

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Number 34, 23 September 2008

Having trouble reading this email? Read it on the web at <http://www.acsso.org.au/AED080923.pdf>
Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

=====

- [Hot Topic: Funding - Schools Assistance Bill to be Introduced](#)
- [Hot Topic: Remunerating Teachers - Teacher overhaul stresses standards for pay rises](#)
- [ACSSO National Conference 2008: Speaker Profile - Kathe Kirby](#)
- [Religion in Schools: Secular schools of thought tainted](#)
- [Teaching Thinking: New worlds for thought](#)
- [Family-School Partnerships](#) (2 items)
- [Indigenous Education](#) (3 items)
- [Research: X, Y and Z: Research charts education across three generations](#)
- [Tertiary Education: Australian Higher Education - What the Public Thinks](#)
- [Vocational Education & Training: VET provides pathways to work](#)
- [Health & Well-being](#) (2 items)
- [Resources: Parenting in Practice reviewed](#)
- [Around the States & Territories](#) (12 items)
- [Conferences & Events](#) (2 items)
- [Reminders](#)
- [Resource Listings](#)
- [ACSSO Email Newsletters](#)

=====

HOT TOPIC: FUNDING

Schools Assistance Bill to be Introduced

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 23 September, 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard will tomorrow introduce the Schools Assistance Bill 2008 into the Parliament which will deliver key elements of the Rudd Government's school reform agenda to non-government schools.

The Schools Assistance Bill will introduce new measures to help close the gap in educational attainment for Indigenous students and new transparency measures to ensure all Australian kids are getting a quality education.

The Schools Assistance Bill will deliver on the Rudd Government's commitment to ensure remote and very remote schools with a large number of Indigenous students receive the maximum amount of funding available under the non-government school funding model.

The Schools Assistance Bill will also ensure that the indexation and remoteness classifications of Indigenous specific education programs are aligned with mainstream indexation rather than at a lesser rate.

The Rudd Government is currently in discussions with State and Territory, Independent and Catholic school systems about the next quadrennial funding agreement which will outline funding arrangements for all schools.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

=====

HOT TOPIC: REMUNERATING TEACHERS

Teacher overhaul stresses standards for pay rises

Justine Ferrari, The Australian, September 18, 2008

TEACHERS would qualify for pay rises only after meeting performance standards under an overhaul of the profession's salary system recommended in a federal government report.

The report, obtained by The Australian, recommends a comprehensive restructure of the way teachers are paid that would end the system of awarding pay rises based on length of service.

It outlines a model of performance pay that restructures the pay scale into bands reached by performance thresholds, with a level for accomplished teachers at the top. At present, teachers are paid according to an incremental scale that rises with years of service and reaches the maximum wage in about eight years, after which they must enter administrative or leadership positions to gain any further salary increase.

The report will be considered as part of deliberations by the Rudd Government, and state and territory governments, over ways to improve teacher quality and reward good teachers.

The productivity working group of the Council of Australian Governments, chaired by federal Education Minister Julia Gillard, is developing a national partnership with the states on ways to improve teacher quality, including performance pay.

The report -- Rewarding Quality Teaching, by Perth-based international management consultants Gerard Daniels -- was commissioned by the former federal minister Julie Bishop.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24362433-601,00.html>

[< top >](#)

=====

ACSSO NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008

Parents and Schools as Partners

20-21 October, Brisbane QLD



Speaker profile: Kathe Kirby

As Executive Director of the **Asia Education Foundation** and Asialink at the University of Melbourne - Australia's largest Asia-Australia Institute - Kathe Kirby is better qualified than most to comment on what needs to be done within the education system to enhance our engagement with Asia.

Kathe has a long background in education having worked as a secondary school teacher, university lecturer in education and as a senior policy officer in the

Department of Education, Victoria, prior to joining Asialink in 1993 to run the Asia Education Foundation (AEF).

The AEF is a national strategy to lead and promote the studies of the countries of Asia in Australian school curriculum. Kathe's expertise focuses on leading change and innovation in education.

Over her career she has worked at the cutting edge of student focused learning, the use of ICT in schools and vocational education. In 2001 Kathe was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate studies of Asia in schools in the US, UK, Japan and Korea.

The work of the AEF has been recognised internationally as world's best practice in developing curriculum that prepares children for an interconnected world in which the Asian region will increasingly play a central role. In 2007, Kathe was nominated as an education finalist in the The Bulletin's Smart 100.

Kathe will be a key participant in Session One of the ACSSO National Conference: Towards a National Curriculum.

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 a school communities.

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

[< top >](#)

Asia studies key to the future

Kathe Kirby, 21 July 2008

Kevin Rudd scored a great public relations coup late last year. As opposition leader, he broke into fluent Mandarin with China's President Hu Jintao, influenced a \$45 billion natural gas deal in the process and vastly affected international perceptions of Australia as a constructive neighbour in Asia.

