

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Number 36, 7 October 2008

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Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

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- [ACSSO National Conference 2008: Speaker Profile: Michael Duffy](#)
- [Hot Topic: The Education Revolution](#) (3 items)
- [Hot Topic: Early Childhood Education](#) (2 items)
- [Hot Topic: Student Behaviour](#) (4 items)
- [Opinion: When it comes to status, the teachers get less than top marks, Kenneth Wiltshire](#)
- [Teaching Australian Literature](#) (2 items)
- [Research: National Review of Religion & Belief in 21st Century Australia](#)
- [Awards & Prizes: Australian Rural Education Awards 2008](#)
- [Resources: Parenting in Practice](#)
- [Health & Well-being: Letter to NSW Minister Tony Stewart - Measures to Protect Children From Tobacco](#)
- [International Year of Planet Earth](#) (4 items)
- [International Year of the Frog](#) (1 item)
- [Conferences & Events](#) (4 items)
- [Reminders](#)
- [Resource Listings](#)
- [ACSSO Email Newsletters](#)

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ACSSO NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008

20-21 October 2008, Royal on the Park Hotel, Brisbane.

Speaker Profile: Michael Duffy

Getting parents involved in schools in remote areas of Northern Australia presents complex challenges of distance, isolation, languages and cultures. Families, rather than parents, have strong ideas about what they expect of schooling.

Getting them involved means negotiating the story of school and then finding ways to raise the level of their cultural capital so they can operate effectively in whitefella structures, which doesn't necessarily mean coercing people into adopting an alien system.

The first step is building relationships and developing trust, which takes time.

Michael Duffy is vice-president of the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations and is closely involved in two funded projects - Strong Schools, Strong Communities and Parents and Teachers Working Together.

He is a freelance writer and editor who has worked with Aboriginal communities and organisations in Northern Australia for more than 20 years. "It's a learning process, which makes it both exciting and exhausting," he says. "And I've learned to leave my ego at the door, listen carefully and avoid narrowing the parameters and pre-judging the outcome!"

When ABC Radio's PM program covered a controversial report on indigenous education in April this year, Michael supplied needed some much-needed perspective. Read the transcript or download the audio in several formats at <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2210142.htm>.

Michael Duffy be a key participant in Session Four: Building a Communications Strategy for Your School.

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/>

[< top >](#)

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HOT TOPIC: THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Take education lead from Finland, Rudd tells international conference

Leah Fineran, Gold Coast Bulletin, September 10th, 2008

AUSTRALIA must follow Finland's education system to save our failing students, says Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. Mr. Rudd endorsed the Finnish method that 'leaves no child behind' as a key solution in his education revolution.

Finland is the highest performing nation for student outcomes, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development statistics, while Australia is ranked between fourth and eighth in literacy, numeracy and scientific literacy.

"One of the best examples of quality schooling is in Finland," said Mr. Rudd. "They recruit 10 per cent of university graduates to become teachers and also they ensure every child excels.

"They employ one specialist teacher for every seven regular teachers and that means children who are at risk of falling behind receive additional help."

Mr. Rudd said Finland's approach was in contrast to that in Australia, where the number of children failing to meet literacy and numeracy benchmarks was growing as the children moved through the primary school years.

"A national report of schooling in Australia shows the national benchmarks are declining," he said. "The results for students from disadvantaged backgrounds are even more stark -- we need reform now."

Read more at http://www.goldcoast.com.au/article/2008/09/10/16094_gold-coast-news.html

[< top >](#)

New York City Chancellor of Education to visit Australia

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 5 October, 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard is pleased to confirm today that the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, Mr Joel Klein, will visit Australia in November to share his experience on transforming the New York City school system.

Ms Gillard met Chancellor Klein during her recent visit to the USA and was impressed by the remarkable progress he has driven in lifting student achievement, especially in disadvantaged areas.

UBS, a leading financial firm, has generously offered to sponsor Mr Klein's visit and I welcome the active involvement of UBS in promoting the importance of education.

Building strong connections between businesses and schools is essential to building a thriving and productive education community.

Highlights of Mr Klein's itinerary will include a major public address and a dinner with leaders from the business and school sectors.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

Gillard guru in line for top job

David Nason and Samantha Maiden, The Australian, October 06, 2008

JULIA Gillard's favoured New York schools guru Joel Klein has been touted as a potential education secretary in a Barack Obama or John McCain administration after both presidential candidates sought his advice in framing their education policies.

Ms Gillard confirmed yesterday that the New York schools chancellor who promotes transparency on school results for parents and bonus payments for high-performing teachers will tour Australia next month.

"Joel Klein, of course, has pioneered a system in New York, a city of great wealth but also pockets of great disadvantage, he's pioneered a system of school transparency which lets you compare like schools with like schools," Ms Gillard told the Nine Network.

"It's working in New York, it impressed me when I was there and he will be here in Australia talking publicly but also talking to Australian educators about his system."

At an education summit in Washington last week, Mr. Klein summarised that advice, saying national standards and assessments, greater focus on teacher quality and more choices for the parents of children in poorly performing schools were the keys to a better system.

He said the next US administration would need to be aggressive in setting high standards for schools, then use national assessments to measure how well the standards were being met.

He said an important aspect of teacher quality was the placing of high-quality teachers in poor and disadvantaged areas that were too often over-burdened with weak and inexperienced teachers.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24450849-2702,00.html>

[< top >](#)

HOT TOPIC: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

500 new university places for early childhood education teachers

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education & The Hon Maxine McKew MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care, 2 October, 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced the delivery of 500 new Commonwealth supported higher education places in the national priority area of early childhood education.

As promised prior to the last election, the new places for early childhood education students will be available at universities around the country from 2009.

Making the announcement at Deakin University in Melbourne today, the Minister announced that the Rudd Government will also be funding a further 500 places to commence in each of 2010 and 2011.

The 1500 additional places promised by the Rudd Government will help meet the national demand for degree-qualified early childhood education teachers.

The new places are part of the Rudd Government's \$126.6 million package of initiatives to train and retain a high-quality early childhood education and care workforce.

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/500newuniversityplacesforearlychildhoodeducationteachers.htm>

[< top >](#)

Experts to develop the Early Years Learning Framework

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education & The Hon Maxine McKew MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care, 2 October, 2008

A consortium of early childhood experts led by Charles Sturt University (CSU) will develop the national Early Years Learning Framework to improve outcomes and opportunities for children during their critical early years.

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education and Child Care, Maxine McKew, today announced that the Rudd Government will provide \$700 000 to the CSU Consortium to develop the framework.

The Early Years Learning Framework is part of the Rudd Government's plan to develop a world-class system of integrated early childhood education and care.

The Framework will guide early childhood educators in developing quality early childhood programs. It will also inform parents, families and the early childhood workforce about the importance of young children's learning.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

HOT TOPIC: STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Suspensions surge at Gold Coast schools

Sue Lappeman , Gold Coast Bulletin, October 1st, 2008

A SURGE in the number of students suspended or expelled from Gold Coast public schools has been attributed to a new Code of School Behaviour which has given teachers the support they need to crack down on violence and misbehaviour. But the worrying increase in the violent incidents in school playgrounds has raised fears that children are mimicking the increase in violence in the greater community.

The Opposition has called for more specialised behaviour management teachers to be placed in schools to deal with the issue so that classroom teachers can focus on well-behaved students.

An answer to an Opposition question on notice yesterday revealed suspensions in the South Coast and Moreton area had increased from 14,668 in 2006/07 to 16,036 in 2007/08 while exclusions had increased over the same period from 234 to 274.

The highest number of exclusions resulted from physical misconduct, with 105 students expelled.

Persistently disruptive behaviour that adversely affected others, verbal and non-verbal misconduct and substance abuse also rated highly.

More than 5000 students were also suspended for violence while others were sent home for disruptive behaviour, absences, property offences and substance misconduct of both legal and illegal drugs.

Read more at http://www.goldcoast.com.au/article/2008/10/01/16930_gold-coast-news.html

[< top >](#)

Plague of student suspensions hits Queensland schools

James O'Loan, Brisbane Courier Mail, 1 October 2008

AN alarming spike in student suspensions for being aggressive, disobedient, taking drugs and wagging school is plaguing the state's classrooms. Education Queensland statistics show suspensions were up 25 per cent at Gold Coast and Ipswich region public schools in the past three years and 22 per cent at Townsville schools.

The initial snapshot has prompted child psychologists to call for family and community strategies to improve the behaviour of disrespectful students.

The state Opposition has called for teachers to be equipped with more comprehensive behaviour management resources.

Professor Paula Barrett, a child psychologist, said the Government should consider making suspended students do community service, such as visiting nursing homes, hospitals or the RSPCA.

She said most of the children suspended probably suffered from learning, emotional or social difficulties, in part because families now spent less time guiding and having fun with their young .

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,24426037-3102,00.html>

Student acting up on rise

Warwick Daily News, 3 October 2008

SCHOOL incidents requiring student discipline in the form of suspension and expulsion across the Darling Downs and south-west have risen in the last three years, according to the latest Education Queensland data.

The figures, which are not broken down into individual towns, show alarming increases in discipline for misconduct and physical and verbal abuse and for refusal to take part in learning.

Suspension and expulsion rates for truancy and cigarette smoking are down slightly, but illegal substance misconduct has been on the way up since the 2005-2006 reporting period.

Education and Training Minister Rod Welford said discipline and positive attitudes to learning were significant issues in Queensland state schools and were a concern for teachers, students and parents.

"Our Government has taken important steps in strengthening school discipline, promoting positive student behaviour and supporting better behaviour programs in our schools," Mr Welford said.

"Unfortunately, there will always be a small minority of the many thousands of school children who are disruptive, but we are determined to ensure they do not disturb the majority.

"In the Darling Downs-south west region, there were about 3300 school suspensions out of more than 32,500 students in 2007, reflecting the number of incidences of suspension and not necessarily the number of students."

Mr Welford said every state school had a Responsible Behaviour Plan for students outlining strategies to promote high standards of conduct among students.

Source: <http://www.warwickdailynews.com.au/storydisplay.cfm?storyid=3786654>

More Sunshine Coast Students Behaving Badly

Toby Walker, Sunshine Coast Daily, 3 October 2008

Physically and verbally aggressive behaviour and absenteeism have been blamed for an alarming increase in student suspensions at Sunshine Coast public schools. Figures released by Education Queensland this week show suspensions across the Coast's student population of 73,000 have risen 32% over the past three years. That is up from 6429 in 2005-06 to 8469 in 2007-08.

The report reveals that the biggest cause for concern was the number of incidents linked to "physical misconduct". That accounted for the most suspensions, up to 2684 in 2007-08 compared with 2044 in 2005-06.

"Verbal misconduct" was cited as the next biggest contributing factor. It accounted for 1691 suspensions in 2007-08 compared with 1121 in 2005-06.

However, a Sunshine Coast psychologist is concerned about the rise in suspensions caused by physically aggressive behaviour. Amberley Boyet, of Peregian, warned that suspending or expelling students could sometimes do more harm than good.

Read more at <http://www.thedaily.com.au/news/2008/oct/03/sharp-rise-student-suspensions/>

[< top >](#)

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OPINION

When it comes to status, the teachers get less than top marks

Kenneth Wiltshire, The Australian, October 04, 2008

Say thanks to a teacher who made a difference in your life or in your children's lives. This is the advice from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation for the occasion of World Teachers Day, which is set aside by the world community on October 5 each year to celebrate teachers and the central role they play in nurturing and guiding infants, children, youth and adults through lifelong learning.

According to teachers' organisation Education International: "Every day in millions of classrooms around the world, the universal endeavour of teaching and learning takes place. The gift of literacy is passed on from one generation to the next, along with a love of learning and thirst for knowledge. When knowledge is shared, skills are gained and lives can be changed."

The world faces an acute shortage of teachers. UNESCO estimates that 18 million more teachers are needed worldwide if universal primary education is to be achieved by 2015, one of the UN Millennium Development Goals. So this year's emphasis is on professional training for quality education.

Of course the key factor in all of this is the status of teachers, which is culturally, not economically, determined. All the ancient civilisations revered teachers and in most communities today teachers command respect, particularly in Asia, Africa and Europe. These cultures respect all educators and the value and importance of learning.

In modern Australia it is a different story. Teachers are certainly not given this status; indeed mention the word status and Australians immediately equate this with salary and perks. Too often our schools are treated like repair shops as the community dumps more and more of its social problems on them. Nor are teachers the proper focus of government rhetoric in the so-called education revolution.

A true and lasting education revolution has to be a bottom-up phenomenon, not the top-down approach touted by the Rudd Government and the Howard government before it. Indeed, Kevin Rudd has morphed into John Howard as he too pursues some worthwhile goals, but through blunt imposed instruments of tied funding, legislation, coercion, performance measures and threats of takeover.

The starting place for any true education revolution would be that magical interface between the teacher and the student: the foundation of learning.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24441263-13881,00.html>

Kenneth Wiltshire has recently completed six years as Australia's representative on the executive board of UNESCO. He was chairman of the review of the Queensland school curriculum and special adviser to the Australian National Training Authority. He is J.D. Story professor of public administration at the University of Queensland business school.

[< top >](#)

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TEACHING AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

English teachers oppose increasing study of Australian literature

Justine Ferrari, The Australian, September 17, 2008

ENGLISH teachers oppose moves to strengthen the study of Australian literature in schools, with their professional association arguing it confers a superiority over the literature of other cultures.

In a submission to a review of the NSW syllabus, the English Teachers Association of NSW says its members also object to giving privilege to print literature above other forms, including film, television and websites.

"A definition of literature with a restriction to the print medium is imprudent, reductive, short-sighted and, most importantly, undermines the integrity of current English syllabuses," the submission says.

"The ETA opposes the selective nomination of some types of text as this implies hierarchies in generic form and medium rather than in the quality of the texts themselves."

The ETA's submission, sent to the board late last month, is in response to proposed changes to the English syllabus for all years of school requested by former state education minister John Della Bosca in May. Mr. Della Bosca asked the board to explore ways to improve the presence of Australian literature in school English courses and ensure the study of more Australian books, poems and plays.

The ETA made its submission after consulting its members, comprising 1800 teachers and about 300 faculties in schools. About 43 responses were gathered. ETA executive officer Eva Gold said the response was small but the views expressed in the submission were representative of the entire membership.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24358568-13881,00.html>

[< top >](#)

Australian literature "not just bush ballads"

Justine Ferrari, The Australian, September 18, 2008

THE English Teachers Association of NSW betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of Australian literature in its objection to strengthening the study of the national literature in the school syllabus.

The Australian Society of Authors and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature yesterday said the ETA appeared to view Australian literature as comprising colonial works about the bush and swagmen, as in the ballads of Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson.

ASAL president Elizabeth McMahon, senior lecturer at the University of NSW, said she was perplexed by the suggestion that giving privilege to Australian literature in the English syllabus gave it an unfair superiority or created a hierarchy of works.

"Reading the ETA submission, a picture of Australian literature emerges as something homogenous, one story and monocultural," she said. "In fact it's the reverse -- the stories are as diverse as the culture."

ASA executive director Jeremy Fisher said: "The ETA in the UK or the US wouldn't even be arguing this, in fact it wouldn't even come up. The literature they're teaching in their schools is almost entirely American or English, and Australian material would be nowhere because there's no place for it. The place for it is in our own culture."

The NSW Board of Studies is reviewing the English syllabus for all years of school following a directive by former state education minister John Della Bosca to ensure the study of more Australian books, plays and poems.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24362427-13881,00.html>

[< top >](#)

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RESEARCH

National Review of Religion & Belief in 21st Century Australia

A national review of what Australians think about religious freedom is being launched by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The commission's race discrimination commissioner Tom Calma says Australia needs to understand what religious freedom means in the 21st century. He says in a secular, multifaith society, people sometimes have different expectations about the way laws reflect those beliefs. Mr. Calma says there is evidence of a growing fundamentalist religious lobby, in areas such as same-sex relationships, stem-cell research and abortion.

Mr. Calma says there is a balance to be struck between the freedom to practice a religion and not pushing those beliefs on the rest of society. "The fundamental human right of freedom of religion and belief is protected by a number of international treaties and declarations," said Commissioner Calma. "It encompasses freedom of thought on all matters and the freedom to demonstrate and express our religion and belief individually, with others, in private or in public."

In calling for submissions from the public, the Commissioner pointed out that the intersection of religion and belief with human rights is illustrated daily in our news headlines. "The involvement of religious institutions in school curriculums and practices, religious and ethical concerns about scientific research, the status of Muslim communities in society, the involvement of religion in debates about homosexuality or abortion - these are just some of the stories that involve us every day at the intersection of religion and belief with human rights," said Commissioner Calma.

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

On 4 September 2008, the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) changed its name to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).

[< top >](#)

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AWARDS & PRIZES

Australian Rural Education Awards 2008

The Australian Rural Education Award has been awarded annually to an institution, organisation or industry to recognise excellence in rural education since 1994.

The Australian Rural Education Awards are managed by the Society for Provision of Education in Rural Australia and announced at their Annual Conference. The recipient is sponsored to attend the conference and invited to showcase the successful project.

The objectives of the Award are to:

- promote a positive image of education in rural Australia
- acknowledge individual or group achievements in rural education
- celebrate and promote creative ways of meeting the education needs of students and families in rural locations.

This year's award went to the Clean Green Energy Park established by Talbingo Public School, a small, isolated school located in the Snowy Mountains area of NSW. With funding from DEEWR through the ASISTM Program, many renewable energy workshops, camps and excursions occurred at several sites across the region.

Read about Award at <http://www.spera.edu.au/area/pamphlet.pdf>

Read about the winner at <http://www.spera.edu.au/area/2008areawinner.pdf>

Read about the other finalists at <http://www.spera.edu.au/area/submissions2008.pdf>

Read more about SPERA at <http://www.spera.edu.au/>

[< 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.

For more details: <http://www.johnberneschool.org/PDF/PiPFlyer.pdf>

[< top >](#)

=====

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Letter to NSW Minister Tony Stewart - Measures to Protect Children From Tobacco

Congratulations on your appointment to the NSW Ministry, and on your speech to Parliament on September 25 introducing the Public Health (Tobacco) Bill 2008.

The 40 organisations attached strongly support the measures contained in the Bill, as does the NSW community as shown consistently in opinion surveys.

Our partner organisations represent parents, people working with children, health and medical professionals and others dealing with the consequences of smoking and its promotion to children. We believe the Bill should be quickly approved and brought into effect as soon as possible. We urge you to resist any renewed attempts to weaken or delay it.

There has already been compromise on the original proposals - for example, we might have wished for more comprehensive seller licensing measures, for a total ban on tobacco vending machines, or for a ban on children selling tobacco.

As you are aware, there has been an aggressive and misleading campaign by the tobacco industry against some of the measures, and it would be a tragedy for children if there were further concessions to the flawed, inconsistent and self-serving arguments of tobacco sellers.

With reference to the Premier's promise on July 30 that "Speciality tobacconists will be required to ensure tobacco products are not visible from outside their store within 12 months", we note with concern that the Bill does not make clear how this will be done. We seek your clarification on this very important matter in your second reading of the Bill. Please see enclosed photo of the present highly visible tobacconist display.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss this or any other aspect of the Bill or what further reforms might be considered to protect children from tobacco.

We look forward to the speedy enactment of these measures, and again congratulate you and your government on proposing them.

Regards,

Anne Jones
Chief Executive, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Australia <http://www.ashaust.org.au>

[< top >](#)

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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH 2008

Release of Treasury's Climate Change Mitigation Policy Modelling Assumptions

Hon Wayne Swan & Hon Penny Wong, 3 October 2008

Today we are pleased to release the Treasury's climate change mitigation policy modelling assumptions book as part of our commitment to developing an economically responsible Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS).

The Rudd Government is committed to delivering the CPRS in a measured and responsible way, and will continue to consult with industry, business and the community every step of the way.

Through the Government's recent consultations there has been considerable interest from stakeholders in the Australian Treasury's climate change policy modelling assumptions. Stakeholder consultation workshops will be conducted from 7 October 2008 using these assumptions.

Key assumptions outlined include global population, productivity, gross domestic product (GDP), Australia's terms of trade and technology assumptions. The Treasury has undertaken extensive research and consulted with a wide range of domestic and international experts in developing these assumptions, particularly in relation to historical trends and possible future economic, social and technological developments.

Read more at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/1008/msccwtres030.php>

[< top >](#)

Swift parrot on its own as Garrett evades plea for help

Rosslyn Beeby, Canberra Times, 30 September 2008

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett has sidestepped pleas to halt plans to log southern Tasmania's forests which would threaten the survival of one of Australia's rarest parrots.

Birds Australia, Australia's biggest science-based conservation group, has called on Mr. Garrett to take urgent action to stop woodchip logging from destroying food trees and nesting hollows in a key breeding area for the endangered swift parrot. The parrots, rarer than China's giant panda or Borneo's orang-utans, are listed by the World Conservation Union in its Red Book of globally endangered species.

But Mr. Garrett's office said yesterday he was powerless to intervene because forestry agreements were exempt from federal environment protection laws.

Fewer than 1000 pairs of swift parrots remain in the wild, and hundreds of the blossom-feeding birds have arrived in Wielangta's tall eucalypt forest, flying in over Bass Strait from the mainland's dry inland and coastal woodlands. It's the longest migration route of any parrot species, and the birds are often seen in Canberra during their brief stopovers.

Read more at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/swift-parrot-on-its-own-as-garrett-evades-plea-for-help/1320930.aspx>

[< top >](#)

Mass species extinction "is under way"

The Australian, October 03, 2008 (AFP)

PARIS: Earth's animal and plant species are vanishing at unprecedented rates, evidence that the planet is facing a tsunami of mass extinction, experts gathering for a global conservation conference have warned.

Whether through habitat loss, pollution, hunting, or indirectly by global warming, humans are squarely to blame for what may be the first major die-off in 65 million years, they say.

From Sunday, more than 8000 ministers, UN officials, NGOs, scientists and business chiefs will brainstorm for 10 days in the Spanish city of Barcelona on how to brake this loss and steer the world onto a path of sustainable development.

The World Conservation Congress, held every four years, will also release an update on Monday of the famous Red List on biodiversity, deemed the global standard for conservation monitoring.

"The evidence is overwhelming - and we have really good data now - that what we are seeing is probably a mass extinction," the sixth in 450 million years, said Michael Hoffman, a mammal expert at IUCN who worked extensively on the Red List.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24440817-30417,00.html>

[< top >](#)

One in five Australian mammal species at risk

Ben Cubby, Environment Reporter, Sydney Morning Herald, October 7, 2008

HE world is facing an animal extinction crisis, with Australia a key culprit, the largest assessment of biodiversity ever undertaken shows.

One in five Australian mammal species is in danger of dying out, the highest proportion of any developed country, the global survey of more than 44,000 animal and plant species found.

The iconic Murray cod, once hauled from the Murray in the tens of thousands, is regarded by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as critically endangered, alongside even rarer animals such as the Sumatran orang-utan and Africa's mountain gorilla.

The destruction of wild forests and rivers by urban development and agriculture is the biggest cause of extinctions, the conservation union's annual report said.

"Within our lifetime hundreds of species could be lost as a result of our own actions, a frightening sign of what is happening to the ecosystems where they live," the organisation's director general, Julia Marton-Lefevre, said.

In Australia, the Murray cod is joined by 64 other critically endangered species, a classification which means a species is one step away from extinction in the wild.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/environment/conservation/one-in-five-australian-mammal-species-at-risk/2008/10/06/1223145261833.html>

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FROG 2008

Frogs face "greatest extinction crisis since the dinosaurs"

Verity Edwards The Australian October 06, 2008

Armageddon is approaching for frogs throughout the world, warns internationally renowned primatologist Jane Goodall. The 74-year-old conservationist visited Adelaide Zoo yesterday to discuss the potential mass extinction of frogs and how an international breeding program, dubbed the Amphibian Ark, might be the only hope for hundreds of species.

Frogs are "the canary in the coalmine", Dr Goodall told The Australian yesterday. "When you see frogs disappear at this rate, then you realise there's something very wrong with the ecosystem where they live." Of about 6,000 amphibian species worldwide, it is estimated close to 2,000 are now threatened with extinction.

Dr Goodall is best known as a primatologist and for establishing the Jane Goodall Institute in 1971. The institute aims to protect the habitats of chimpanzees and other animals.

She said frogs were particularly vulnerable to shrinking water supplies caused by climate change and poor agricultural practices, as well as pollution run-off.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24450461-30417,00.html>

Dr Goodall is in Australia on a public lecture tour. Read more at <http://www.janegoodall.org.au/attachments/db/jgd/3.pdf>

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 >](#)

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
 - school- linked or school-based projects;
 - speaking to classes or
 - 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/>

[< 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 >](#)

Music - Count Us In

23 October

We are well on the way to breaking last year's participation record, with some 800 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

So whether you want to join in with music backing from a school or community orchestra, rock band, string group, choir, percussion players - or even a ukelele ensemble - we have exactly the material you need!

The national team of trainers currently delivering their professional learning around the song to primary school teachers is on the move around Australia.

And if your school hasn't yet registered - NOW is the time to go online and sign up for the event of the year!

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

[< top >](#)

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REMINDERS

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>

7-9 October - N.O.W. Conference - online - <http://nowconference2008.ning.com/>

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 October - Seabrook Primary School Online Conference - online -
<http://knowledgebank.globalteacher.org.au/2008/09/16/closing-the-ict-loop-seabrook-primary-school-online-conference/>

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

[< top >](#)

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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/

[< top >](#)

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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 (quarterly)

[< top >](#)

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