

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Number 46, 16 December 2008

Having trouble reading this email? Read it on the web at <http://www.acsso.org.au/AED081216.pdf>
Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

=====

- [Hot Topic: Early Childhood Education](#) (5 items)
- [Research:](#) (3 items)
- [Indigenous Education: Aboriginal teens taught in primary schools](#)
- [Religious Education:](#) (2 items)
- [Digital Education Revolution:](#) (2 items)
- [Professional Development:](#) (2 items)
- [Tertiary Education:](#) (5 items)
- [Around the States & Territories:](#) (8 items)
- [Health & Well-being: How table tennis improves pupils' health and behaviour](#)
- [Conferences & Events:](#) (3 items)
- [Reminders](#)
- [Resource Listings](#)
- [ACSSO Email Newsletters](#)

=====

HOT TOPIC: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

UNICEF report slates Australia's failing childcare

Stephen Lunn, The Australian, December 12, 2008

AUSTRALIA has the third-worst childcare and early learning system in the developed world, a new international report finds. Our early childhood services sit above only Canada and Ireland on a league table of OECD countries to be published today by the United Nations' children's rights arm, UNICEF.

Using 10 benchmarks, including the amount of GDP spent on early childhood services, the availability of paid parental leave and the subsidies provided for childcare and education, the report ranks Mexico, Slovenia and Portugal higher than Australia.

Australia meets just two benchmarks, accreditation for early learning staff and the provision of subsidised childcare services for at least 25 per cent of children under three.

The report, *The Child Care Transition*, says poor quality care "has the potential for both immediate and long-term harm" to children, and warns that some countries provide childcare "in an ad hoc way with minimal assurances of quality".

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/business/story/0,,24788120-5018471,00.html>

[< top >](#)

UNICEF Early Childhood Education Report

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Radio Interview, 12 December 2008

LEON BYNER: There are three child care issues. The first of which, was it surprising to you to when you woke up today to find that a report on child care puts us, Australia, below Mexico, Slovenia and Portugal?

JULIA GILLARD: Unfortunately, Leon, I wasn't surprised because we've had other international report cards that also give us a bad report and put us near the bottom of the class. I mean, under the former government, the Federal Government just didn't engage in these issues and we regularly came last or second last in the OECD for investment in early childhood education.

We've acted to change that. It was one of our big platforms of the 2007 election and we have struck a deal to ensure that there's universal preschool around the country; that every child, no matter what setting they're cared for in, whether they're at home and go to a standalone kinder or in child care, get the benefit of early learning programs—which are just so important to them getting on well at school.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

UN Child Care Transition Report

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Radio Interview 12 December 2008

TONY EASTLEY: The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard says the Government is already moving to address serious shortcomings in Australia's child care and early childhood education. She blames the former government for the neglect. Julia Gillard is speaking here with Alexandra Kirk.

JULIA GILLARD: We've entered new arrangements with states and territories to have universal access to pre-school. Whether children are in child care or being taken to kindergarten or pre-school, wherever they're cared, for they will get the benefit of early learning programs.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: But the report card recommends above all that children should be cared for by the parents at home for at least the first twelve months. Obviously that necessitates paid parental leave and UNICEF says that should be 50 per cent of the parents' salary. Do you accept that's the level of support required?

JULIA GILLARD: The Rudd Labor government commitment, the one we took to the election, was to get the Productivity Commission to report on the best way of having paid parental leave in the Australian context. Obviously in the Australian context we have the baby bonus now, we also have many employers who offer the benefits of paid parental leave. We have said that we do want to see a scheme of paid parental leave in this country but we also want to get it right and that's why we are going through the process of expert inquiry and report.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: The UN report's also critical of the Government's lack of investment in child care. They say that it should be at least one per cent of GDP. That's more than double the current level of federal funding. Will you do something to address what the UN regards as a serious case of underfunding?

Read entire transcript:

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

[< top >](#)

Proper care a matter of quality

Natasha Bita, The Australian, December 13, 2008

HE clings like a koala to his mother, who is late for work. As she tries to coerce her cry-baby into the arms of another woman, mummy suppresses sobs of her own. A 20-year-old childcare worker cuddles the distressed child as mum departs. But with four other babies to look after today, for eight hours, she cannot give her undivided attention to this one for more than a few minutes at a stretch.

With no formal training, she is paid a minimum wage for what is a vitally important, frighteningly responsible, mentally tiring and physically exhausting job.