It was a powerful illustration of the 21st Century interactions Australia needs if it is to thrive.

The question is – are our school kids prepared for Asian engagement? The answer? Not really!

By 2040, when today's five-year-olds will be at the peak of their careers, China and India are expected to dominate the world economy.

India is Australia's fastest-growing source of international students. Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, is on our doorstep. Japan's economic and cultural influence remains formidable.

By 2020 a quarter of the world's population will be younger than 25 and live in Asia. They will be our children's contemporaries – their business partners, workmates, bosses and customers. If we play our security and social cohesion cards right, they will also be their friends.

Yet half our schools teach little or nothing about Asia. Less than a quarter of students have a chance to learn an Asian language and only 5.8% learn one at Year 12.

Read more at <http://www.languageseducation.com/kirby080721.pdf>

[< top >](#)

=====

RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

Secular schools of thought tainted

Jane Caro, Sydney Morning Herald, September 22, 2008

Imagine if Bob Hawke, our only openly atheist prime minister, had allocated \$165 million for religious schools to have an atheist, agnostic or humanist counsellor, philosopher or ethicist to help them teach values and improve their pastoral care.

Or if publicly funded (and they all are) religious schools were compelled to provide two hours a week of atheist, agnostic or humanist instruction to their students. Parents could withdraw their children from such classes, but no other instruction could be offered to those students during those two hours. Excluded children would be banished to endless repeats of videos in the hall.

What would be the reaction if the reason given for the refusal to offer alternative instruction during the humanist two hours was that it was unfair competition because something more varied, academic or entertaining could encourage students to withdraw? If they wouldn't voluntarily listen to atheist philosophy, the argument went, they would just have to be bored.

What if programs offered in some religious schools - programs claiming to teach merely grooming, good manners and social skills - turned out to be run by atheist feminist and gay rights advocates whose motivation was to convert students to their secular ideals. How would society react?

There would be a hysterical outcry. Such a scandal could fell a government, or at least a minister, and no doubt many headmasters would lose their jobs. There would certainly be much outraged pontificating on the insidious nature of such proselytising on innocent and unsuspecting young people.

Yet this is precisely what is going on in our secular public schools. The only difference is it is not atheists, feminists or gay rights advocates who are seeking converts. It is, instead, those with a Christian agenda who are determined to insinuate their dogma into schools that are forbidden to privilege one brand of religion over another.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/secular-schools-of-thought-tainted/2008/09/21/1221935447618.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

[< top >](#)

=====

TEACHING THINKING

New worlds for thought

Keeli Cambourne Sydney Morning Herald, September 15, 2008

To be or not to be - a philosophy graduate. That used to be the question, but not any more. Gone are the days when the disciples of Plato and Socrates graduated with no clear job prospects and were seen as laid-back hippie types who spent more time navel-gazing than paying taxes.

Now these critical thinkers are being snapped up by blue chip companies to become much wanted corporate trouble shooters and problem solvers.

In the United States and Britain, philosophy is generating a lot of talk - not just among academics, but also the movers and shakers of big business.

Britain's Higher Education Statistics Agency reported last year that philosophy graduates from universities in that country nearly tripled in five years - rising from 895 graduates with a first degree in the discipline in 2001 to 2040 in 2006.

The agency found that the rate of full or part-time employment for those graduates had risen by 13 per cent in Britain, compared with 9 per cent for graduates from other disciplines.

The US is having a similar experience. Its colleges and universities report a revival in this ancient discipline. The City University of New York reported a 51 per cent increase in philosophy majors since 2002.

Australia is following suit. Data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations shows an increase in enrolment in philosophy units at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in Australian universities, as well as an increase in the overall philosophy student load at bachelor as well as postgraduate level.

There was a 9 per cent increase in students enrolling in philosophy units as part of a bachelor degree from 2001-06 and the largest increase is noted at first-year level, where there has been a 19 per cent increase.

"There are increased enrolments by students in three or more units of philosophy, which suggests students' interest is not limited to first year, but with a philosophy major, also," says Eliza Goddard, the executive officer of the Australasian Association of Philosophy.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/new-worlds-for-thought/2008/09/14/1221330653041.html>

[< top >](#)

=====

FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Parents unite to learn the lesson

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, September 19, 2008

AUSTRALIAN parent groups will explore the boundaries of parental expectations of schools after concerns that some parents become too pushy with teachers.

Two national parent organisations, representing families at public and private schools, have established a body to help families and schools work out their relationship.

The Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau website says it was set up this month to "help Australian schools, families and communities build sustainable, collaborative, productive relationships".

