



# Australian Council of State School Organisations

The National Voice of Parents of Children in Australia's Public Schools and Their School Communities

## AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Volume 3 Number 2, 3 February 2009

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### BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

#### **New and Upgraded Buildings in every Australian School**

*Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister, 3 February 2009*

To boost jobs and invest in Australia's long term future the Rudd Government will build or upgrade buildings in every one of Australia's 9,540 schools.

Building the Education Revolution is a \$14.7 billion long term investment to improve the quality of facilities, like gymnasiums, libraries and science labs in Australian schools.

Building the Education Revolution will commence in 2008-09 and will:

- Build or upgrade large scale infrastructure, such as libraries and multipurpose halls in every primary school, special school, and K-12 school in Australia.
- Build around 500 new science laboratories and language learning centres in high schools with a demonstrated need for upgraded facilities.
- Provide up to \$200,000 to every Australian school for maintenance and renewal of school buildings and minor building work

This historic nation building investment by the Rudd Government will not only support jobs - it is also a down payment on the long term strength of the Australian economy.

By improving the quality of education received by every Australian child, this program will help deliver the stimulus of today and underwrite higher productivity tomorrow.

Building the Education Revolution is a key element of the Government's \$42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan to support up to 90,000 Australian jobs over the next two years.

Building the Education Revolution will commence in 2008-09 and will be rolled out over the next three years. Building the Education Revolution is divided into three key programs.

**Primary Schools for the 21st Century** is a \$12.4 billion long term investment to build or upgrade large scale infrastructure in all primary schools, special schools, and K-12s. New school buildings funded by this program will include libraries and multipurpose halls.

**Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools** is a \$1 billion long term investment to build around 500 new science laboratories and language learning centres in schools with a demonstrated need, readiness, and capacity to complete construction by 30 June 2010.

**Renewing Australia's Schools** is a \$1.3 billion investment to refurbish and renew existing infrastructure and undertake minor building works. Under this program, every Australian school will receive up to \$200,000, based on the size of the school, for maintenance and minor building works.

Building the Education Revolution will also help to support local communities, as a key requirement of the package is that major facilities in primary schools which are built or upgraded with this funding, such as halls or indoor sporting centres, are made available for community use at no or low cost.

Read entire Media Release at: [http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2009/media\\_release\\_0777.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2009/media_release_0777.cfm)

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## **Building a Better National Future through Education:**

### **Parents applaud Rudd Government's school infrastructure initiative**

*ACSSO Media Release 3 February 2009*

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"Every young Australian deserves access to the full array of high quality learning and development opportunities that will enable them to achieve their potential, lead fulfilling lives and contribute as members of a cohesive and productive society.

"High quality teaching is central - but to be fully effective such high quality teaching must be supported by facilities and infrastructure of a matching high quality, currency and availability.

"The parents of Australia's public schools in particular have long argued the need for a total, inclusive national upgrade of education buildings, facilities and infrastructure to a common national standard of excellence that will contribute to the best possible learning opportunities and outcomes for every child."

Read ACSSO Media Release at: <http://www.acsso.org.au/media/pdf/MR090203.pdf>

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## **School spending 'to boost productivity'**

*Julian Drape, The Age, February 3, 2009*

Pumping close to \$15 billion into the nation's schools is the most important infrastructure investment the federal government could have made, Australia's leading education union says.

The Rudd government will spend \$14.7 billion over the next three years to erect or upgrade buildings at all of the country's 9,540 public and private schools.

The money will be delivered through Labor's Building the Education Revolution (BER) package announced on Tuesday.

"It's a lot of money," Australian Education Union president Angelo Gavrielatos said.

"In addition to serving as an important economic stimulus, it will allow schools to engage in urgent maintenance and upgrade buildings and facilities.

"It is the most important infrastructure investment the government can make."

Read entire article at: <http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/school-spending-to-boost-productivity-20090203-7wmy.html>

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## **SUPPORTING FAMILIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

### **\$950 One-Off Cash Bonus to Support Jobs**

*Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister, 3 February 2009*

The Rudd Government today announced five key \$950 one-off payments for low and middle income households and individuals.

The Government is providing these cash payments to immediately support jobs and strengthen the Australian economy during a severe global recession.

These targeted cash bonuses are a key element of the Government's \$42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan to support up to 90,000 Australian jobs.