Often as not, bubs will calm after a few minutes and play the day away. But only a parent can comprehend the trust it takes to leave a child in the care of someone else. Once mum and dad walk out the door, how can they really know what goes on behind it?

They can't because the states and territories responsible for licensing and inspecting childcare centres and ensuring they meet standards of quality rarely make their findings public. So if a carer is sacked for smacking an infant, parents will not necessarily be notified. If a centre is understaffed, parents will not be told. If a centre is fined for keeping dirty or dangerous premises, mum or dad will be lucky if they hear about it through the car park grapevine.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24790686-32542,00.html>

[< top >](#)

ABC Learning

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 10 December 2008

The receiver of ABC Learning Ltd, McGrath Nichol, has today announced the findings of its review into the operational circumstances of all 1042 ABC Learning child care centres. The receiver has announced that an additional 64 ABC Learning centres will join the original 656 centres identified on 26 November as profitable centres.

It is now up to the receiver to determine the way forward for the 720 profitable centres.

The receiver has announced that 55 ABC Learning centres will close from 1 January 2009 and parents will be offered a place for their child in nearby profitable ABC centres or in a small number of cases, centres run by other providers.

The review of ABC Learning child care centres found that 241 centres are unviable under the ABC Learning business model. Under the Corporations Act 2001 (Section 420A) the receiver has an obligation to maximise the value of the assets. This means that under normal circumstances the 241 unviable centres would be closed.

The Rudd Government believes a number of these centres could be viable under different arrangements. The Government also believes these centres could represent an opportunity to gain greater diversity in the child care market.

The Rudd Government will provide up to \$34 million of additional funds to keep the 241 child care centres open into the New Year and if necessary until 31 March 2009. The Australian Government will make an

application to the NSW Supreme Court for a Court Appointed Receiver to be installed to work closely with the Government, landlords, staff and parents to ensure continuity of care for children while options are examined for a sustainable future for in these centres.

21 centres owned and leased by the Department of Defence will continue to operate with Government support while new management arrangements are determined.

The full list of ABC Learning child care centres will be available from 1pm on the company's website <http://www.childcare.com.au>

[< top >](#)

=====

RESEARCH

International mathematics and science study shows mixed results for Australia

Australian Council for Educational Research, 10 December 2008

The latest results from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) show that Australian Year 4 students have displayed some improvement in Mathematics achievement since 2003. But achievement levels of Australian students have remained static in Year 8 mathematics and Year 4 science and declined significantly in Year 8 science.

Results from the study involving 49 countries at Year 8 and 36 countries at Year 4 were released by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in Boston overnight.

Australia's national report was released simultaneously by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Internationally, Asian nations lead the way with the Russian Federation and Slovenia among those making big improvements since the last administration of TIMSS in 2003.

In Australia, a nationally representative sample of around 4000 Year 4 students from 229 primary schools and 4000 Year 8 students from 228 secondary schools took part in the TIMSS assessments in late 2006.

In Year 4, Australian students performed above the international TIMSS scale average in both Mathematics and Science. At Year 8, Australian students performed above the international scale average for Science and were on par with the international scale average for Mathematics.

"These results show that, overall, Australia is doing a very good job at educating students to an average standard," said ACER's chief executive Professor Geoff Masters.

Read more at http://www.acer.edu.au/timss07/images/uploads/MR_081210-TIMSS.pdf

Download highlights from the full ACER report, taking a closer look at mathematics and science in Australia at http://www.acer.edu.au/timss07/images/uploads/TIMSS_2007-AustraliaHighlights.pdf

Download the full ACER report at http://www.acer.edu.au/timss07/images/uploads/TIMSS_2007-AustraliaFullReport.pdf

[< top >](#)

Improvement in Maths and Science needed if Australia wants to count

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 10 December 2008

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study looked at the maths and science results of classes of Year 4 and Year 8 students in nearly 60 countries. The report found that Australian students perform relatively well in these fields, but also highlighted a number of areas of concern.

Australian students achieved results that were significantly above the average in maths and science at Year 4 - but only achieved at the average in Year 8 maths.

Year 8 science students' performance was also above average in comparison with their international peers, but had declined since the previous study undertaken in 2003.

Meanwhile, a number of other countries have improved their performance relative to Australia in both maths and science at Year 8.

Of particular concern was the widening gap in the results of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at the Year 4 level.

This 2007 study makes clear that Australian students are falling behind in maths and science. The Rudd Government is determined to reverse this deeply concerning trend.