The Herald yesterday reported that private schools in America were asking parents to sign behaviour contracts in response to "helicopter parents", who hovered around schools, harassing and second-guessing teachers.

The Association of Independent Schools of NSW shares concerns that parents of children at independent schools have increasing expectations of teachers.

The executive director of the Australian Parents Council, which represents families at private schools, Ian Dalton, said parents had every right to be engaged with their child's school. He said the new bureau had been established by his organisation in collaboration with the Australian Council of State School Organisations, representing families at public schools.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/parents-unite-to-learn-the-lesson/2008/09/18/1221331058570.html>

[< top >](#)

Pushy parents shown the rulebook

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, September 18, 2008

"HELICOPTER parents" who hover around private schools pestering teachers have become so annoying that they are being asked to sign behaviour contracts.

Gene Batiste, from the US National Association of Independent Schools in Washington, DC, raised the issue, which has become a serious concern for his NSW counterparts.

In Sydney for the opening of a leadership centre for the Association of Independent Schools of NSW, Mr. Batiste said some parents had taken on adversarial roles with teachers and school administrators.

"Helicopter parents' is the growing issue of parents hovering over schools," he said. "They are just around too much. It is putting on tremendous negative pressure, primarily on the classroom teacher and secondarily on administrators.

"Not only are teachers having to focus on lessons and teaching but they have this cloud of negativity when the parents come and demand so much of the teacher beyond what he or she is doing in the classroom."

Not only were parents second-guessing the approach teachers took with the curriculum, some were making special appointments to see teachers to view their resumes and verify the teacher's qualifications.

In the US some schools were asking parents to sign behaviour contracts.

"A lot of our schools are having parents sign, as part of the contractual agreement for admission, parents' behaviour contracts," Mr. Batiste said. "Parents sign this covenant that they will behave in a way that is appropriate."

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/pushy-parents-shown-the-rulebook/2008/09/17/1221330929858.html>

[< top >](#)

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

The power of one-on-one

Joel Gibson, Sydney Morning Herald, September 22, 2008

An innovative mentoring program has unearthed a deadly weapon in the battle to get indigenous teenagers to school and keep them there: university students.

The brainchild of a team of young Aboriginal tertiary graduates, the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience achieved a 40 per cent increase in attendance among Aboriginal year 9 students in its first year at an inner-city school.

Now four years old, it operates in 21 Sydney public and private schools, linking 300 teens for an hour a week with one-on-one mentors from nearby campuses.

The University of Sydney and the University of Wollongong fund the program. Corporate sponsors are being sought to help double its numbers and expand it interstate.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/the-power-of-oneone/2008/09/21/1221935450306.html>

[< top >](#)

New Koorie Schools to Help Close Education Gap

Media Release, Bronwyn Pike, VIC Minister for Education, 18 September 2008

The Brumby Government will establish four new Koorie Pathway Schools, targeted primarily at students in the Years 7-10 age range, to help close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Acting Education Minister Jacinta Allan said the initiative is part of a statewide strategy to revitalise schools operating under the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) and improve education outcomes for all Victorian Koorie students.

"Education remains the Brumby Government's number one priority and through the recent release of our Education Blueprint and today's announcement, it is clear that we are delivering on our commitment to giving every child the opportunity to have the best start in life through a great education," Ms Allan said.

"The new Koorie Pathway Schools will provide intensive, short term support within a specialist school setting, for those Koorie students not in the mainstream system.

"Each student who attends one of these schools will have an individualised learning plan that will provide a pathway into the appropriate academic or vocational setting. VCOKE students currently in P- 6 will be have individualised transition plans to move into local primary schools.

"The end result will be to prepare these Koorie students to eventually make the transition into mainstream education, training and employment, and to do so with confidence knowing they have gained the required skills to succeed.

Read more at <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-education/new-koorie-schools-to-help-close-education-gap.html>

[< top >](#)

Infrastructure funding supports Indigenous students

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 16 September, 2008

Indigenous students boarding at eight non-government schools will benefit from a further \$8.6 million in infrastructure funding from the Australian Government.

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today congratulated the schools from Queensland and Western Australia, and recognised their contributions to the educational welfare and achievements of Indigenous students.

The Indigenous Boarding Infrastructure Program is designed to improve boarding facilities at non-government schools, which enrol significant numbers of Indigenous students.

The funding will enable the boarding schools to upgrade aged and deteriorating student accommodation.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

=====

RESEARCH

X, Y and Z: Research charts education across three generations

Three decades of research into young people's education and post-school transitions reveals trends for future generations.

ACER has conducted extensive research into young people's education and post-school transitions over the last 30 years, through the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) and earlier studies.