To immediately stimulate the economy in the shortest possible time, five groups of one-off cash bonuses will be paid in March and April 2009.

These five key bonuses include a:

- Tax Bonus for Working Australians of up to \$950 paid to every eligible Australian worker earning \$100,000 or less. This will support up to 8.7 million individuals.
- \$950 Single Income Family Bonus to support 1.5 million families with one main income earner.
- \$950 Farmers' Hardship Bonus paid to around 21,500 drought affected farmers and farm dependent small business owners receiving exceptional circumstances related income support.
- \$950 per child Back to School Bonus to support 2.8 million children from low- and middle-income families.
- \$950 Training and Learning Bonus paid to students and people outside of the workforce returning to study to help with the costs of education and training.

To support jobs in the middle of a severe global recession the Government must stimulate the economy in the most immediate manner possible.

For further details: [http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2009/media\\_release\\_0778.cfm](http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2009/media_release_0778.cfm)

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## **SCHOOLS WORKING TOGETHER**

### **More funds for school projects**

*Patricia Karvelas, The Australian, February 02, 2009*

JULIA Gillard wants to expand a groundbreaking Rudd government program under which government and non-government schools will share facilities after she was overwhelmed with submissions for funding.

Recording studios, arts centres, science and technology hubs, indigenous education and wetlands resource centres are among the 15 projects across every state and territory that will today receive a share of \$31.7million funding.

The initial plan is to fund 25 projects and evaluate the \$62.5million scheme after three years, but the Government now believes the program should be retained and expanded.

Ms Gillard said the projects chosen covered every state and territory and would "benefit metropolitan, regional and rural communities".

Labor seats are the big winners of the program, with 10 of the 15 projects in Government-held electorates, most of them with safe margins, while four of the remaining five are in marginal Coalition seats.

Ms Gillard said the projects selected would provide innovative education initiatives as part of Labor's promised education revolution.

"The aim of the program is to encourage government, Catholic and independent schools to work together to develop shared educational facilities that will broaden the benefit of government expenditure on capital infrastructure," the Education Minister said.

"This partnership also extends to third parties such as local councils or businesses where projects may feature a broader community benefit."

Read entire article at: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24994064-2702,00.html>

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## **DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

### **Elite private schools take big bite from laptop plan**

*Natasha Bitu, The Australian, January 29, 2009*

FREE computers will be handed out to some of the nation's most elite private schools under the federal Government's \$141 million computers-in-schools program.

Brisbane Grammar, which charges parents about \$14,000 a year in tuition fees, has been allocated 176 free computers as part of the program.

The second stage of the national IT rollout, announced yesterday, will equip nearly 1400 high schools with computers.

But while the scheme was designed to bring computers into the classroom of some of the poorest schools, the nation's most prestigious private colleges have not missed out.

Brisbane's Churchie College has been allocated 122 computers while Brisbane Boys College has snapped up 208. Both charge about \$14,000 a year in tuition fees.

Sydney Grammar School, where fees nudge \$23,000, received 100 computers.

Another 118 will go to Melbourne's Haileybury College, where parents pay \$21,000 a year to educate their youngsters.

Caulfield Grammar, in Melbourne's exclusive East St Kilda -- where fees can top \$18,000 -- has been handed funding for 215 computers.

Canberra Grammar, a popular choice with the nation's politicians and top public servants, which charges up to \$18,000 a year, will be given 107 computers.

Independent schools have received 16 per cent of the federal funding cake, with \$23 million given to 347 schools catering to 106,687 students.

Another 281 Catholic schools, with 145,000 students, will share in \$36.6 million in computer funding -- 26 per cent of the total.

The nation's 766 state schools will get \$82 million in funding -- 58 per cent of the total -- for their 315,000 students.

But the figure for public schools excludes NSW, which banned its schools from applying for computers until the federal Government provided extra money to program and maintain them.

A spokeswoman for NSW Education and Training Minister Verity Firth said yesterday schools were still in the process of applying for federal funds to buy a laptop for every one of the state's 197,000 senior students.

Announcing the funding results in Caboolture, north of Brisbane, yesterday, federal Education Minister Julia Gillard said computers were the "learning tools of the 21st century".

"We're very happy with the rate the schools are taking up the digital education revolution," she said.

