



# 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 15, 5 May 2009

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### A NATIONAL ISSUE: BULLYING

#### Bullying escalates at Toowoomba school

*Jim Campbell, Chronicle, 30th April 2009*

A SEVEN-year-old girl has been tearing her hair out because she is so emotionally stressed about being sexually abused by another student at Wilsonton State School.

The girl's mother contacted The Chronicle after seeing other mothers speak out about what they say is a bullying problem at the school. She said a year three boy had pushed her daughter into the boys' toilets on several occasions and exposed himself to her.

The mother said she called Education Queensland about two weeks ago because she was not happy with the response she got from the school. "The principal called me later that day and said the boy would be more strictly supervised, but that didn't last long."

She said the boy exposed himself to her daughter again on Tuesday while she was lining up to go into her classroom. "She has literally been pulling her hair out, she is so stressed."

Read entire article: <http://www.thechronicle.com.au/story/2009/04/30/bullying-problems-escalate-at-school/>

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#### Toowoomba school bullies' reign of terror

*Jim Campbell, Chronicle, 28th April 2009*

A GROUP of angry Toowoomba mothers has taken a stand against playground bullies terrorising their children at Wilsonton State School.

Michelle Dubery had to pull her eight-year-old daughter, Paris, out of Wilsonton State School to stop her being assaulted by schoolyard bullies. Loren Crabb and Natalya Edser are also considering pulling their children from the school after Mrs Crabb's seven-year-old son, Luke, broke his collarbone on Thursday when he was pushed to the ground by another student who was trying to start a fight.

Mrs Crabb said Luke was injured in the playground during lunch, but she was not contacted about the incident. She said staff put an icepack on his shoulder and he went back to class.

It wasn't until she took him to hospital that night that she knew how seriously he was injured.

Read entire article: <http://www.finda.com.au/story/2009/04/28/school-bullies-reign-terror/>

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## **NSW high school student a 'hermit' after bullying becomes rife in school**

*Saffron Howden, Northern Star, 21st March 2009*

A GROUP of parents at Casino High has banded together to demand action on bullying they say is 'rife' within the school. The five parents, one of whom has removed their daughter from the school due to bullying, say the bullies go unpunished while the victims are left without support.

Connie Scholl took her child out of the school at the end of Year 7 after she became a 'hermit' as a result of bullying.

Anne, who did not want her surname published, has two children at Casino High and said if she could afford to send them to a private school, she would.

Anne said bullying was a major problem throughout the school. And she thought the problem started with the school management.

Monica Killiby has taken her concerns directly to the NSW Department of Education and wants a formal investigation into the school. "They have a duty of care towards these kids and they're failing," she said. "It is mental torture. It is abuse. It starts right at the top with the headmaster.

Read entire article – and comments – at: <http://www.finda.com.au/story/2009/03/21/student-becomes-hermit-after-school-bullying/>

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## **Bullied may 'get it from all angles'**

*Saffron Howden, Northern Star, 24th February 2009*

THEA KEANE knows more than most about the long-term impact schoolyard bullying can have on a person. Thea, manager of relationship services at Lismore's Interrelate Family Centre, was bullied when she was at school.

"I felt very isolated, I felt alone and I felt that no one understood me," she said. "The experience of bullying has a big impact on you for many years."

But Ms Keane's experiences have helped her to better understand the families and children she now assists through her work.

Building self-esteem is the key to healing the scars of bullying, whether it occurs at home, in the workplace, or at school, she said. "When I'm working with kids who are being bullied, or have been bullied, it's working on their own self-esteem."

The Australian culture of self-deprecation discourages people from liking themselves, particularly in the self-conscious adolescent school environment, she said.

Ms Keane said some young victims of bullying were bombarded from all sides. "They're getting it from all angles," she said. "I've seen some kids who get no time out."

Read entire article: <http://www.finda.com.au/story/2009/02/24/bullied-may-get-it-from-all-angles/>

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## **NSW student suicide - it's time to stop young bullies and cyberspace bullying**

*Adam Parks & Patricia Williams, Northern Star, 30th August 2008*

BALLINA lawyer Vince Boss believes more teenagers would come forward with allegations of bullying in cyber space if they weren't afraid of the consequences in the schoolyard. Mr Boss said cyber-bullying was a 'big issue' for teenagers across NSW.

Mr Boss's firm is acting on behalf of the parents of local high school student Alex Wildman who took his own life last month amidst allegations of bullying. He said it was becoming apparent that it was a real issue, and was having a greater impact on the lives of young people than was generally recognised.

Mr Boss's comments come after Tweed Heads police interviewed a 16-year-old male from Banora Point yesterday in relation to a MySpace website called 'Let's kill Michael Murray'.