ACER Principal Research Fellow Dr Sheldon Rothman and Research Fellow Kylie Hillman presented their findings at the annual ACER conference in Brisbane in August.

Longitudinal studies such as LSAY give a clear picture of what young people are up to at any point in time and the pathways they took to get there. The capacity to follow the same young people over time means that the factors influencing their pathways and outcomes can be identified and the employment experiences of successive generations can be tracked.

Rothman and Hillman's analysis of the trends in young people's participation in education from the 1970s until this year reveals several important patterns.

Read more at http://www.acer.edu.au/enews/0809_HillmanRothman.html

Download the conference paper at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/RC2008_RothmanAndHillman.pdf

[< top >](#)

=====

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Australian Higher Education - What the Public Thinks

Professor Ian Chubb, 11 September 2008

ANU Poll was established this year as a different kind of survey of Australian public opinion that would serve a distinct national purpose – in line with the distinct national purpose of this University.

The ANU Poll differs from other opinion polls by placing public opinion in a broad policy context, and by benchmarking Australia against international opinion.

The inaugural ANU Poll measured public opinion towards governance, and indicated a greater level of trust in government amongst Australians relative to other nations. By international standards, the first poll found that Australians are much more positively disposed to high levels of government expenditure, particularly on health, education, and the environment

The second ANU Poll – released today - measured public opinion towards higher education. This seemed both appropriate and timely, given the Australian Government's declaration it would oversee an 'Education Revolution' and the current Review of Higher Education chaired by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Australia.

It is also appropriate and timely that the Australian public – who as taxpayers provide a large chunk of the funding for Australia's universities – get to voice an opinion on the place and performance of those universities in our society, and that its not just left to former and current Vice-Chancellors to determine the shape of the debate about the way forward for higher education in this country.

But of course it would be a very rare Vice-Chancellor, former or current, who wouldn't want to share their views on higher education reform if the opportunity presents itself – unheard of really.

So today I am going to outline some of the key findings of the ANU Poll of public opinion towards higher education, and suggest some public policy responses that would address those issues.

Read more at <http://news.anu.edu.au/?p=677>

Download the full Poll report at <http://www.anu.edu.au/anupoll/images/uploads/080804fullreport.pdf>

[< top >](#)

=====

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

VET provides pathways to work

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 18 September 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, has welcomed the release of the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER) report on VET Pathways Taken by School Leavers written by David D Curtis.

The report reveals that school leavers who participate in Vocational Education and Training (VET) are more likely to succeed in their careers, as they increase their employment prospects and earning power.

The study followed more than 6000 Year 9 students in 1995, through education and training pathways commenced by age 20 and onto their labour market outcomes at age 23. By the end of the study in 2004, most had entered the workforce.

The study showed that by age 23, young people who had undertaken VET programs were more likely to be in full-time employment than those who had not undertaken any post-school study.

69 per cent of those who had not undertaken any post-school study were in full-time employment compared with 91 per cent of participants in apprenticeship courses, 81 per cent of participants in traineeships, and 75 per cent of participants in non-apprenticeship VET programs.

Apprenticeships were taken predominantly by males (85 per cent) who did not complete Year 12 while most traineeship participants were female (60 per cent) and 24 per cent of Indigenous young people had participated in a traineeship by age 20 compared with 9 per cent of non-Indigenous young people.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/gillard/releases/vetprovidespathwaystowork.htm>

Read the ACER media release at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/MR_080918-LSAY52.pdf

Read the Report Executive Summary at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/LSAY_execsum52.pdf

Read the full Report at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/LSAY_lsay52.pdf

[< top >](#)

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

School bags can be a pain in the neck

Dani Cooper, ABC 18 September 2008

It might sound like boot camp, but an Australian researcher is urging parents to load up their teenager's backpack and make them walk to school.

In the latest Australian Journal of Physiotherapy, Professor Leon Straker of Curtin University, Western Australia, says students who walk or cycle to school are less prone to back and neck pain.

But the study of 1202 Western Australian 14-year-olds found that 72% of students travelled to school by car or bus.

Straker says the study suggests walking or cycling while carrying a school bag helps improve trunk and spinal muscle strength and endurance.

This helps reduce back pain because greater muscle strength improves support for the back during load carrying.

Despite advocating that parents get their children moving, Straker warns bag load should not exceed 15% of body weight.

Straker says the study also highlights that neck pain is as common as back pain among young teenagers.

This is an area that has been largely overlooked, he says, but can be an important indicator of neck pain into adulthood.

Read more at

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2008/09/18/2368222.htm?site=science&topic=latest>

[< top >](#)

Victorian Teachers reject smoking bans in school grounds

The Age, September 17, 2008 (AAP)

A proposal to ban smoking on Victorian school grounds would limit the potential fundraising activities of schools, the education union says.