Read entire article at: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24977702-12339,00.html>

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## **NSW teachers will be given laptops under \$44 million plan**

*AAP, February 01, 2009*

First it was students, now NSW's public high school teachers will receive their own wireless laptop computer as part of the State Government's plan to create "the clever state".

The \$44 million roll-out to 25,000 teachers is funded by both the State and Federal Government and will begin this year and be completed by 2012.

The announcement comes on top of a mini laptop program for NSW's 197,000 senior high school students launched last year.

"This is about helping teachers plan and deliver lessons on the net," Premier Nathan Rees said.

"This means students and teachers will be using the same laptop, giving teachers the tools to electronically plan and deliver lessons and work with the students in the classroom using the same technology.

"I said some months ago that we were about setting up NSW as the clever state and this is the first port of call, making sure that our schools and our teachers have the capacity to deliver lessons in a manner that is absolutely at the vanguard of education in Australia and anywhere in the world."

The computers are being promoted as a useful teaching aid and, as with students, teachers will not be able to access social networking sites Myspace or Facebook - both sites banned by the education department server.

Read entire article at: <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,27574,24992240-1702,00.html>

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## **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

### **Bid to lift Aboriginal education**

*Justine Ferrari, The Australian, January 17, 2009*

TEACHERS have called for the school year in indigenous communities to be extended to 48 weeks, and for the schools to take on the role of community centres offering after-hours courses and family assistance.

Australian Education Union federal president Angelo Gavrielatos, representing government school teachers, said it was time to explore different educational structures and models for indigenous students.

In his opening address to the AEU federal conference in Melbourne yesterday, Mr Gavrielatos said the federal and state teaching unions were prepared to discuss radical ideas to develop schools as education complexes that could build capacity within communities as well as improve the educational achievement of indigenous students.

"By any measure, we have a long way to go in order to achieve an equality of learning outcomes for indigenous students," he said.

"The actions of the federal Government with respect to the needs of indigenous students and their communities remain inadequate and misguided, to say the least.

"The provision of education to indigenous students cannot be more of the same."

Mr Gavrielatos proposed a number of models to be considered, including extending the school day and year, up to 48 weeks from 40 or 41 weeks, and establishing education complexes delivering pre-school, school and vocational education.

Read entire article at: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24923119-13881,00.html>

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Call for childcare industry shakeup

*Natasha Bita, The Australian, February 03, 2009*

CHILDCARE benefits for parents should be abolished and the money given instead to centres with the highest standards, the nation's commissioners for children have said in an attack on profit-driven daycare operations.

And in a drive to improve quality, childcare centres should start employing nurses to look after babies, the commissioners have told a Senate inquiry in a joint submission.

The commissioners - government watchdogs responsible for children's rights and guardianship from NSW, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia and the ACT - are calling for a shakeup of the childcare sector.

"Current policy on early childhood education and care does not go far enough to place children at the core of services," their submission to the Senate inquiry states.

"Providing subsidies directly to parents has not contributed to an increase in standards and has possibly caused a lack of balance between private and community providers. Direct grants to providers could link to staff ratios and qualification levels, giving providers a financial incentive to increase quality levels."

The commissioners criticise the profit-based industry model that fuelled the growth of corporate childcare chains such as ABC Learning, which collapsed into receivership last year. And they note that 70 per cent of childcare centres are privately owned.

"The complexity and relationship-based nature of early childhood care and education services means these cannot be managed in the same market-based way as other commercial industries," the submission says.

"Pressures to increase profits over children's needs can pose ethical dilemmas for staff."

The commissioners admit that reforms will come at a cost.

"Quality early childhood education and care services are expensive," they say.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/business/story/0,,25000187-5018471,00.html>

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### Tough new child-care ratios on the table

*Dan Harrison, The Age, February 3, 2009*

CHILD-CARE centres would be required to have a staff member for every three babies, under tough new quality standards being considered by the Rudd Government.

The recommendation by its expert advisory panel of 11 child-care industry representatives, academics and public servants calls for national minimum standards, which are stricter than any state or territory has been prepared to adopt until now. Currently, most states and territories require only one staff member for every five children under two years of age.

Western Australia and Queensland have a minimum ratio of one to four. Victoria last month released proposed regulations that require a ratio of one staff member to four children aged under three years.

The panel also calls for a ratio of one staff member to every 10 children between the ages of three and five. Currently in that age group, Victoria has the lowest ratio in the nation, requiring only one staff member for every 15 children.