The Rudd Government understands that high quality science and maths education is critical for building a strong, prosperous and innovative society.

It is vital more students go on to study science and maths after school, so Australia can meet the demand for these skills, which are critical to the nation's future.

Read more at

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

Download full details of TIMSS 2007 at <http://timss.bc.edu/TIMSS2007/index.html>

[< top >](#)

Our kids in worst class of bullies

Erik Jensen and Rachel Browne, Sydney Morning Herald, December 14, 2008

BULLYING in Australian primary schools is in the worst category in the world, a new study of education standards has found.

In the Trends In International Mathematics And Science Study, which surveyed schools in about 40 countries, more than a quarter of Australian year 4 students said they had suffered bullying.

The results have alarmed child-health experts and education bodies, which have been running strict anti-bullying programs in schools over the past six years.

Australian primary school students suffer bullying at a rate of almost 50 per cent above the international average, putting Australia in the worst category for bullying. Of the 36 countries sampled in the survey of year 4 students, only Kuwait, Qatar, Taiwan and New Zealand fared worse than Australia.

The research, which showed Australia lagging behind its neighbours and even Kazakhstan in maths and science education, found more than a quarter of Australian year 4 students had been bullied in at least three ways in the month before they were tested.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/our-kids-in-worst-class-of-bullies/2008/12/13/1228585181498.html>

[< top >](#)

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Aboriginal teens taught in primary schools

Natasha Robinson, The Australian, December 13, 2008

ABORIGINAL teenagers are still attending primary school in homeland communities in northeast Arnhem Land, where outstations are denied permanent teachers and students are taught to lower standards than white children at urban schools.

Mapuru homeland school, near Elcho Island at the northeast tip of Arnhem Land, is petitioning the Northern Territory Government to allow it to become an independent Christian school, after years of requests for authorities in Darwin to provide a permanent teacher fell on deaf ears.

The school, which has between 50 and 60 students regularly attending class, teaches only to preschool and primary school levels, despite students as old as 16 being enrolled and attending classes.

Fly-in teachers attend the school three days a week. The assistant teacher who works at the school, Jackie Nuluwidi, has taught there for almost 30 years, but is yet to be provided training as a qualified teacher.

Mr. Nuluwidi and fellow assistant teacher Roslyn Malngumba told The Weekend Australian at Mapuru this week that they had been asking the NT Government for years to properly fund their school, which compared with indigenous schools in larger towns, achieves almost 100 per cent attendance.

The NT Government's review of outstation services this week completed its two-week consultation process, with Patrick Dodson and NT Education Minister Marion Scrymgour touring the Territory and holding discussions on how much support the Government should offer about 500 outstations.

For years, the commonwealth and NT governments have badly neglected homelands, where about 10,000 people live. Infrastructure is crumbling, rubbish is not collected, and there are sanitation problems.

Under an agreement signed last year when the federal government handed responsibility for outstations to the NT, the commonwealth provided funding of \$20 million a year over three years for essential services at homelands. That is the equivalent of \$50,000 a year per homeland.

Mr. Nuluwidi and Ms Malngumba said they fear the NT Government is attempting to slip through a policy that will make homeland education untenable. That would mean parents having to send their children to board in nearby towns.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24792921-13881,00.html>

[< top >](#)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Option for students to be taught there's no evidence of God

December 14, 2008, The Australian

VICTORIAN state primary school students will soon be able to take religious education classes which teach there is no evidence God exists.

The Humanist Society of Victoria has developed a curriculum for primary pupils that the state government accreditation body says it intends to approve, The Sunday Age newspaper reported.

Accredited volunteers will be able to teach their philosophy in the class time allotted for religious instruction, the newspaper said.

As with lessons delivered by faith groups, parents will be able to request that their children do not participate.

"Atheistical parents will be pleased to hear that humanistic courses of ethics will soon be available in some state schools," Victorian Humanist Society president Stephen Stuart said.

The society does not consider itself to be a religious organisation and believes ethics have "no necessary connection with religion". Humanists believe people are responsible for their own destiny and reject the notion of a supernatural force or God.

Source: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24797718-2702,00.html>

[< top >](#)

The God allusion

Michael Bachelard & Liza Power, The Age, 14 December 2008

Peter Devereaux, a former principal who now has a senior role in the education department, said many schools had adopted a multicultural approach to Christmas without a religious theme, but there remained a strong expectation of some form of yuletide celebration.

"Some people are totally opposed to it, some just don't want their kids involved. And some strong religious people object to the commercialisation of it ... It's a challenge!" he says.

The Christmas experience highlights that more than 130 years after the original 1872 legislation set up the first "secular, compulsory and free" state schools in Victoria, the role of religion in government primary schools is still not fully settled.

In Victoria, state primary schools can offer two kinds of religious instruction.

The first, "general religious education", allows comparative religion to be taught in the curriculum as an academic subject, offering the ability to discuss religion in a "non-partisan" way.

The second, "special religious instruction", offers 30 minutes per week to accredited religious representatives of any belief system to come into the classroom and instruct children in the stories and rituals of their faith. Classroom teachers are not permitted to teach this subject — it is left to volunteers who are identified by religious institutions and accredited by one of two bodies on behalf of the State Government.

"Special religious instruction" is not an academic exercise, it is a spiritual one. In the Christian curriculum, by far the largest, children are taught to pray, they learn Bible stories, they are told that God created the world.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/the-god-allusion-20081213-6xym.html?page=-1>

[< top >](#)

DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Turn off the laptops so students learn

Editorial comment, The Australian, December 05, 2008

THE Rudd Government is to be congratulated that its real education revolution is taking shape after only a year, including performance standards, the public reporting of results and rewards for top teachers. The provision of a personal computer or laptop for every student in Years 9 to 12, however, will not lift education standards.

The Computers in Schools program will cost hundreds of millions of dollars more than originally estimated. As schools know, maintaining computers and running a reliable intranet to draw the best from the technology costs more than the capital investment. The cost blowout, however, is not the main reason to rethink the program.

The internet is many things. Used well, it is a vast, convenient library. It is also the world's largest repository of pornography, rumour and error. Broadband, PCs and laptops are not, despite political stunts, the basis of a "digital education revolution". Neither are they "the toolbox of the 21st century" as Kevin Rudd claimed in a catchy grab during last year's campaign. The best education toolbox for the 21st century is the same as in ancient Rome and the Victorian era: the human brain. In the wrong hands, the internet and computers impede rather than enhance its use.

In such subjects as English and drama, cutting and pasting slabs of text, instead of reading and analysing books and plays, is prevalent. Despite detection software, plagiarism and even buying assignments online is rife. Too often, studying Shakespeare means watching a DVD of Baz Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet. Watching it on individual laptops will not make it any more educational.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24752455-16741,00.html>

[< top >](#)

Supplementary Round Two Open for Applications

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 10 December 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today invited schools to apply for funding in the supplementary Round Two process of the Rudd Government's computers in schools program.

As announced following the most recent Council of Australian Governments meeting, schools that did not apply in Round One or Round Two of the National Secondary School Computer Fund are encouraged to take this opportunity to apply under this supplementary Round Two process.

Schools will have until 11 February 2009 to lodge an application.

The aim of this round, together with Rounds One and Two, is to bring all secondary schools with Year 9-12 students in Australia, government and non-government, to a national target ratio of 1:2.

The Rudd Government will invest more than \$2 billion in the Digital Education Revolution after agreeing to provide a further \$807 million to States and Territories for legitimate on-costs.

This funding will cover the legitimate on-costs incurred for computers purchased through Round One as well as future on-costs associated with subsequent rounds.

The additional funding of \$807 million will be paid before the end of the 2008-09 financial year.

Any schools which did not apply in the first or second round for any reason, including uncertainty over the issue of on-costs, have the opportunity to apply under the supplementary Round Two process.

Read more at

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

Read more about the National Secondary School Computer Fund at

<http://www.digitaleducationrevolution.gov.au>

[< top >](#)

=====

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leading Australia's Schools

Applications now closing 30 January 2009

Leading Australia's Schools is a challenging national leadership development program for principals from across Australia.

Teaching Australia recently invited applications for the 2009 Leading Australia's Schools program by 15 December 2008. This deadline has proved difficult, and the date has been extended to Friday 30 January 2009.

Principals are encouraged to consider applying for this challenging leadership development program.

Read more at <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au>

[< top >](#)

The Futures Focused School

Teaching Australia - Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

School leadership teams - principals, school leaders and parents involved in their school governance – are invited to participate in Futures Focused School workshops.

The Futures Focused School project is a professional learning activity designed to assist schools to incorporate futures thinking in their strategic planning.

Two day workshops will be held in metropolitan and regional areas around Australia from March to May 2009.