The Victorian government is considering a reform package as part of a new tobacco control strategy that would ban smoking, including by staff and parents, on school grounds, in addition to existing laws against smoking inside school buildings.

Under current laws smoking is still allowed by parents picking up children, staff on school grounds or at school community events.

Australian Education Union (AEU) state president Mary Bluett said there was little reason to change the law.

"Overwhelmingly schools are smoke-free. People who need to smoke go off school grounds out of sight of students. They're very aware of their role model status," Ms Bluett said.

"Many schools have halls that are rented out for functions and while the hall itself has to be smoke-free if you don't have the capacity for people to smoke outside, it will impact on that school hall being part of a community resource, and in some cases an income stream for the school."

"(The change) would be of concern to many schools."

Read more at <http://news.theage.com.au/national/teachers-reject-smoking-bans-in-school-20080917-4i9x.html>

[< top >](#)

=====

RESOURCES

Parenting in Practice

by Joseph Degeling & Christine Langridge, 2nd Edition 2008

Review by Rupert Macgregor, ACSSO National Projects Manager

The first edition of this excellent book – strongly recommended by both ACSSO and the Australian Parents Council – was rapidly sold out; and its success has encouraged the authors to develop a second and expanded edition in response to continuing high levels of interest from parents and schools across the country.

Children – notoriously – are not delivered with a User Manual: an oversight in the scheme of things which this very useful booklet seeks to address.

The strategies outlined reflect the learnings from a hands-on parenting program and extensive experience in working with parents. The skills and strategies which it presents can be applied in every parent's daily life. Starting from the very early years – and continuing progressively from there...

While it certainly does not ignore the negative influences that can impact adversely on a young person's development, its emphasis is on building positive habits into the parenting process right from the beginning, in terms of:

- Establishing realistic boundaries and expectations appropriate to the child's age and stage of development;

- Focusing on the consequences of behaviours – with an emphasis on the positive consequences and recognition of positive behaviours and achievements;
- Looking after yourself and your own supportive relationships, so you can maintain your focus and balance as a reflective, positive and nurturing parent.

This booklet packs a vast quantity of very practical wisdom, experience and good advice into its pages, and is highly recommended to parents at any stage of their shared journey as the primary educators and role models for their child. It retails at \$14.99 (inclusive of GST) –with big discounts for multiple copies ordered - and proceeds go to support the Berne Education Centre for young people at risk.

Read more at <http://www.johnberneschool.org/PDF/PiPFlyer.pdf>

[< top >](#)

AROUND THE STATES AND TERRITORIES

ACT: Labor vows to reduce class sizes

ABC News 18 September 2008

The ACT Government has unveiled a plan to reduce class sizes across all Canberra schools. The \$22 million promise will see a maximum of 21 students in primary and high school classrooms and no more than 19 students in college classes.

The announcement is part of Labor's commitment to spend \$50 million on education over four years. It follows an earlier commitment by the Canberra Liberals to reduce class sizes in public primary schools.

Education Minister Andrew Barr denies the Government is copying Opposition policy.

"Well Labor has the runs on the board, we've already delivered smaller class sizes we have that strong commitment and we're extending that commitment to all levels of schooling," he said.

Save Our Schools lobby group says the pledge is poorly targeted and will not be cost effective.

Spokesman Trevor Cobbold says research shows reducing class sizes in upper primary and high school has virtually no impact.

"But the research does show that reducing class sizes in schools where there is a high level of learning need, where there are high proportions of economic disadvantage and Indigenous students does have an impact," he said.

"We think the money being spent on across the board class sizes would be better targeted to schools where there is high learning need."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/18/2367910.htm>

[< top >](#)

ACT: Labor pledges \$12m for literacy and numeracy

ABC News, Sep 17, 2008

The ACT Labor Party has pledged nearly \$12 million to improve literacy and numeracy in Canberra's schools. Education Minister Andrew Barr released the policy today, which includes hiring specialist teachers to work with underperforming students.

Mr. Barr says if the party is re-elected next month, it will employ 17 specialist literacy and numeracy teachers, and spend \$3 million working with the lowest performing students.

The centrepiece of Labor's policy is an \$8 million program to employ highly trained teachers to help develop reading and writing plans in schools.

"The most recent national testing data showed the ACT performed really well when compared with other states and territories," he said.

"But what it did identify is that a proportion of ACT students, around 5 per cent, are not achieving the national benchmarks.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/17/2367338.htm>

[< top >](#)

NSW: Yes, minister, you pay for public schools

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, September 19, 2008

AFTER just days in her job as the state's Education Minister, Verity Firth was shocked to discover that the State Government provided most of the funding for public schools.

