DAVID REYNE: Now can we start with the OECD figures that came out last night. Now they are, let me get this right, the 2008 Education at a Glance Report, which revealed that Australia's spending on education, public education, all levels of education, was below the OECD amount. Now you've said that that is long ... there were some longstanding areas of underperformance and underinvestment. What are they and how are we going to fix that?

JULIA GILLARD: Well it's certainly a very revealing report. It came out last night, but it's actually 2005 figures.

DAVID REYNE: Oh, so it's not your problem.

JULIA GILLARD: Well, it's our problem to fix it. Because what the 2005 figures clearly show is that we're spending less than the OECD average on education. We're coming 19th out of 28 countries - that's not good.

DAVID REYNE: That's terrible.

JULIA GILLARD: And we're particularly down the bottom of the class when it comes to investment in early childhood, those vital early learning years. And we're underperforming when comes to vocational education and training and higher education. So we've got to do more right across the board. I mean what this OECD report is telling us is that we do need an education revolution. We've starting on that revolution with more investments in early childhood, more investments in vocational education and

training and universities, and we're working on a lot more resources for schools, particularly in discussions with our state and territory colleagues.

KIM WATKINS: What's this going to cost? How much is the Government spending at the moment? Because, bearing in mind, we're so far behind already. I mean, really the amount of money involved here is extraordinary.

JULIA GILLARD: It is extraordinary. The May Budget saw an extra \$19 billion into education; \$11 billion of it into our Education Investment Fund, which is about new investments in capital. We're spending a lot more on computers in schools - \$1.2 billion; a lot on Trades Training Centres - \$2.5 billion. But we need to do more, we know that. We've already allocated more than half a billion for early childhood education and we're interested in better investments in schools, greater investments in schools. We want every kid to have the chance at a great education and on the world rankings now, we know we're slipping behind.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/NAPLANOECDReportteacherqualityagepension.htm>

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## **ACSSO NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008**

### **Parents and Schools as Partners**

*20-21 October, Brisbane QLD*

Speaker Profile: Leonie Trimper



Leonie Trimper is another ACSSO Conference presenter who has developed a strong media profile, both as a spokesperson for the Australian Primary Principals Association when it releases reports, papers and statements coming from its own research, and also when asked to comment on other ongoing developments in education policy and practice.

Leonie is an active, organised and passionate advocate for the APPA, with recent publications including their just-released Position Paper on current educational issues and also their Charter on Primary Schooling, "a strategic, thoughtful and forward-looking statement of the purposes of primary schooling".

Leonie Trimper began her career as a junior primary teacher and deputy principal in South Australia and brings to her role 25 years' experience as a primary school principal, including 10 years as a Junior Primary principal (R-2) and 15 years as a Primary principal (R-7). All her experiences have been in very disadvantaged schools.

She was the first principal in Australia to be invited onto the Curriculum Development Council by the then Education Minister; and in 1998 she was elected President of the South Australian Primary Principals Association and remained there unopposed for seven years.

In 2004 Leonie was elected as President of the Australian Primary Principals Association and is currently in her second two year term.

Leonie will be a key participant in Session One of the ACSSO National Conference: A National Curriculum - What does it involve?

Principals, administrators, education researchers, teachers and parents - from all sectors of education, right across the country - this conference is for you! As in previous years, special rates are available for parents representing school communities.

Read more at <http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf08/>

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## **STUDENT RETENTION**

### ***Prime Minister Kevin Rudd - Interview 9 September 2008***

PM: What we've been talking about is school retention. And how do you best make sure that our young people are encouraged to stay on to year 12 equivalent. Now, around Australia right now we have as an average retention rate through to year 12 something like about 75 per cent.

The Government has committed to raising that to 90 per cent by the year 2020.

And the reason is year 12 equivalent retention at school is the best predictor of a young person's life opportunities. The best predictor of their employment opportunities. The best predictor of how their subsequent educational opportunities and training opportunities unfold as well.

So that's the challenge.

And what we've seen here are very practical examples of what the teachers are doing cooperatively with the kids here to encourage a lift in year 12 retention.