Educational Transformations, led by Brian Caldwell and David Loader, is working in partnership with Teaching Australia to develop and deliver the workshops and supporting resources.

Cost is \$250 per participant. 10% savings apply to registrations received by 31 December 2008 and school groups registering 3 or more people.

Read more at <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au>

[< top >](#)

=====

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Universities to merge in major overhaul as Bradley review recommends vouchers

Luke Slattery and Andrew Trounson, The Australian, December 12, 2008

UNIVERSITIES will be merged, a national voucher system introduced and incentives given to enrol students from low socio-economic backgrounds under recommendations being considered by the Rudd Government.

The reforms, which are understood to be contained in a 200-page report to Education Minister Julia Gillard by former University of South Australia vice-chancellor Denise Bradley, would consolidate the prestige metropolitan universities while leaving the future of several outer suburban, regional and remote campuses in doubt.

In anticipation of Bradley's recommendations, two NSW institutions, Charles Sturt University and Southern Cross University, yesterday announced they would merge to form a new national university based in regional Australia.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24788101-12332,00.html>

[< top >](#)

\$500 million to promote Teaching and Learning in Australian Universities

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 12 December 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced an injection of \$500 million into universities through a new Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for Higher Education.

The new fund will provide a one-off investment of \$500 million targeting capital expenditure towards the development of teaching and learning spaces in Australia's universities that are physically and technologically appropriate for 21st century approaches to tertiary education.

The Teaching and Learning Capital Fund is part of a \$4.7 billion nation-building infrastructure package announced by the Prime Minister today to support Australia's economy in tough times.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

\$580 million fast-tracked into Australian universities

Hon Julia Gillard MP & Senator Kim Carr, 12 December 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr today announced \$580 million would be fast-tracked into universities through the Education Investment Fund.

The Ministers approved 11 successful projects as part of a \$4.7 billion nation-building infrastructure package announced by the Prime Minister to support Australia's economy in tough times.

The successful projects were selected from 55 eligible applications received through the 2009 funding round of the HEEF.

This round focuses on capital expenditure and strengthening research facilities in Australian universities and the proposals selected highlight the diversity of the sector.

The proposals are across the teaching, learning and research spectrum, as well as a variety of disciplinary areas ranging from education and creative arts to medical research, engineering and science.

A full list of the successful projects is attached and further information on the Education Investment Fund is available at <http://www.heef.deewr.gov.au/EIF/>

Read more at

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/580millionfasttrackedintoAustralianuniversities.htm>

[< top >](#)

Funding boost lets universities focus on their strengths

Hon Julia Gillard MP, 11 December 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced funding of \$111.5 million to encourage greater specialisation among higher education providers and promote diversity across the sector.

More than 30 universities will receive funding for 49 projects through the latest round of the Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund.

Successful projects will help the higher education sector better respond to student and employer demand and assist universities in developing their distinctive missions.

Projects will promote innovative arrangements with partners in higher education and in vocational education and training, to create new pathways for students across the tertiary sector.

Many of the projects will also promote access to universities for students from low socio-economic status backgrounds, regional and remote Australia and Indigenous students.

A full list of successful projects is below and further information on the Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund is available at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/dsa>.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

\$500 million for TAFE and Community Infrastructure

Hon Julie Gillard MP, 12 December 2008

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced an injection of \$500 million into public skills and training infrastructure to secure economic activity, address the sharpest impacts of the economic downturn and increase the capacity of the training sector over the longer-term to meet 21st century skills needs.

The Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for Vocational Education and Training is part of a \$4.7 billion nation-building infrastructure package announced by the Prime Minister today to support Australia's economy in tough times.

The \$500 million will be distributed through two streams focused on modernising and improving the quality of teaching and learning across the vocational education and training sector.

Read more at

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

[< top >](#)

AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

NSW: Land for Islamic college obtained by deception, say Greens

The Australian, December 12, 2008

THE land on which an Islamic school is to be built in Sydney's southwest was obtained by deception, the NSW Greens claim. They are also demanding the state's education minister take back the land.

The Land and Environment Court gave conditional approval on Thursday for a 1200-student Islamic school to be built, despite the controversial plan having been rejected twice by Bankstown Council.

NSW Greens MP John Kaye said the first problem was that the college would generate a lot of traffic and have a severe effect on residential streets.

"The second is the land was obtained by deception. The government was told it was going to be a residential development, Garden View Apartments was purchasing the property," Dr Kaye told the ABC.