Ms Firth told the Herald she was concerned and more than a little surprised at the discovery. "When you think about the actual percentage of education funding that comes from the states versus the amount that comes from the Commonwealth, the states overwhelmingly fund primary and secondary school education," she said.

"I think I was a bit ignorant about that. I think I'd always assumed it was a bit of a 50-50. It's not at all; it's about 80-20 ... we need a better partnership on that."

Among her first priorities was a meeting with the NSW Teachers Federation this week. "On the very first day I got the job, I put in a call, because I want a constructive relationship with the teachers federation and, of course, with the P&C, primary and secondary principals," she said.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/yes-minister-you-pay-for-public-schools/2008/09/18/1221331058576.html>

[< top >](#)

NSW: Future plans for Port Macquarie Australian Technical College

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 22 September 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced that the Australian Technical College (ATC) – Port Macquarie will keep its doors open to address local skills shortages in the region.

The College will be known as the Newman Senior Technical College and will continue to be owned and operated by the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Lismore. The Diocese will underwrite future operating costs for the College.

Senator for New South Wales, Mark Arbib, welcomed the announcement and emphasised the value of integrating these facilities into the broader education and training effort in the Port Macquarie region.

The Government has worked closely with the Diocese of Lismore, the Industry Board of the ATC, the New South Wales Government, the new local member, Rob Oakeshott and local stakeholders to determine future arrangements for Port Macquarie's College.

These arrangements will centre on involving local industry in the development of training programs to suit the needs of employers in Port Macquarie.

The College will continue to focus on trade training in Automotive, Construction, Furniture Making, Metal and Engineering and Commercial Cookery. The curriculum will now be expanded to address local skills shortages in Early Childhood, Aged Care and Business.

The College will have an open enrolment policy and discussions between the Diocese of Lismore and local schools are continuing to ensure that Government school students in the local area are able to access the facilities.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

NSW: Future Agreed for Western Sydney Technical College

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 22 September 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced that the Australian Technical College (ATC) – Western Sydney will expand and cater for up to 800 students in Years 9-12.

The College will be operated by the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation and will continue to work in strong partnership with industry. Enrolments for the College will be open to all interested students in the Greater Western Sydney region.

This announcement fulfils the Government's commitment to better integrate ATCs with existing education and training systems in NSW, to train more students in the trades and build Australia's skills base.

The collaboration of the Australian and New South Wales Governments and stakeholders has resulted in a locally designed outcome for the Western Sydney region, ensuring that the best education and trade training options are available for their students.

The College will expand opportunities for students to enter the trades by offering an apprenticeship pathway commencing in Years 9 and 10.

In Years 11-12, the College will offer students a choice between two trade-training pathways: a Certificate III Australian School-based Apprenticeship or a VET-in-Schools qualification, also at the Certificate III level. Students will also gain the Higher School Certificate and may follow a UAI pathway if desired.

It will expand the range of training available to include more skills shortage vocations such as plumbing, carpentry, automotive, electro-technology, commercial cookery, painting and decorating, nursing, aged care, child care, hairdressing and business services.

The ATC is working with the NSW Board of Studies and industry to develop a trade-oriented curriculum.

As a Registered Training Organisation, the College will also forge partnerships with other schools to provide vocational education training, to be delivered in partnership with the local school.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

NSW: Proposed changes to HSC examinations and school assessment

Board of Studies NSW, 27 August 2008

Read and respond to HSC proposals

The Board of Studies NSW is seeking responses to proposals about some aspects of HSC exam specifications and assessment tasks.

The proposals are designed to reduce unnecessary stress and workload for students and teachers, to improve consistency between exams, and to give clearer advice on the number and scope of assessment tasks.

The proposals aim to provide clear and manageable expectations for students and teachers and deliver the best and fairest outcomes for all students.

Background Paper and Course Proposals

Below you will find links to both the Background Paper and the Course Proposals, which describe the specific changes proposed for exam specifications and assessment requirements in each HSC course.

It is important to read the Background Paper in order to understand the rationale behind the proposed changes to any course.

The Background Paper is an eight-page PDF document that clearly sets out the two general issues before the Board as well as the proposed actions for your response.

Read the background paper at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/exam-proposals/hsc-background-paper-exam-changes.pdf

Browse the Course Proposals at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/exam-proposals/courses.html

Read more at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/exam-proposals/

[< top >](#)

QLD: A glimpse at school reality

GoldCoast.com.au, Editorial, September 18th, 2008

"I grabbed a star picket and came back at them and said, 'go, just go'.

"He said, 'you can't do anything to me, you'll get fired, you're a teacher'.

"As soon as they realised I wasn't a teacher, he sort of took a step back and went off."