Things like the homework club. Things like active engagement with traineeships and apprenticeships. Things like active engagement with the local PCYC. Things like active engagement with one-on-one work with some of the kids who might be finding basic reading and writing and numeracy tasks a little bit tough.

The thing is every school is different. All the challenges are different. And every young person brings their own unique story to the school.

Read more at [http://www.pm.gov.au/media/interview/2008/interview\\_0465.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au/media/interview/2008/interview_0465.cfm)

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### **Early Learning Help for Disadvantaged Children**

#### ***Hon Kevin Rudd MP & Hon Maxine McKew MP, 16 September 2008***

Special Rudd Government programs offering educational support to very young children from disadvantaged families will be established in every Australian State and Territory from next year. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Childcare, Maxine McKew, today announced 13 new locations for the Home Interaction Program (HIP) for parents and children.

As part of the Education Revolution and in partnership with the Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, this program offers home tutoring, books and educational resources to disadvantaged children aged between three and five years.

The Rudd Government has committed to \$32.5 million over five years to roll out the program nationally.

Mr. Rudd said that parents played a crucial role in their child's education. "This program helps parents to provide their children with the skills and confidence to start school with a positive attitude to learning," Mr. Rudd said.

The 2007 National Report on Schooling in Australia Preliminary Paper indicates that by Year 3, children from families where neither parent has worked for twelve months or more, do considerably worse against reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks.

By Year 3:

- 88.5% of children from jobless families are meeting reading benchmarks compared with 93.4% of all students;
- 87.2% from jobless families are meeting writing benchmarks compared with 93% of all students; and
- 87.3% from jobless families are meeting numeracy benchmarks compared with 93.2% of all students.

"To close this gap, the Rudd Government is determined to identify and target additional resources to parents, children and schools where there is underachievement and disadvantage," Ms McKew said.

Home Interaction Programs will be established in 50 communities, supporting 3,000 families. HIP already operates at nine locations, six in Victoria; two in Tasmania; and one in New South Wales.

Read more at [http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2008/media\\_release\\_0476.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2008/media_release_0476.cfm).

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## **AROUND THE STATES AND TERRITORIES**

### **ACT: Territory loses top education mandarin**

*Emma Macdonald, Canberra Times, 9/09/2008*

The ACT has lost one of its most senior public servants with the chief executive of the Department of Education and Training, Michele Bruniges, to take up a new Commonwealth position. ACT Education Minister Andrew Barr yesterday announced Dr Bruniges would become the deputy secretary for early childhood and child care within the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Dr Bruniges' resignation comes at a difficult time for the department with the retirement this week of executive director Craig Curry. Both Dr Bruniges and Mr. Curry were considered great educational leaders and assets to the ACT Government, with a vast store of corporate knowledge between them. Mr. Curry, who was an expert in special education, retires after a long career of public service, the last seven years of which he has been with the department.

Read more at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/territory-loses-top-education-mandarin/1267034.aspx>

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### **ACT: Helping high school students move into jobs or further education**

*Andrew Barr MLA Minister for Education & Training*

Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr today launched new guidelines to help ensure ACT high school students move on to further study or a job after completing school.

The 2008 Vocational Education and Training Guidelines for ACT Public High Schools have been developed by the ACT Labor Government in cooperation with the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Education Union, the Boards of Secondary Schools Studies and vocational education and training teachers.

"This guide is all about tackling the local impacts of the national skills shortage and ensuring ACT public school students have the opportunities to move into further study or skilled work when they finish school," Mr. Barr said.

"Currently around 90 percent of year 10 students go onto years 11 and 12, the highest retention rate in Australia. However there is a group of students who leave school without going onto further education or training and we need to continue to work to ensure these students can go on to satisfying

careers and to ensure ACT businesses have access to the skilled people they will need to continue to succeed. "

Read more at <http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.php?v=7359&m=49>

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## **NSW: New Education Minister Firth pledges laptop start**

*Fran Foo, The Australian, September 16, 2008*

NEWLY appointed NSW Education Minister Verity Firth will put the wheels in motion from next month to start spending the state's \$56 million National Secondary School Computer Fund allocation. First-round funding was allocated in June but NSW, the largest recipient, has yet to spend a cent due to dissatisfaction with the federal Government.

NSW has said in the past that it would spend the money on laptops only.

The state was expected to issue expressions of interest for the laptop tender as soon as negotiations with the commonwealth for additional funding to cover installation and maintenance costs for the computers were finalised by the end of the year.

But Ms Firth believes an agreement can be reached next month.

"The negotiations are ongoing (but) it is anticipated that the October COAG (Commonwealth of Australian Governments) meeting will reach (an) agreement," Ms Firth said.

Former NSW Treasurer Michael Costa had threatened to stymie Kevin Rudd's so-called education revolution unless the state received an additional \$245 million over four years.

The laptop business is one of the most widely anticipated state government contracts, with vendors Hewlett-Packard, Dell, Lenovo, Asus, Acer and Toshiba, among others, gearing up for first dibs.

All up, the NSSC fund is worth \$1.2 billion over five years.

Ms Firth replaced John Della Bosca, who moved to the health portfolio, in a recent shake-up of the NSW Cabinet.

Read more at <http://www.australianit.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24351391-15306,00.html>

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## **QLD: School sex club run by small boys, says Brisbane dad**

*Des Houghton, Courier Mail, September 13, 2008 12:00am*

THREE boys aged six ran a sex club at a Brisbane state school demanding and receiving sexual favours from Year 2 classmates, a father has claimed. The outraged father alleged yesterday the school did not bother to tell him for more than a week that his son was involved .

He spoke out as similar stories emerged at state schools on the Gold and Sunshine coasts and in Cairns, which indicate the sexual abuse of young students by other school children appears rampant.

The Brisbane father said his son was one of a trio seen performing various sex acts in a toilet block. "The teachers interrogated the kids and made them write out statements without our consent," he said. "The boys wrote down that they belonged to a sex club.

"The teachers didn't make contact for six days. They sent me an email and said, 'Sorry, we've been busy'.

"We believe older children were also involved." The father added "I want a full police investigation. I was on the phone for hours being fobbed off by the Education Department."

His revelations came as uproar was sparked by yesterday's Courier-Mail story, which told how the sexual assault of a seven-year-old girl by a young classmate was dismissed as a "childhood experiment" by a country school principal.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,24336376-952,00.html>

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## **SA: Schools held develop new curriculum materials on Aboriginal culture**

*Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP, Minister for Education & Children's Services*

South Australia will introduce new curriculum materials next year to give school students across South Australia a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The new materials are part of a new Aboriginal cultural studies curriculum, which will expand on the Aboriginal culture studies already provided to students through studies in society and environment.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith today congratulated 10 State schools helping to develop and trial a new Aboriginal cultural studies curriculum.

"We want students in all of our schools to understand Aboriginal culture and its significant contributions to the past, present and future of our State," Dr Lomax-Smith says. "These schools are taking a frontline role in the development and trialling of new Aboriginal cultural studies educational programs. Once completed, the materials will be offered to schools across the State to be used in lessons with students.

Read more at <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=3655&page=1>

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## **SA: State slug to erode federal computer grants, says opposition**

*ABC News, Sep 11, 2008*

The Opposition says South Australian public schools will lose nearly \$300 in fees from each \$1,000 federal grant to buy new computers.

Opposition education spokesman David Pisoni says the SA Government will take \$250 per computer for licensing fees and another \$40 as a transaction fee. He says the SA Government had told him in the past that the computers were replacements and existing licences would cover the costs.

Mr. Pisoni says private schools will not have to pay the fees, so will get the total grant. "It's obvious to me that the private schools have been able to negotiate a much better deal for their students," he said.

"It's obvious to me that [Education Minister] Jane Lomax-Smith has little interest in seeing this program implemented."

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/11/2361523.htm>

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## **SA: Lunchbox police make kids go hungry**

*Michael Owen, The Australian, September 11, 2008*

RULES on junk food in schools will be sent to all principals in South Australia this week amid parent anger over teachers inspecting children's lunchboxes and confiscating items viewed as unhealthy.

Education Department chief executive Chris Robinson told The Advertiser last night guidelines would be reissued to all state schools and preschools.

This follows reports yesterday of several schools ordering teachers to search children's lunchboxes for "inappropriate" food. In some cases, confiscated items were not replaced, leaving children to go hungry.

Mr. Robinson said the department's ban on junk food under the Right Bite strategy launched last year by Health Minister John Hill and Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith, applied only to food and drinks sold in school canteens and vending machines. Birthday cakes and food or drinks from home are not covered by the ban.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24327111-5006787,00.html>

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## **TAS: Call to help autistic students**

*ABC News, Sep 15, 2008*

An autism action group is concerned that autistic children are being forgotten in the debate on truancy.

The Department of Health and Human Services has been accused of giving up on a 14-year-old foster child by labelling her a "school refuser" in an email to her parents.

The foster parents had contacted the department for advice because their daughter had not been attending school.

Roger Law from Action for Tasmanian Autistic Children says not enough attention is being paid to the integration of intellectually disabled children in schools.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/15/2364501.htm>

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## **VIC: Anger over scrapping of walking school bus funding**

*Julie McNamara September 15th, 2008*

A DECISION to cease funding for the Walking School Bus Program has been slammed by Liberal member for Western Victoria John Vogels. Mr. Vogels said cuts to funding placed the entire program in jeopardy.

"It is a classic example of Government cost-shifting to local government," Mr. Vogels said. "The Brumby Government, under the imprimatur of VicHealth, sets up a program like the walking school bus program, it is very successful and popular and then, bingo - the local council is forced to pick up the tab," he said.

Mr. Vogels said the funding was used to buy incentives for students participating in the program such as fruit, breakfast and prizes. "The overall strategic objectives of the service are to increase health and reduce childhood obesity and provide active transport with healthy food choices and healthy breakfast incentives promoted as an incentive," he said.

Read more at [http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2008/09/15/18253\\_news.html](http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2008/09/15/18253_news.html)

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## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

### *Preschoolers 'seeking perfect body'*

Tamara McLean, September 15, 2008 (AAP)

YOUNG children are picking up a potentially dangerous message that fat is bad and muscle is good before they have even started school, a study of Australian preschoolers has revealed.

Parents and teachers of preschoolers are making little girls weight conscious and little boys want more muscle, according to the research showing kids form an image of "perfect body" ideals very early in life.

The study of four-year-olds by Melbourne researchers has found adults are unintentionally sending these negative messages in how they talk about their own and the child's body, said lead researcher Marita McCabe, a professor of psychology at Deakin University.

"Even at this young age, mothers are already communicating different messages to boys and girls," Professor McCabe said.

The study of 53 children across four kindergartens is the first to focus on the socio-cultural influences on body image among preschoolers.

Prof McCabe said the development of eating disorders was one of the dangers of parents and teachers communicating messages about "ideal" bodies to boys and girls.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,24349158-2,00.html>

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## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH 2008

### **The joke that grew into a school forest**

Kerry Coleman, Sydney Morning Herald, September 10, 2008

MOST Sydney schools have vegetable patches, rainwater tanks or solar panels, but the students of Ascham School are sure they are the only ones with their own eco-forest.

The brainchild of a year 11 student, Sarah Cohn, the forest, hopefully, will eventually be big enough to completely offset the Edgecliff school's carbon use. It is ambitious and innovative, but it started out as just another paper recycling campaign.

"After I saw the movie An Inconvenient Truth, I started looking at Ascham and how un-environmentally-friendly it was," Sarah says. "As a student, the thing we notice most is how much paper the school uses, so I thought that was going to be one of the main problems." But closer investigation, and a meeting with the school bursar, Bill Apter, proved otherwise. "Mr. Apter showed me a pie chart of where our usage actually was and the two biggest areas were electricity and gas."

To reduce expenditure in these areas, the pair successfully campaigned to have the temperature of the school swimming pool reduced by a few degrees, dramatically reducing gas consumption. It was a good result, but they wanted more. "I had calculated the school's carbon footprint and I jokingly said that if we turned the whole school into a forest, then we could offset all our carbon emissions," Apter says.

But Sarah took the suggestion seriously. A few weeks later she had another meeting with Apter.

"She said she'd found a boarding family who were willing to let us plant trees on a section of their property," Apter says. "She handed me a plan outlining how we were going to plant all the necessary

trees, and then she set up a meeting with all the relevant parties where she allocated us all roles to get it all happening." In the July school holidays, Sarah and five other year 11 girls went to the Spring Ridge site to build a fence to protect the new forest from livestock. Later this month they will return to plant the first 500 trees.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/environment/funny-about-that--the-joke-that-grew-into-a-school-forest/2008/09/09/1220857547552.html>

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## **Greenfest 2008: 10-12 October Brisbane**

Greenfest is Brisbane's free green festival and place for full community participation in the issues around climate change and global warming

View presentation by Dr Jane Goodall, who will speak at the opening of and become the patron of Greenfest green education. View SEED International's locally produced film Think Global Eat Local.

All exhibitions, speakers and performances are free. Participation by new and renewed generations together is a formula for resonance and by just turning up you will have taken action for sharing a greener world. Greenfest offers real benefits to schools and universities and is committed to working towards conserving Australia's natural habitat.

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

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## **INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FROG 2008**

### **Working to save endangered frogs species from a deadly fungus:**

#### ***2008 Eureka Prize Finalist: Michelle Stockwell***

Michelle is currently working in a rehabilitated wetland habitat in the Hunter Region of NSW, testing to see if ponds with artificially manipulated salt concentrations actually reduce chytrid infection rates on frogs in the wild. This study should also show the effects salt treatment has on the survival and long term fitness of frogs, and the rest of the environment. If all goes well, the next step would be to re-introduce bell frogs to this site.

Frog populations around the world have been decimated by the amphibian chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. The chytrid fungus attacks the skin of adult frogs, causing disease. The frog becomes sick, unable to eat or move and dies within a few days. The fungus has been held responsible for the decline or extinction of up to 200 frog species, which is the largest loss of biodiversity in recent history.

Because frogs and the fungus live a large part of their life in water, this seemed an obvious place to start investigations. Michelle collected water from ponds where the frogs had disappeared and from sites where the frogs still live. Michelle inoculated both water samples with the chytrid fungus and found that its growth rate was significantly lower in the water sample taken from the pond where the frogs still live. This suggested that there may be something in the water that inhibits the fungus growth.

Water quality testing and heavy metal analysis found that there was a significant relationship between the concentration of salt and chytrid growth: the higher the salt concentration, the lower the chytrid growth. Michelle found that salt concentrations greater than 1ppt (part per thousand) inhibits the growth rate of the chytrid fungus and its ability to infect frogs.

Michelle's research has found a likely way of controlling chytrid fungus. By manipulating the salt concentrations in water bodies, fungal infections could be prevented and frog populations could be

saved. Michelle's discovery could also be used to reintroduce frog species back into areas from which they have disappeared.

Read more at <http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/index.cfm?objectID=A7DF0951-A463-055F-0518AFF3CFA597F5&view=pca&displayEntry=true>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **"Hope for Nature" - Dr Jane Goodall's Australian Lecture Tour**

***1-12 October 2008***

Dr Jane Goodall PHD DBE, world renowned primatologist, humanitarian and UN Messenger of Peace will share stories from her latest book called Hope for Nature.

Dr Jane will highlight flora and fauna that are being saved from extinction around the world. She will also invite local heroes and scientists who are saving our native flora and fauna from extinction to speak.

These events will also promote the work of the Jane Goodall Institute in Australia, and the rapidly growing network of young people and communities working together under the banner of her international "Roots & Shoots" program which promotes community interaction and engagement.

There will be a Roots & Shoots component at each State's lecture, to involve the children that have been doing their own projects on the environment, involving their community and its conservation

Read more at Jane Goodall Institute Australia Website at <http://www.janegoodall.org.au/attachments/db/jgd/3.pdf>

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### **Anti-Poverty Week:**

**12-18 October 2008**

Our aim is to encourage as many schools as possible to do something during Anti-Poverty Week.

- use your community networks to encourage organizations who work with poverty (local welfare agencies, international aid or development organisations, etc) to think about focusing on schools during the week, through
  - o school- linked or school-based projects;
  - o speaking to classes or
  - o conducting information sessions at school assemblies;
  
- contact other schools in your area and encourage them to participate with your community; or find out what they are doing and how you can coordinate your activities with them

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

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### **Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) National Conference**

**Let Sydney Rock Your World**

***28-31 October, Sofitel Wentworth Hotel, Sydney***

The program has been designed to encourage principals to reflect upon previous professional learning experiences and refocus their energies to promote growth within their school communities. The conference offers:

- a variety of guest speakers;
- a school tour program featuring city schools from the Catholic, Government and Independent sectors;
- the APPA AGM and business sessions;
- affiliate association (ACPPA, AGPPA, JSHAA and NSWPPA) business sessions;
- social functions including the opportunity to Rock It Up! at the Dinner on Friday 31 October.

The conference is limited to financial members of APPA through their membership of an affiliated association (ACPPA, AGPPA, JSHAA and NSWPPA).

Read more at [http://nswppa.nicheit.com.au/APPA\\_08/](http://nswppa.nicheit.com.au/APPA_08/)

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## Music - Count Us In

*23 October 2008*

We are well on the way to breaking last year's participation record, with almost 750 schools registered for Australia's biggest ever school music event "Music. Count Us In.

You can see the current list of registered schools at: <http://www.musiccountusin.org.au>

You can also

- download the professional development kit for primary generalist teachers
- order a version of the song in braille
- watch a short video of kids at Gordon Primary School learning the song and
- download sheet music of the song for just about any conceivable school music scenario

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

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## REMINDERS

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/>

24-25 September - Scottish Learning Festival - Glasgow, Scotland - <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/slf/index.asp>

29 September-2 October - 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](http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=47)

1-3 October - Biennial National Conference, Association of Women Educators - Cairns -

<http://www.awe.asn.au/conferences/cairns08/index.php>

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

8-9 October - School Marketing Conference - Perth - <http://www.marketingschools.net/>

12-18 October - Anti-Poverty Week - <http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au/>

16-18 October - Learning Democracy by Doing - Toronto, Canada - <http://tlc.oise.utoronto.ca/wordpress/conferences/october2008>

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>

10-11 November - Curriculum Corporation Conference 2008 - Melbourne - <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/conference/2008/>

17-19 November - International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation - Madrid, Spain - <http://www.iated.org/iceri2008/>

24-26 November - International Conference on Distance Education - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic - <http://www.icde.org/oslo/icde.nsf/id/05C3211E27B0737DC12573E100405E7F?OpenDocument>

25-28 November - Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future - Geneva, Switzerland - <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/ice.html>

30 November-4 December - Australian Association for Research in Education International Education Conference - Brisbane - <http://www.aare.edu.au/conf2008/index.htm>

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](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/research_conf_2009.htm)

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## RESOURCES

### The Asia Scope and Sequence for The Arts

#### *Professional Learning Workshop and units of work*

The **Asia Scope and Sequence for The Arts** highlights key studies of Asia concepts and content that can be incorporated into the P-10 curriculum.

A professional Learning program focusing on how to make the most of this rich resource is now available free of charge for download on the AEF website.

[http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public\\_html/downloadable\\_materials.htm](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public_html/downloadable_materials.htm)

Ten units of work have been written to support the use of the Asia Scope and Sequence for The Arts.

They provide teachers with a range of practical and exemplary activity types which teachers can use as is or build on. There are 5 Primary English units and 5 Secondary English units.

Find these at: [http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public\\_html/scope\\_sequence.htm](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public_html/scope_sequence.htm)

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## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:hotline@edex.com.au)

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

Drug Awareness Website - [www.drugawareness.com.au/](http://www.drugawareness.com.au/)

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## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- **Australian Education Digest** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- **International News Roundup** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- **Values Education** : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Languages Education** : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Ensemble - Music Education** : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Public Education Voice** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)
- **Family School Partners** : [http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page\\_id=6](http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6) (quarterly)

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