"When they first signed the contract for sale, it was signed to a company called Garden View Apartments with the understanding that it would be developed as apartments, as the name would imply.

"Just before the contract was finalised, Garden View Apartments exercised their right to change the name of the purchaser and they changed it to al-Amanah College."

At that point the government made a massive mistake, Dr Kaye said.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24789168-2702,00.html>

[< top >](#)

QLD: Protests as Muslim school seeks site next to church

The Age, December 4, 2008 (AAP)

Hundreds of Gold Coast locals marched on the city council's headquarters on Monday to protest against plans to open the Australian International Islamic College at Carrara. The march followed a public meeting last month, attended by 400 opponents.

Tony Doherty is a minister with the neighbouring evangelical Dream Centre Christian Church, and the spokesman for the Concerned Carrara Residents Group staging the protests. He said residents were opposed to the college for town planning reasons, including insufficient car parking in the street and the site's location on a flood plain.

Mr. Doherty also said it made no sense to build the Muslim facility next to the church. "They want to build it right next to the Christian church," he said.

If the project is approved it will be the second campus for the Australian International Islamic College, which was founded in Brisbane six years ago. College trustee Keysar Trad said the college was open to children of all faiths. "We are very open to taking in students of all different backgrounds, regardless of whether they are Islamic or not, or if they have no religion," he said.

A final council decision is not expected before February next year but mayor Ron Clarke has said the college is likely to win approval.

Read more at <http://news.theage.com.au/national/muslim-school-seeks-site-next-to-church-20081204-6r89.html>

[< top >](#)

QLD: Muslim school sacks teacher who wanted national anthem

James O'Loan, Herald Sun, December 05, 2008

A MUSLIM school has banned the national anthem at assemblies and sacked the teacher who asked for it to be played. Australian International Islamic College teacher Pravin Chand was sacked last month, four months after his proposal for students to sing Advance Australia Fair was ruled to be against the "Islamic view and ethos". A memo sent to teachers in July also announced "the singing of the anthem will be put on hold".

Yesterday, the Brisbane school denied it had banned the national anthem at assemblies.

The school chairman, Imam Abdul Quddoos Azhari, said students sang the national anthem "at every function, on every occasion".

But Mr. Chand, whose version of events was backed by a second teacher, said he had not heard the anthem once this year. "No national anthem, to me, means no integration with Australian kids," he said. "Western values (at the school) are a no-no. It's like a paramilitary camp, that place."

Mr. Chand's employment was terminated by the college board on the ground that he was "not fitting into the school's ethos".

Outgoing principal Azroul Liza Khalid, who started at the school in July, said she had not heard the anthem at assembly, although it was played on two or three other occasions. Ms Khalid said she was told by a board member not to play the anthem, or any songs, on a Friday because it was a holy day. In July, school assembly day was moved from Monday to Friday.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,24753262-661,00.html>

[< top >](#)

QLD: Red pen saga - teachers told to leave wrong answers blank

Patrick Lion, Courier Mail, December 04, 2008

TEACHERS at a Brisbane school were told to leave wrong answers by students blank, as marking it wrong would have hurt the child's confidence.

The case at Algester State Primary School on the southside has emerged in the wake of the red pen controversy this week involving Queensland Health warning teachers to stop using red pens as the colour was too "aggressive".

One teacher, who wished to remain anonymous, said he was shocked at the recent directive to leave answers blank. "They didn't want us to write anything," he told The Courier-Mail.

A spokeswoman for Education Minister Rod Welford said he was too busy to be interviewed and that he did not comment on "operational" issues anyway.

"There's nothing for our minister to say," the spokeswoman said. A one-paragraph statement from Education Queensland issued later failed to discuss issues proposed.

It came after the red pen controversy played out in State Parliament again, with the Bligh Government turning the tables on the Opposition over the source of the red pen advice.

It was contained in a Queensland Health kit given to 30 schools to provide a range of tips and hints on dealing with mental health issues in the classroom.

The Liberal National Party had claimed the document was "kooky, loopy, loony, Left policy" but the Government yesterday revealed the kit was initially released nationally by the Howard government in 2000.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,27574,24752391-3102,00.html>

[< top >](#)

QLD: Green high school gets Froggy award

Sunshine Coast Daily, 5 December 2008

Noosa District State High School now has its own Froggy. It's made of pewter but it's no less important than the real thing as it recognises a commitment to environmental excellence.

The Sunshine Coast Environment Awards – or Froggies – are presented annually by the Sunshine Coast Environment Council and this year it featured a sustainable schools category.

Science teacher Anne Bailey said sustainability had been part of the curriculum for some time but there were also changes afoot in the way the school was run on a day-to-day basis. She said the students, through the environment committee, were involved in external groups such as Landcare and Water Watch.

And within the school they had increased their efforts to recycle, conducted energy efficiency campaigns and created a permaculture garden.

The students demonstrated their awareness when they ran in the recent GetUp! climate change torch relay with members of Powerlines Action Group Eumundi.

SCEC coordinator Julie Failor said the school was recognised at the 13th instalment of the awards for its sustainable approach. "It is exciting to see a high school activating interest in education for sustainability by promoting and celebrating their contribution to a sustainable future," she said.

Source: <http://www.thedaily.com.au/news/2008/dec/05/green-school-gets-froggy-award/>

[< top >](#)

SA: Lack of quality science teachers threat to future

Clare Peddie, Advertiser, December 08, 2008

A LACK of top quality science teachers is a major threat to the state's economic future, a Flinders University professor has warned.

The Flinders Centre for Science Education in the 21st Century's director Professor Martin Westwell says there are many cases of "mission creep" where teachers are being redeployed in an attempt to fill the gaps.

"There are many teachers being asked to fill in positions that they are not qualified for or even comfortable with," he said. "Teachers who are not science teachers, who are maybe teachers of other subjects, being asked to fill in . . . Or teachers qualified in middle school level being asked to teach senior science subjects and things like that."

As a consequence, he says students are "voting with their feet", closing off career paths that are of strategic importance to the state.

They will be unable to make the most of the job opportunities that are opening up in science, engineering and technology, he said.

Professor Westwell will tomorrow deliver the recommendations of the Working Group on Science and Maths in Schools to the Premier's Science and Research Council. Quality teaching is top priority, in terms of both initial teacher education and ongoing professional development.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,27574,24765476-2682,00.html>

[< top >](#)

TAS: Life lessons lift learning

ABC News, Fri Dec 5, 2008

An innovative Tasmanian program, using games to teach students how to behave, is improving classroom attendance and literacy levels.

Gagebrook Primary School, in Hobart's northern suburbs, started the program about a year ago and its attracting interest around the state.

The Principal, Ben Stockwin, says the activities cover issues such as basic hygiene and resolving conflict.

He says the student's success is reflected at home and school.

"Our attendance rate has gone up from around on average about 14 per cent daily absence to around 9 per cent daily absence which is very close to the state average and our suspension rates have dropped by over 60 per cent over three years," he said.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/12/05/2439443.htm>

[< top >](#)

WA: Computer reporting error for WA school-kids

Paul Lampathakis, Perth Now, December 06, 2008

HUNDREDS of WA children could be getting the wrong marks and comments on their school reports. Teachers say a computer system malfunction means grades and remarks for Years 8 to 10 students have been input against wrong names. They say affected schools are using an old computer system and many hundreds of children were involved.

The Education Department confirmed yesterday that the system had crashed in 12 schools, but would not name the schools or say how many students were involved.

A spokesman said solutions had been provided for the schools so they could continue working on reports.

The deputy director-general of finance and administration, Peter McCaffery, played down the situation, saying a "very small number" of schools had reported a problem with the school report template. "It is not widespread and will not affect students receiving their school reports," he said. "The issue will be addressed on Monday and, if necessary, the reports can be produced centrally."

But teachers said so many children were involved they were not confident all mistakes would be picked up. They also expressed concern about Year 11 reports that had already been processed before it was realised there was a problem.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,27574,24760433-2761,00.html>

[< top >](#)

=====

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Net gains: How table tennis improves pupils' health and behaviour

Gordon Cairns, 27 November 2008

Table tennis, that most understated of Olympic sports, has been introduced in one of Britain's poorest areas to give pre-teens the chance to lead a successful, fulfilling and healthy life.

Although table tennis was introduced into the schools to tackle from an early age the health problems endemic in the community, head teachers are reporting a wide range of related positive results. Anecdotal evidence suggests discipline is improving and parents are using the sport as a carrot for unruly charges.

First, pupils come in before the school day begins to play ping pong. In one school this has made the incidences of lateness a fraction of what they were. This also means pupils are using breakfast clubs and getting something healthy into their stomachs early in the day.

Teachers have noted that regular players are more alert in class and self-esteem has been boosted as they have found something they are good at. Improved communication is another by-product: teachers are seeing difficult pupils in a positive light for the first time.

The head of St Clare's, Gerard McLaughlin, has already noted a change in the school "We have noticed fewer discipline problems since last year," he says. And he is impressed by the order imposed on the game's players. No research has looked at the long-term effects of the project, which is entering its fourth year, but the evidence is going in the right direction.

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/net-gains-how-table-tennis-improves-pupils-health-and-behaviour-1035970.html>

[< top >](#)

=====

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

VILTA Annual Conference

26-27 February, Melbourne, VIC

The 2009 Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers' Association's annual conference will be once again held at the Hemisphere Convention Centre, South Road, Moorabbin.

Read more at <http://www.mltav.asn.au/indonesian/content/view/146/163/>

[< top >](#)

CSEDU 2009 International Conference on Computer Supported Education

23-26 March, Portugal, Lisbon

CSEDU 2009 aims at becoming a yearly meeting place for presenting and discussing new educational environments, best practices and case studies on innovative technology-based learning strategies, institutional policies on computer supported education including open and distance education, using computers.

In particular, the Web is currently a preferred medium for distance learning and the learning practice in this context is usually referred to as e-learning.

CSEDU 2009 is expected to give an overview of the state of the art as well as upcoming trends, and to promote discussion about the pedagogical potential of new learning and educational technologies in the academic and corporate world.

Read more at <http://www.csedu.org/CFP.htm>

[< top >](#)

AAMT 2009 22nd Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers

13-16 July, Fremantle, WA

AAMT holds a conference every two years to showcase quality teaching in mathematics.

Teachers of primary, secondary and tertiary students as well as teacher educators, researchers and government representatives share and discuss initiatives to promote the learning of mathematics.

Participants from all states and territories of Australia as well as from other countries provide a rich source of teaching and learning ideas.

The diversity of contributions to the conference is a real strength and provides an opportunity not to be missed.

AAMT 2009 in Fremantle, Western Australia will be no exception; internationally recognised speakers in mathematics education will set the scene for stimulating discussions about the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Presentations and workshops by teachers will highlight effective classroom practices and exhibitors will present a range of the latest resources.

Read more at <http://www.aamt.edu.au/2009-conference>

[< top >](#)

REMINDEERS

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

11-16 January - Positive Education Conference - Corio, Victoria - <http://www.gqs.vic.edu.au/index.asp?menuid=200.060>

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

18-23 January - Positive Education Conference - Corio, Victoria -
<http://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/index.asp?menuid=200.060>

20-23 January - Australasian Computing Education Conference - Wellington, New Zealand -
http://www.cs.rmit.edu.au/conf/ace_2009/

2-5 March - BIG Skills Conference - Sydney Australia -
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/programmes_funding/programme_categories/Conferences/

3-5 April - WA Childcare and Early Childhood Education Conference - Perth, WA -
<http://www.waecec.com.au/>

16-18 March - IASTED International Conference on Web-based Education - Phuket, Thailand -
<http://www.iasted.org/conferences/home-644.html>

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

17-21 April - National Art Education Association National Convention - Minneapolis, USA -
<http://www.naea-reston.org/convention.html>

21 May - Education 09 - London, UK - <http://www.govnet.co.uk/education/>

4-7 July - CONASTA Science Education Conference - Launceston, TAS -
<http://www.cdesign.com.au/conasta58>

8-10 July - Education in a Digital Present: Enriching Rural Communities - Flinders University, SA -
<http://www.spera.edu.au/conferences/callforpapers.pdf>

[< top >](#)

=====

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.

Read more at <http://www.passporttoaustralia.com>.

[< top >](#)

Linguascope

The most valuable resource for schools for French, German, Italian, Spanish or ESOL - Year 1 - 12

Registration to **Linguascope** gives teachers access to thousands of resources - and enables every student to access to games and activities at all levels when they login at school - or at home.

When teachers discover Linguascope, they never want to give it up! With a re-subscription rate of 99%, it shows the value to teachers across Australia – and worldwide.

Linguascope's clear instructions and attractive colourful graphics will ensure that the site is a hit with your students. Linguascope encourages them to log on at school and home giving them the opportunity to revise and do extra study at night or during their lunch break. Students using Linguascope are able to work at their own pace, and teachers love it:

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

[< top >](#)

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 ten community languages.

Read more at <http://www.lote-at-home.com.au>

[< top >](#)

Educational Experience

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.

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

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

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

[< top >](#)

=====

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>