THESE statements to The Bulletin, by a workman who confronted intruders at Marymount College on Tuesday, describe a fundamental flaw in the Queensland education system.

It is common knowledge that Queensland teachers are vulnerable and prone to legal and physical threats from the public -- parents in particular -- and cannot always count on Education Queensland to back them up.

Job security is not assured for teachers when over-protective parents reach for a lawyer and threaten action; a frequent response from the department is to suspend a teacher rather than support them and to accept the claims of a supposedly aggrieved student until matters have been thoroughly investigated.

Teaching staff can do little more than note absenteeism and report instances of truancy back to parents, many of whom couldn't care less where their children are.

It has become apparent from daytime incidents and police reports on the Gold Coast that truancy is widespread.

Read more at http://www.goldcoast.com.au/article/2008/09/18/16478_editorial-news.html

[< top >](#)

SA: Warm welcome for young migrants

22 September 2008

The Minister for Multicultural Affairs Michael Atkinson has congratulated six community groups that have received grants to help young people who've recently settled in South Australia.

"These organisations are vital to making newcomers feel welcome. This funding is a helping hand and an encouragement to groups that are doing great work with young migrants," Mr Atkinson said.

The Multicultural Youth Development Fund, which is supported by Multicultural Youth S.A. (MYSA) and the Department for Families and Communities, has given \$35, 000 to six groups.

"This funding helps to break down the social isolation sometimes experienced by young newcomers and helps educate them about their rights and responsibilities as South Australian residents," he said.

Read more at <http://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=3708>

[< top >](#)

SA: Regional Catholic Technical College for Northern Adelaide

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 22 September 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced that the Australian Technical College (ATC) – Northern Adelaide will become a Catholic systemic senior secondary college owned and operated by the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide.

The College will continue to operate from its Elizabeth West campus and will be known as a 'Regional Catholic Technical College' from 2009.

Nick Champion MP, Member for Wakefield, welcomed the announcement and emphasised the value of integrating these facilities into the broader education and training effort in the northern Adelaide region.

The Rudd Government has worked closely with the Board of the Australian Technical College, the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide and the South Australian Government to develop this education model.

The College will become a Registered Training Organisation to offer Certificate III level courses in Automotive, Building & Construction, Commercial Cookery, Electrotechnology and Metal & Engineering.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

TAS: \$4 million to Extend Tasmanian Literacy Initiative

David Bartlett MP, Premier, 29 August 2008

The State Government's multi-million-dollar Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap literacy initiative will be extended as a result of an extra \$4 million in Australian Government funding.

Visiting Warrane Primary School in Hobart today with Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Premier David Bartlett welcomed the announcement.

The extra funding is a result of Tasmania's submission under the Literacy and Numeracy Pilots in Low SES School Communities program.

"The State Government acknowledges that lifting literacy standards is an important issue. We're embarking on an innovative reform agenda to ensure that all Tasmanian children finish school with functional literacy and numeracy skills," Mr Bartlett said.

"Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap is the pillar of Tasmania's literacy strategy and I'm delighted that the Australian Government has seen the merit in this initiative and provided an extra \$4 million over two years to extend the program to another 11 schools.

"This brings the total funding to \$36 million over four years which will enable targeted support to significantly increase the number of children finishing their primary education with the necessary literacy and numeracy skills and for all children to achieve higher literacy levels."

Read more at [http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/about/news-room/latest-news/\\$4-million-to-extend-tasmanian-literacy-initiative](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/about/news-room/latest-news/$4-million-to-extend-tasmanian-literacy-initiative)

VIC: Selective Entry Students to Access the Best

Media Release, Bronwyn Pike, VIC Minister for Education, 19 September 2008

The Brumby Government is working with Wyndham City Council to locate the new selective entry school for Melbourne's west in Werribee in collaboration with Victoria University and the University of Melbourne.

Acting Education Minister Jacinta Allan said the proposal to build the leading academic school on the Werribee Technology Precinct would be great news for all concerned.

"There are clear benefits for students who attend a selective entry school with close links to two of Victoria's leading higher education institutions," Ms Allan said.

"We are looking at locating the selective entry school within the Werribee Technology Precinct, which includes facilities run by both Victoria University and the University of Melbourne, including health, engineering and science, veterinary science and sporting faculties.

"Students having access to Victoria University facilities, along with the partnership we already have with the University of Melbourne, would offer students at the selective entry school even more opportunities and a logical and smoother pathway to higher education."

Read more at <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/minister-for-education/selective-entry-students-to-access-the-best.html>

VIC: Microsoft joins Victorian Government to launch education research lab

Media Release, Microsoft Australia, 29 August 2008

Victoria is set to become the birthplace of groundbreaking technology-based teaching practices with the launch of a new education research facility in Broadmeadows.