Frank Cusmano, the chief executive of the Childcare Centres Association of Victoria, which represents about 450 centres, said higher staff-to-child ratios would be welcome but would make child care more expensive for families without extra government funding.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/tough-new-childcare-ratios-on-the-table-20090202-7vrc.html>

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## **Rudd child care ratings promise put on ice**

*Dan Harrison, The Age, February 2, 2009*

THE Rudd Government's election promise to rate child-care centres from A to E appears in doubt after its expert advisory panel warned such a scheme could lead to fee rises and parents leaving the workforce to care for their children rather than placing them in lower-ranked centres.

The expert panel - made up of 11 academics, public servants and child-care industry representatives - says while it supports the creation of a rating system, an A to E system could have "unintended and potentially negative impacts for families" and further research was needed.

"These consequences include potentially undermining family's confidence in their services - especially when choice of service is limited - and changing behaviours, such as exiting the workforce rather than using a service that is considered only 'adequate'," its report states. Lower rankings could also make it difficult for centres to attract staff, the report also suggests.

The panel also warns that higher-ranked services might increase their fees, reducing low income families' access to high quality care. It says the rating levels A to E carried "cultural understandings ... such as 'C' being 'average' and 'E' being a 'failure'," which do not fit comfortably with the content of the rating levels.

It says a five-star rating system was likely to cause similar problems. Instead, it suggests a more descriptive text format.

Currently, the National child-care Accreditation Council classify child-care centres only as "accredited" or "not accredited".

Barrie Elvish, the chief executive of non-profit child-care group C&K, and a member of the expert advisory panel, said parents needed a system that provided more information about centres.

"That's good for parents as far as their choice goes, but it's also good for the sector because then it creates some incentive for all services to get to a higher level," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/rudd-child-care-ratings-promise-put-on-ice-20090201-7ut6.html>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **World Conference on Higher Education**

*5-8 July 2009, UNESCO, Paris, France*

"The New Dynamics of Higher Education" is the theme of the World Conference on Higher Education. It will bring together key stakeholders to forge a new commitment to the development of higher education.

A global platform for innovative thinking, the 2009 World Conference will take stock of the changes in higher education and research since the last World Conference in 1998, address the dynamics shaping the strategic agenda for the development of higher education and identify concrete actions to meet national development objectives and individual aspirations.

A series of preparatory regional conferences will address specific regional concerns, expectations and proposals to bring to the 2009 World Conference.

Read more at [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=56642&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=56642&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

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## **Tipping Points: Courageous actions, Powerful stories**

### **ACEL International Conference**

*26-28 September, Darwin, NT*

An opportunity to discover the tipping points to breakthrough learning environments. Challenge Old Patterns, Realize New Possibilities.

This is your opportunity to hear from leading thinkers from around the world, not only from education, but also business, government, and nonprofits. Network with colleagues from Australia and countries around the world, learn about innovative approaches and best practices, and explore exhibits from leading companies - all with the exciting location and benefits of Darwin, Australia, as your backdrop!

The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) is the major professional association for educational leaders at all stages of their career from within Australia and throughout the world.

Read more at <http://www.ancel.org.au/index.php?id=858>

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## **REMINDERS**

21 February - International Mother Language Day - <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/language/index.html>

26-27 February - Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers Annual Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.mltav.asn.au/indonesian/content/view/146/163/>

2-5 March - BIG Skills Conference - Sydney Australia - [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training\\_skills/programmes\\_funding/programme\\_categories/Conferences/](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/programmes_funding/programme_categories/Conferences/)

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

21 March - Harmony Day - <http://www.harmony.gov.au>

23-26 March - International Conference on Computer Supported Education - Lisbon, Portugal - <http://www.csedu.org/CFP.htm>

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

15-18 April - International Outdoor Education Research Conference - Beechworth, VIC - [http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/research\\_conf\\_2009.htm](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/research_conf_2009.htm)

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/>

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

8-10 July - SPERA) National Conference - Flinders University, SA -  
<http://www.spera.edu.au/conferences/callforpapers.pdf>

13-16 July - Conference of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers - Fremantle, WA -  
<http://www.aamt.edu.au/2009-conference>

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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 fantastic 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>.

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### 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>

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### 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>

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## 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>

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

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

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## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

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

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at [letters@acsso.org.au](mailto:letters@acsso.org.au)

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