The site had 64 members and claimed it was 'exclusively for those who want to bash' the 17-year-old. Michael said he feared for his safety every time he left the house. "I can't go out any more. It only takes one of them to see me and the rest of them know where I am," Michael said. He said he was at a loss to explain why he was being targeted.

An Australian Democrats poll in 2007 suggested that one-in-five young Australians had been the victim of cyber bullying, which included threatening or offensive text messages.

Other research from the Queensland University of Technology suggests that nearly all teens will experience some form of mobile phone bullying by the time they finish high school.

Read entire article: <http://www.finda.com.au/story/2008/08/30/its-time-stop-young-bullies/>

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## **Surely enough is enough!**

*Concerned NSW parent, 6 December 2008*

If I verbally abused my children, if I destroyed their self esteem, continuously told them how bad they are, how ugly they are and that if they died nobody would miss them, then DOCS would step in and remove them from my care.

So why is it that this behaviour is allowed in our schools?

As a parent, we send our children to school to gain an education and to shape their future. We think that they are in a safe learning environment. So why is it that some children can make life a living hell for those that are different in some way?

And why is it that the schools are sweeping this behaviour under the carpet?

As a parent when do we say enough is enough?

Read more at <http://www.finda.com.au/story/2008/12/02/stamp-out-bullying/>

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## **“The Bullies’ Playground”**

*Four Corners, ABC, 6 April 2009*

In this program, children across Australia talk about the alarming impact of bullying on their lives. Despite major efforts from governments, schools and teachers, bullying remains an intractable problem made worse by modern technology.

Once it was fists, rocks and personal abuse - now bullies have the net, mobile phones and Facebook as their playgrounds for brutality. This isn't just concerning - it can be lethal, as reporter Quentin McDermott reveals.

"I would like someone to take the lead on what I consider to be the most important public health issue impacting on adolescent mental health in Australia today." Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

If you talk to the experts there's little doubt bullying is a problem that won't go away. Governments have invested tens of millions of dollars trying to stop it but often their efforts to curb the problem seem simplistic and ineffectual.

Now, in an attempt to assess the problem from the inside out, Four Corners has spoken to children who have been bullied and those that do the bullying.

View the program online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2009/s2533505.htm>

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## **COMPACT WITH YOUNG AUSTRALIANS**

### **COAG Secures a Compact with Young Australians**

*The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education and The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Youth & Sport, 30 April, 2009*

COAG today agreed to establish a Compact with Young Australians.

This will ensure that as we recover from the global recession, young Australians have the skills required to realise their potential.

Under the terms of the Compact agreed today, every Australian under the age of 25 will have a guaranteed education or training place.

This education and training guarantee will ensure anyone under the age of 25, including those who lose their job, will be able to take part in further education or training.

The Compact is based upon three core principles:

1. Anyone under the age of 17 must be earning or learning, you must be in full time school, training or work.
2. If you are under the age of 20 and are not working, you will be provided with a training place with the first priority - a year 12 or equivalent VET qualification.
3. If you are under the age of 25 and you are not working you are guaranteed a training place to ensure you have the skills needed to be part of the recovery.

The Government anticipates that the Compact with Young Australians will provide up to 135,000 young people with higher qualifications.

Read more at

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_090430\\_154925.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090430_154925.aspx)

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## Gillard tells young people to step up to the challenge

*Canberra Times 1/05/2009 (AAP)*

The onus is on young people without a job to keep themselves in education and training during the economic downturn, Employment Minister Julia Gillard says.

The federal government is tightening eligibility requirements for the youth allowance and family tax benefit, forcing young people under 20 to either earn or learn.

"What we're saying to young Australians is sitting around isn't an option," Employment Minister Julia Gillard told ABC Radio. "We're there saying to young Australians you need to step up. You need to step up by keeping yourself in education and training.

All the evidence showed that young people without a Year 12 qualification have a problem getting work.

Ms Gillard accepted some young people were living in difficult circumstances, such as homelessness. "But with creative provision of education, they can be back, back learning, back gaining self-esteem and self-respect, and back gaining opportunities that are going to make a difference for the rest of their lives."

The government did not want this generation of young people to bear an ongoing burden from the economic crisis, she said.

Ms Gillard could not say whether the education and training system would be ready from July 1 - when the new youth allowance arrangements start - to handle an expected influx of young people.

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/gillard-tells-young-people-to-step-up/1501721.aspx>

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## FAMILY-SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### Schools First

### \$5 million to support partnerships that improve student outcomes

Schools First is about bringing together students, teachers, parents and community members, to support each other and help improve student outcomes.

With a prize pool of \$5 million every year for three years, Schools First is a national awards program that provides:

- Financial recognition of success in establishing effective school-community partnerships; and
- Financial support to build stronger school-community partnerships.

In support of the awards and their objective, Schools First will also:

- Provide regional workshops to support schools and communities to form or strengthen partnerships and prepare submissions for an award;
- Showcase successful partnerships as a means of inspiring other school communities; and
- Assist in developing a "knowledge bank" of resources on which school communities can draw.

And it's open to all Australian primary and secondary schools, whether they're public or private, special needs, religious or independent.

The awards include up to 60 local awards of \$50,000 each and up to eight state awards of \$100,000 each. And one outstanding national award recipient will receive \$500,000 - \$1 million!

From March to June 2009, a series of 80 public workshops are being held in cities and regional centres around Australia. The workshops provide community and school participants with practical guidance on how to create successful school and community partnerships and strengthen existing ones.

The workshops also provide more information about how Schools First works, the awards criteria, and the way the awards are structured.

Workshop dates and locations and how to register for a workshop near you:

<http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/docs/SF-Workshops-110309.pdf>

General information and to sign up for the email newsletter: <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/cms-home/index.phps>

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## SCHOOL COMPETITION

### Does inter-school competition really lift standards?

*Trevor Cobbold, 30 April 2009*

Many recent studies around the world show that competition and markets in education fail to improve student performance; and create greater social segregation between schools.

The latest evidence on the failure of competition in schooling comes from a study on the impact of choice of religious schools on student achievement presented at the annual conference of the Royal Economic Society in the UK in April.

The study by academics at the London School of Economics and the Institute of Education concluded that there is "significant evidence that religious schools are associated with higher levels of pupil sorting across schools, but no evidence that competition from faith schools raises area-wide pupil attainment".

One of the co-authors of the study, Anna Vignoles from the London School of Economics, told The Economist magazine: "What is described as a quasi-market clearly is not working" (23 April 2009). The Economist itself was forced to concede that the pro-market and competition approach to education by Britain's Labor Government has failed: "That it hasn't worked is clear".

The study found no proof that providing parents with the choice of a religious secondary school either raised results or helped drive up standards in other local schools. Students in areas with more faith schools made no greater educational progress in secondary school in any of the four subject areas

tested than students in areas with fewer faith schools.

Read the full article: <http://soscanberra.com/>

The paper "Can school competition improve standards? The case of faith schools in England" is available at: <http://www.rebeccaallen.co.uk/publications.html>

*Trevor Cobbold is an independent education researcher and commentator.*

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## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### Revisiting Indigenous Education

*Helen Hughes & Mark Hughes, Centre for Independent Studies Monograph, 23 April 2009*

Literacy and numeracy of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in remote Australia have not improved in 20 years. A perceived gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has masked the real gap between non-performing Indigenous remote schools and mainstream schools, laying the blame for low Indigenous achievement on ethnicity rather than on education policies.

Because the causes of poor remote schooling have not been identified, government attempts to improve remote Indigenous schools have been ineffective. The National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in 2008 shows that:

- Indigenous students in mainstream schools in Victoria, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory perform at the same literacy and numeracy levels as non-Indigenous students.
- New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland have non-performing remote Indigenous schools. But the problems in the remote Indigenous schools of the Northern Territory are even more serious and systemic.

The Commonwealth government has increased funding for remote Indigenous education substantially, but the state and the NT governments have been unable to effect the policy changes necessary to improve remote Indigenous schools.

Australia undoubtedly has the resources to bring remote schools to mainstream standards within three years, but governments will have to take politically tough decisions to get rid of non-performing schools in this time frame.

Access complete paper at: [http://www.cis.org.au/policy\\_monographs/PM94.pdf](http://www.cis.org.au/policy_monographs/PM94.pdf)

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### Lights of hope flicker bravely amid indigenous gloom

*Mike Steketee, The Australian, April 30, 2009*

"THERE are lights of inspiration all around the country," Australian of the Year and Aboriginal academic Mick Dodson says. He discovered one last week when he visited schools in the Northern Territory with Chief Minister Paul Henderson. At Ngukurr in southeast Arnhem Land he found a community engaged with its school, with parent involvement, an active school council and an emphasis on local culture.

"That is not to say there is any neglect as far as mainstream education is concerned," Dodson says. "The kids are hitting the books hard, as well." He says attendance rates are among the best for a school of its type.

Dodson wants to use his appointment to focus attention on his initiative for every Australian child to be enrolled in school by the start of next year. In the context of tackling indigenous disadvantage, it is one relatively straightforward area in which to close the gap with other Australians.

As Noel Pearson, who has thrown his weight behind Dodson on this issue, puts it, if the problem of school attendance is solved, many other things start to flow: kids get a better education, have more chance of finishing year 12 and are more likely to find work.

Staying positive about indigenous affairs, as Dodson tries to do, is important because the alternative can lead quickly to despair. Today, he launches two reports commissioned by Reconciliation Australia and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum on how young indigenous people are faring, drawing particularly on the 10 years of census data since 1996.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25405534-5013457,00.html>

Access the two Reports at: <http://www.dsf.org.au/?catID=151>

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## **SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

### **No security for teachers of special needs pupils**

*Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, April 29, 2009*

ELIZABETH GAWTHORNE has spent 11 years working with children at Marrickville High School yet is still classed as a temporary employee.

As a school learning support officer, she works alongside classroom teachers, helping children with special needs.

While satisfying, the job provides no security from one year to the next. Further training opportunities are limited.

"I have 11 years of experience and can be told I'm not wanted next year," she said. "I am still classed as a long-term temporary employee. At the end of each year I have to see if I have a job the following year."

The NSW Public Service Association is starting a campaign on behalf of 5000 learning support officers this week in an effort to help them secure permanent employment and professional development from the Department of Education and Training.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/no-security-for-teachers-of-special-needs-pupils-20090428-am37.html>

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## **LANGUAGES EDUCATION**

### **2020 Summit: Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Awards**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 23 April 2009*

The 2020 Summit, the Youth Summit and the Schools Summit all recognised the importance of Australia being an Asia-literate country.

In response to this the Government is committing \$14.9m over four years to deliver a new scholarship

scheme: the Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Awards.

This commitment builds on the Rudd Government's \$62.4 million National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program.

Forty scholarships will be awarded annually to Australian university students, twenty at undergraduate level and twenty at postgraduate level.

The scholarships will allow the recipients to undertake one year of study in Asia, which can be followed by an internship or work placement also in Asia.

Ten scholarships will also be awarded to the top international Endeavour Postgraduate Awards scholars at PhD level from the priority Asian countries each year to study in Australia, with a maximum of two for any one country.

In the first three program years the following countries have been identified as priorities for both incoming and outgoing scholars: China (including Hong Kong and Macau SARs); India; Indonesia; Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

Applications for the first round of the Awards will open from May 2009 for scholarships commencing in 2010.

Read entire release:

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_090423\\_092319.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090423_092319.aspx)

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## **Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships**

The Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships (ELTF) offer Australian practising and trainee languages teachers with an exciting opportunity to improve their language proficiency and cultural knowledge through intensive short-term study programs.

The broad objectives of the ELTF program are to:

- provide practising languages teachers and trainee languages teachers with the opportunity to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of the languages and cultures about which they will teach
- help develop a pool of languages teachers with recent in-country experience and expertise as a resource at school, system, state/territory and national levels
- strengthen linkages between educators in Australia and in targeted countries
- promote the value of languages education in Australian schools
- strengthen mutual understanding between the peoples of participating countries.

More specifically the ELTF program aims to:

- provide intensive professional learning to increase language proficiency levels of languages teachers and trainee languages teachers
- strengthen networking among languages teachers and trainee languages teachers nationally and in each state/territory.

Applications for the 2010 Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships Awards are now open and will close on 29 May 2009.

Further details and Application Packs for practising languages teachers and trainee languages teachers are accessible from:

Practising Languages Teachers:

[http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/language\\_teachers\\_fellowships/practising\\_language\\_teachers.htm](http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/language_teachers_fellowships/practising_language_teachers.htm)

Trainee Languages Teachers:

[http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/language\\_teachers\\_fellowships/Trainee\\_language\\_teachers.htm](http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/language_teachers_fellowships/Trainee_language_teachers.htm)

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## HIGHER EDUCATION

### Survey confirms education can overcome disadvantage

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education. 5 May, 2009*

A survey of university graduate outcomes five years after university has found most Australian graduates are enjoying employment success and earning high salaries.

The 2008 Graduate Pathways Survey: Graduates' education and employment outcomes five years after completion of a bachelor degree at an Australian university is the first national study of its kind in Australia.

Prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research based on survey data provided by 9 238 graduates from Australian universities, the survey found 91 per cent of bachelor graduates from Australian universities were employed five years after graduation.

The median graduate salary rose from \$38 000 to \$60 000 in the first five years post graduation.

Read more at

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_090505\\_153635.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090505_153635.aspx)

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## RESOURCES

### MunchMonitor – the online school ordering system that saves you time and money!

MunchMonitor is a system enabling online ordering and cash-less payments by parents for school canteens, uniform/book shops, excursions, tuition & fundraisers.

MunchMonitor helps by:

- saving parents time & money
- improving student well-being
- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of school canteen/shop operations.

We've assisted school communities to achieve great success, recording sales increases by more than 25% at school canteens & cashless sales accounted for more than 55% of total sales after only seven weeks. Removing cash handling has also resulted in time efficiencies of up to 30 minutes per day, easing the pressure on staff and volunteers.

MunchMonitor will provide & install all equipment required. The system is very easy to use, as it was designed to reflect experience gained after volunteering over 200 hours at schools.

You will quickly find that the functionality of the system has a range of features that will benefit your canteen team, the parent organisation – and all the families in your school community.

For more information go to <http://www.munchmonitor.com.au>

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National Solar Schools Program



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## AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

### ACT: \$10m boost for talented, literacy and numeracy

*Emily Sherlock, Canberra Times, 2/05/2009*

More than \$10million will be allocated in the ACT budget to improving literacy and numeracy and recognising gifted students. The funding aims to reduce the gap between students in the highest and lowest achievement bands.

The centrepiece of the funding is \$5.9million, over four years, for 17 literacy and numeracy field officers to work in public primary and high schools. The officers will be in schools from next year. They will be responsible for providing expert advice and supporting the development and implementation of literacy and numeracy priorities. The officers will also strengthen student monitoring.

Students who speak English as a second language will benefit from \$3.1million spent to employ eight full-time specialist staff.

An additional \$428,000, over four years, will help fund a literacy centre, a joint initiative of the University of Canberra and the ACT Government.

Read more at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/10m-boost-for-talented-literacy-and-numeracy/1502385.aspx>

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### NSW: NSW school grounds used for drug, alcohol & violent crime

*Anna Patty & Heath Gilmore, Sydney Morning Herald, May 3, 2009*

A GROWING number of people are being caught committing drug and alcohol offences on school grounds after hours.

Figures from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show that liquor offences outside of school hours more than doubled between 2005 and 2008. The number of drug offences has also increased by a third over the same period and weapons offences have increased from 282 to 295.

There has been a slight increase in the number of explosive or dangerous devices, usually home-made bombs, being used on school grounds after hours. Rates of crime in other areas including arson have dropped significantly over the same three-year period.

NSW Secondary Principals' Council president Jim McAlpine said an increasing number of security fences were being built around schools. This and an increase in training for schools in "lock-down" procedures had helped give schools "a greater sense of security".

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/school-grounds-used-for-crime-20090502-aqrn.html>

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## **NSW: Mass disruptions at schools expected from stimulus building work**

*Daily Telegraph, April 29, 2009*

PARENTS have been warned to expect mass disruptions at NSW schools from building work as the Federal Government ramps up its stimulus spending.

The Government is spending \$14.7 billion in its Education Revolution, with \$12.4 billion for primary school projects over the next two years.

Planning Minister Kristina Keneally said yesterday students and teachers at some regional schools may have to move out while work is carried out.

The State Government has amended laws to allow easier construction of large school buildings such as gyms and two-storey facilities.

"Pretty much every school in the state will, over the next two years, be a construction site at some point," Ms Keneally said. "This is going to be a massive logistical challenge for us. Usually we would do major school construction during the school holidays. That's typically not going to be possible with the amount of construction activity that's taking place."

She said it was inevitable some schools would be forced to relocate during construction work.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,25400309-5013110,00.html>

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## **NSW: So much haste, so much waste**

*Editorial comment, Sydney Morning Herald, April 21, 2009*

IT WAS depressingly predictable that the NSW Government, when confronted with a gift horse, would look it in the mouth.

Given the unexpected bonus of a multi-billion-dollar windfall from Canberra, in the form of Kevin Rudd's manic dash to spend on education, the State Government has typically deflected and diluted the impact of the project by squandering money.

Once again, the Labor Government's behaviour creates the impression it is a patronage machine first, with public service coming second and public sector efficiency a distant third.

A pattern of misallocation, over-spending, over-charging, over-pricing, and generally slovenly standards in the implementation of the \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution stimulus package is beginning to emerge in NSW.

Some egregious examples have been encountered by the Herald's education editor, who is hearing from aggrieved school principals. The worst examples are bloated centralised costings from the NSW Department of Education of \$2 million for constructing prefabricated buildings, when permanent structures could be built by local contractors for half the price.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/editorial/so-much-haste-so-much-waste-20090420-acmi.html>

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## **NT: Caffeine crackdown at school canteens**

*ABC News, Apr 28, 2009*

Some soft-drinks and iced coffee will be removed from Northern Territory school canteens this year in a bid to promote healthy eating - but some education groups are warning the move could affect school attendance.

The Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations says the changes are being phased in over this school term as part of a draft national policy.

The council's vice president, Michael Duffy, says the aim is to improve health outcomes for children but he says it could have unintended consequences in senior schools.

"One of the senior colleges, the school council there is not particularly happy with the sudden arrival of this policy," he said. "They hadn't actually had time to work out the implications of it but one clear one for them is senior kids leaving school at lunch time because they want a wider choice or they want their favourite junk food. And the difficulty there is getting them back."

He said: It's all very well meaning but I'm not sure that schools have had quite enough time to think about how they're going to do it."

The Territory Education Union's Adam Lampe says the bans will also be blow for canteen owners, as it will make them far less profitable.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/04/28/2554400.htm>

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## **NT: Change to school leaving age**

*ABC News, Apr 29, 2009*

It will be compulsory for all Territory students to complete year 10 from next year, the Northern Territory Government says.

Currently, Territory students can leave school when they turn 15, meaning some miss out on completing year 10.

The Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, also says students who want to leave school after year 10 will be forced to do training or get a job.

"We believe at the moment there are around 2000 students at the age of 15 and 16, who are not in the permanent workforce and who are not at school.

"So this is a significant reform."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/04/29/2556159.htm>

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### **NT: School leaving change 'bad for teachers'**

*ABC News, Apr 30, 2009*

A plan to keep all students in school until the end of year 10 will make class control extremely difficult for teachers, the Northern Territory branch of the Education Union says.

The union's Rod Smith says students who do not want to be in class will disrupt other pupils.

"When you force people to go to school, they can flout those rules as much as they like," Mr Smith said. "So what are you going to do? You're probably going to suspend children who can't cope - and that's exactly what they want."

The Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations has also expressed doubts about the plan.

COGSO vice president, Michael Duffy, says the plan will not work without adequate facilities and teachers to take on the extra students.

"It brings us into line with the other states and the Act.

"Whether it's a good idea or not depends on whether the Northern Territory system is really geared up to take young people beyond the age of 15, and I'm particularly thinking about remote schools."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/04/30/2556768.htm>

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### **QLD: Qld Govt looking at testing teachers on literacy, numeracy**

*Chris O'Brien, ABC News, May 1, 2009*

An education expert has recommended that Queensland school teachers be tested before they teach reading, maths and science.

Education researcher Professor Geoff Masters has made five recommendations to improve Queensland's annual results in national literacy and numeracy tests.

He says primary school teaching graduates should be tested themselves and existing teachers should get advanced training.

"There are some teachers who are coming out of pre-service teacher education and development whose skills could be further developed," he said.

Professor Masters says aspiring primary teachers should demonstrate their knowledge through test performances.

"On entry to any profession now, there are standards that people are expected to meet," he said.

"In teaching it would make sense for us to set standards, to set expectations for the kinds of knowledge that teachers should have."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/05/01/2558205.htm>

Access the Report at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/mastersreview/pdfs/final-report-masters.pdf>

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## **SA: Maths and science key to new jobs era**

*Deputy Premier Kevin Foley, 1 May 2009*

The State Government is embarking on a major campaign to promote careers in the defence and resource sectors to young South Australians.

Using the slogan, 'There's More To It Than You Think', the campaign is encouraging Year 9 and 10 students to consider careers in the State's future growth industries and to choose maths and science as a pathway to these careers.

Deputy Premier Kevin Foley has endorsed the campaign, which is being launched at the National Careers and Employment Expo at Wayville Showgrounds this morning.

Mr Foley says: "We need more students thinking about careers in science, engineering and technology, as well as the mechanical, electrical and construction trades.

"Notwithstanding the current economic slowdown, the State's future prosperity will continue to be driven by defence, resources and energy, ICT/electronics, advanced manufacturing and construction.

"Remembering that career choices are targeted at opportunities 7 to 10 years in the future, now is the time to be preparing the new engineers, scientists, technicians and tradespeople that will be needed to support these industries," Mr Foley says.

Read more at <http://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=4714>

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## **SA: Big investment for SACE teachers**

*Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith, April 29, 2009*

Work to prepare teachers for the start of the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is continuing this term, with workshops and conferences planned throughout the State.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says training is well advanced to ensure teachers are ready for next year's introduction of the new SACE for Year 11 students.

"Since 2007, the Government has invested more than \$10 million in professional development for teachers, and for trialling new SACE subjects in schools so that skilled teachers can help in creating better opportunities for young people," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"The new SACE will deliver greater opportunities for young people to succeed beyond school, so we need to ensure teachers are fully prepared to guide students through the new senior secondary system."

Read more at <http://www.premier.sa.gov.au/news.php?id=4693>

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## **TAS: Primary Schools for the 21st Century**

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education. 4 May, 2009*

Today we are here for an exciting announcement. Earlier this year the Prime Minister announced that the Rudd Government would be investing \$42 billion in a Nation Building and Jobs plan.

The single biggest component of that Nation Building and Jobs plan is investment in schools right around the country. Now the Nation Building and Jobs plan is here today to support jobs during the global recession, but while supporting jobs we are building the 21st century infrastructure that our schools need.

The biggest component of the \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution plan is to put new learning spaces into primary schools like this one.

The new multi-purpose learning facilities that primary schools need, libraries for the 21st century and new classrooms that meet new learning needs for children today.

I'm very pleased today to be able to announce with the Premier of Tasmania that the first 20 per cent of the Primary Schools for the 21st Century Building the Education Revolution program projects have come to Tasmania.

Today I'm able to announce that we are investing almost \$100 million in 51 primary schools around Tasmania including this one.

Read more at

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article\\_090505\\_080957.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article_090505_080957.aspx)

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## **VIC: Middle Kinglake Primary School re-opens after bushfires**

*John Masanauskas, Herald Sun, April 29, 2009*

WHEN Middle Kinglake Primary held its first assembly since the Black Saturday fires, the singing of the school song stirred up deep feelings.

"It was written for the centenary and one verse says may we 'be here for 100 years more'," principal Janette Cook said yesterday. "Some parents and staff found that quite emotional. Everyone was just so pleased to be back together."

The school was hit hard by the tragedy: the building was destroyed, three students died and more than 40 were left homeless.

The school community was split up as students and teachers were sent to different schools.

But just a few months later Middle Kinglake is back in business, on its original site.

The 124 students and 22 staff will be in portables until their school is rebuilt, but that's not a worry.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,25403100-2862,00.html>

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## **VIC: Helping hand for foreign students**

*Sushi Das, The Age, April 29, 2009*

A NEW Melbourne support service has been set up to help foreign students who are exploited by

unscrupulous colleges, employers and landlords.

Overseas Student Support Network Australia (OSSNA) is liaising with the Federal Government to deal with students' complaints, amid growing concern that students' negative experiences in Australia could harm the nation's \$13.7 billion international education industry.

Executive director Robert Palmer said OSSNA had been inundated with requests for help since it was established in February, with up to 20 students a day seeking help, advice or information. Mr. Palmer said foreign students were vulnerable because they were young, inexperienced, isolated and often homesick.

A combination of their lack of local knowledge, unfamiliarity with Australian culture and limited English meant they sometimes did not know who to turn to in difficult times. A significant number came from countries run by oppressive regimes or had cultures that fostered a fear of government.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/helping-hand-for-foreign-students-20090428-am2k.html>

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## **WA: WA schools shine in national indigenous education awards**

*Education Minister Liz Constable, 30 April 2009*

Five Western Australian public schools have excelled in a national awards program that recognises work done to improve the education of Aboriginal students.

East Kalgoorlie Primary School, Karratha Senior High School and One Arm Point Remote Community School were among the high-achievement winners in the Dare to Lead Excellence in Indigenous Education Awards announced today by the Federal Government.

East Waikiki Primary School and Narrogin Primary School were named among the winners of the achievement category.

Western Australian Education Minister Liz Constable said the success of the schools' programs demonstrated that change could be achieved through hard work, leadership and creativity.

"These five programs are shining examples of the focused, innovative work that will help us close the gap between the educational outcomes of indigenous and non-indigenous students in WA," Dr Constable said.

Read more at <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=131763>

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## **WA: Teachers, students to benefit from new energy resource**

*Education Minister Liz Constable, 30 April 2009*

Science students will have a greater understanding of energy and alternative sources thanks to a program launched today by Education Minister Liz Constable.

The BP Energy Education Program, developed by two teachers from Warnbro Community High School with funding from a BP Education Grant, would be provided to every Western Australian secondary school.

Dr Constable, who launched the resource at Duncraig Senior High School, said the program would

allow students to study 11 different areas, including alternative energy sources and oil and gas production.

The resource could be used as individual modules or as a continuous program. It was suitable for science; and society and environment courses across years eight to 10.

BP planned to put the program on its website to allow teachers to adapt it to suit their classes.

Read more at <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=131757>

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## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### National Online Conference for Parents:

**“What support do parents need to be active participants in their children’s learning and development?”**

*18-24 May 2009*

Parents of primary and secondary students, in all locations, are invited to take part in the third online conference, hosted by Parents Victoria. The conference will be held non-stop on the internet from 6am Monday 18 May to midnight Sunday 24 May. No special software is needed, other than an internet-connected computer and a browser. The online discussions will be very easy to join in, and guidelines about how to participate will be provided. Join in for all days, just some days, or even a few hours, depending on your lifestyle and other commitments.

Register online at no cost. The Parents Victoria Online Conference 2009 website will open from 6am on 18 May at: [http://www.cybertext.net.au/pv1\\_09/](http://www.cybertext.net.au/pv1_09/) but please register yourself online first at <http://www.cybertext.net.au/pv09.htm>

Each day, the conference will discuss one of the following questions:

- Parent/teacher meetings - how could these meetings be improved?
- School attendance - when is it okay to stay away?
- Transition - what could be done to improve transition from one level of schooling to the next, i.e. kindergarten to primary, year 6 to secondary?
- Cyberbullying - how do we keep our children safe?
- Sex education - who's responsible?
- Banning confectionery from school canteens - tell us your thoughts (this will be hosted on Thursday 21 May by Prue Cerin from the Victorian School Canteen Association)
- Parental engagement - What can be done to get more parents involved in their children's schools?

For details: <http://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au>

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## Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY) 2009 Conference

**“Making Prevention Work”**

*2-4 September 2009, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre*

The central aim of the ARACY Conference is to present and explore preventive innovations and initiatives that are improving the well-being of children and young people. Conference sessions will be

directly and widely relevant to those working in both public and non-government sectors, and those operating across sectors, disciplines and professions.

Call for Abstracts extended to 7 May 2009

Conference registration is now open. Further information on the provisional program and on invited and keynote speakers at: <http://www.aracyconference.org.au>

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## **Curriculum: a national conversation - The 2009 Biennial Conference**

### **Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA)**

*2-4 October 2009, Hotel Realm, CANBERRA*

As Australia moves progressively and positively towards the development of a national curriculum, this major event will facilitate a dynamic discussion around contemporary and emerging curriculum issues. This three-day conference aims to involve teachers, academics and curriculum specialists in a conversation about where we are now, and what the future may hold.

So this conference will provide keynote addresses to inspire you, panel discussions to challenge you, workshops to inform and engage you, intervals to enable you to network with others – and even some events to entertain you.

To find out more visit the ACSA Website <http://www.acsa.edu.au>

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## **REMINDERS**

March-May - Teaching Australia Workshops and Masterclasses - locations around Australia - <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au>

7-9 May - Australian Group on Severe Communication Impairment Conference - Canberra, ACT - <http://www.agosci.org.au>

8 May - Nominations close for Prime Minister's Prizes for Science and Science Teaching - <https://grants.innovation.gov.au/SciencePrize/Pages/Home.aspx>

15 May - National Walk Safely to School Day - <http://www.walk.com.au>

15 May - MLTAV Annual Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.mltav.asn.au/content/view/200/>

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

25 May - Boys & Learning Conference - Parramatta, NSW - <https://aben-2009.schoolevent.org>

26 May - Boys & Learning Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <https://aben-2009.schoolevent.org>

31 May - Australian Rural Education Awards nominations close - <http://www.spera.edu.au>

15-16 June - Communities in Control Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2009>

19 June - Nominations close for Australian Awards for Teaching Excellence - <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au>

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

5-8 July - World Conference on Higher Education - Paris, France - [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)

5-10 July - Youth ANZAAS 2009 - Melbourne, Victoria - <http://www.anzaas.org.au/youth.html>

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

9 July - Registration closes for Environmental Song for Australia Contest - <http://www.imex.net.au/envsoncont.html>

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

31 July - Nominations close for ASG Inspirational Teacher Awards - <http://www.neita.com>

31 July-1 August - NSW Federation of Parents' & Citizens' Associations Annual Conference - Penrith, NSW - <http://www.pandc.org.au/annual-conference.seo>

6-7 August - Professional Development Network School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.griffith.edu.au/conference/professional-development-network-leadership-conference-2009>

13-14 August - Isolated Children's Parents' Assoc. of Australia Federal Conference - Longreach, QLD - <http://www.icpa.com.au>

26-28 September - ACEL International Conference - Darwin, NT - <http://www.ancel.org.au/index.php?id=858>

12-13 October - ACSSO National Conference - Hobart, Tasmania - <http://www.acsso.org.au/natconf09/>



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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)
- Family School Partners : [http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page\\_id=6](http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6) (quarterly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (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). Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information only; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation.

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