The new laboratory, known as the Broadmeadows Innovation and Learning Lab (Ideas Lab), has been established by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in collaboration with Microsoft, Intel, Cisco, the Hume City Council and the University of Melbourne, and was officially launched today by the Premier of Victoria, John Brumby, and the Victorian Minister for Education, the Hon. Bronwyn Pike MP.

The Ideas Lab, which will be open from September 1st, will help solve one of the major issues facing educators today: how to align student experiences in the classroom with their experience and enthusiasm for technology outside of school.

Speaking at the launch, Ms Tracey Fellows, Managing Director, Microsoft Australia said: "Microsoft's investment in and support for the Lab reflects our belief in its potential to be an incubator of innovation for new teaching practices and techniques that underpin improved learning outcomes.

"Today's children are widely regarded as digital natives who have grown up with technology: the Ideas Lab will provide teachers with the resources and support to find fresh ways to engage our children in the learning process," she said.

Microsoft will draw upon its experience of working with educators around the world to contribute strategic and on-the-ground advice to the Ideas Lab, as well as helping to provide access to the world's most advanced software and technology. The company will also provide direct funding for the Lab.

Read more at

http://www.microsoft.com/australia/presspass/news/pressreleases/2008_08_29_microsoft_joins_victorian_government_to_launch_education_research_lab.aspx

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

N.O.W. Conference

7-9 October, online

Today's students have unprecedented access to cheap and sophisticated technology. Web 2.0 or the Read/Write Web is becoming an increasing influence on the way students learn and interact with their peers in and out of school.

As educators, we too are ever evolving to provide the best possible opportunities for all our students.

Online tools, spaces and communities are starting to have more impact across the globe and in our schools.

The N.O.W. Conference is a chance for us to begin and extend our conversation around Navigating the Online World and Teaching for the NOW Generation.

The conference runs over three days, from October 7 to October 9 and offers educators the opportunity to participate in online, interactive presentations on a variety of practical ways teachers can incorporate web 2.0 applications and eLearning into their classrooms.

Read more at <http://nowconference2008.ning.com/>

[< top >](#)

Closing the ICT Loop

Seabrook Primary School Online Conference

20 October, online

Seabrook Primary School in partnership with Knowledge Bank Online Events, is hosting an online conference on Monday October 20 2008.

The four sessions (see details at website referenced below) throughout the day will be conducted online in Elluminate and are free for all who Sign Up.

Seabrook is a P-6 school in the Western Metropolitan Region in Melbourne.

Classroom teachers from across the school will share how they are currently using ICT and web 2.0 technologies within the context of authentic learning.

Read more at <http://knowledgebank.globalteacher.org.au/2008/09/16/closing-the-ict-loop-seabrook-primary-school-online-conference/>

[< top >](#)

=====

REMINDERS

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/>

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.acer.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

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

=====

RESOURCE LISTINGS

Passport to Australia: The Australian Travel Game

Find out more about our amazing country the fun way:

Strap yourself in for a learning adventure like no other with Passport to Australia, the new board game from Brisbane based company Barker Boys (Australia) Pty Ltd

This is a fresh and exciting way for players of all ages to learn about Australia – the ultimate board game that takes players on a funtastic journey to every state and territory

The game is a brilliant way to improve your general knowledge on places that are in our own backyard. Though you hardly notice you're learning because it's so easy to get carried away with the thrill of the chase.

New questions will be added to later editions of the game and supplementary question packs will be available online and through recommended retail outlets.

"Best of all, with every purchase of a Passport to Australia buyers will be contributing to the establishment of a school camp to provide learning and recreational experiences for young people," said Managing Director Bruce Barker.

"Our intention is to continue to create opportunities to share knowledge and learn in fun and interesting ways."

Passport to Australia is available through ABC shops, selected retail stores and online at www.passporttoaustralia.com.

For more information: <http://www.passporttoaustralia.com>

[LOTE@HOME](#) – Learning languages at home from the early years

"Children who have grown up learning two or more different languages are better problem solvers"

[LOTE@HOME](#) is an innovative way for parents to participate with their kids as they all learn a second language.

[LOTE@HOME](#) packs are not intended to replace formal LOTE lessons, however they are intended to build an "in country environment" in the home that will support the formal learning of a second language.

Devised by a parent who was unable to identify an approach to learning a language other than English that focused on a home, family-based setting, these family-friendly kits are now available in five community languages (including Japanese and Mandarin) with others to follow shortly.

By using the cards, and reinforcing words around the house, kids will learn a new language in exactly the same way they learned English - by immersion and absorption.

Find out more: <http://www.lote-at-home.com.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/

=====

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 (quarterly)

[< top >](#)

=====
Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information only; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

To unsubscribe from ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribe>