



# 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 19, 2 June 2009

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### COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

**Teachers must be held to account:**

**Concealing poor results reinforces educational disadvantage**

*Editorial, the Australian, 28 May 2009*

If ever the Rudd Government needed to smash provider capture it is now, with teachers and school principals threatening rearguard blackmail to derail the essential shift towards transparent reporting of school performance.

By threatening to stop members conducting national literacy and numeracy tests or to withhold results, teachers' unions and principals' associations have betrayed their real intention: to shield their members from community scrutiny.

Should they succeed, the losers will be students, the wider society and the economy.

The row centres on educators' demands for legislation to prevent publication of school-by-school results - so-called league tables. The outburst appears to have been prompted by the admirable work of two state-based newspapers, The Courier-Mail in Queensland and The Mercury in Tasmania.

The newspapers put the public interest first by publishing school-by-school results from national literacy and numeracy testing.

Read entire editorial: <http://tinyurl.com/mkbwg7>

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## Using league tables to keep score of schools entrenches division

*Chris Bonnor, May 29, 2009*

Despite the denials and spin, it was just a matter of time before national assessment test results appeared in the form of school league tables.

Even the weak set of principles and protocols agreed by all governments didn't stop the recent publication of lists of schools, ranked by student achievement, in Tasmania and Queensland.

The newspapers that created league tables out of these tests have also dished up generous serves of high-minded rhetoric about transparency, the right to know and school choice.

While some cautions were issued along with the lists of schools, there was nothing about the errors, false assumptions and borderline fraud inherent in publishing such information.

The recent outbreak of school league tables represents a new low standard in misinformation about schools, but one aided and abetted by official encouragement and confusion.

While the Rudd Government previously declared that such tables "will not be a product of the new framework", Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who is also Education Minister, only a few days ago welcomed "the cleansing sunshine of public scrutiny".

So what is wrong with throwing the spotlight on comparative school performance? Years ago I almost convinced a tabloid journalist to run a shock-horror story on the fact that 50 per cent of school students were persistently below average. The penny eventually dropped.....

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nzoqng>

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## School league table plans 'oppressive'

*Emma Macdonald, Canberra Times, 28/05/2009*

State and territory education ministers are too scared of losing billions of dollars in federal funding to oppose Rudd Government plans to allow league tables of schools, a former Dean of Education at the University of Melbourne says.

International education consultant Professor Brian Caldwell said new reporting standards agreed between the states, territories and Commonwealth would lead necessarily to league tables and direct comparisons of schools and this would spell disaster for Australia's education system.

Newspapers in Tasmania and Queensland have already published league tables based on preliminary school results with other states and territories set to follow once governments publish school results on the internet by the end of the year.

Professor Caldwell will deliver the Agitation Hill Lecture in Castlemaine, Victoria, tomorrow in which he will condemn the Rudd Government's \$14.7billion planned spending on school infrastructure as wholly inadequate.

Professor Caldwell said this figure would need to be tripled if planned expenditure in Britain was used as a benchmark for Australia.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nnnuub>

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## **Education agitation against "league tables"**

*Professor Brian Caldwell, ABC Radio "Life Matters" 28 May 2009*

League tables (school performance results) should be banned by parents and teachers.

The government's insistence on making results public defies most professional advice, and ignores international experience, according to educational consultant Professor Brian Caldwell.

He's calling on parents and teachers to reclaim their local schools, and use 'radical dissent' to prevent the government from publishing school data.

Listen now or download audio at <http://tinyurl.com/n74ruh>

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## **Want world class schools? It's time to agitate!**

*Brian J. Caldwell, Agitation Hill Lecture, 29 May 2009*

Agitation Hill in Castlemaine was the site of a major uprising in 1853 following the decision of Governor La Trobe in 1851 to introduce a monthly licence fee on the goldfields of Victoria. Others were the Monster Meeting at Forest Creek, the Red Ribbon Rebellion around Bendigo and the dramatic events at Eureka in Ballarat in 1854.

These agitations and the language of radical dissent they invoked were key events in the story of democracy and responsible government in Australia.

It is time for the community to adopt the language of radical dissent; agitate for significant, systematic and sustained change; and above all, become more fully engaged in the governance of public education.

This is necessary if Australia is to have world-class schools in which all students in all settings secure success. It is necessary but not sufficient for this engagement to occur at the level of peak organisations of teachers, parents, businesses and governments.

It must occur in dramatically different ways at the local level.

Read entire lecture at: <http://tinyurl.com/lu8n8z>

*Brian J. Caldwell is managing director of Educational Transformations and professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne where he was dean of education from 1998 to 2004. This paper was delivered in the Agitation Hill Lecture Series in Castlemaine on 29 May 2009.*

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## **PRESSURE ON PRIVATE SCHOOL PARENTS**

### **Private schools move to bankrupt parents**

*Peter Hawkins, Sydney Morning Herald, May 30, 2009*

Sydney's private schools have been trying to force parents into bankruptcy to recover millions

in unpaid school fees, and the numbers are expected to soar as the financial crisis worsens.

Recent court records show the elite schools St Joseph's College, SCECGS Redlands, Kincoppal-Rose Bay, The Scots College, St Stanislaus College in Bathurst and Cranbrook School have started bankruptcy proceedings against 13 families to recover more than \$500,000. This follows earlier reports that every week parents are losing their homes to bankruptcy actions brought by schools owed up to \$2 million in fees.

Roger Mendelson, the chief executive of Australia's largest debt collector, Prushka, said there had been a 25 per cent increase in schools pursuing debtors to bankruptcy in the past year. But Mr. Mendelson, who represents about 20 Sydney schools, predicts it will get even worse.

"I'm expecting quite a big spike towards the end of this year of parents who are in arrears now, but the schools haven't taken action yet," he said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mkfmkh>

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## **Wealthy private schools show no mercy to parents in trouble**

*John Kaye MP, Media release: 30 May 2009*

The public purse shows abundant generosity to six elite institutions that are driving parents who fall on hard times into bankruptcy.

Dr Kaye said: "St Joseph's College Hunters Hill, SCEGGS Redlands, Kincoppal, Scots College, Cranbrook and St Stanislaus College receive \$23.9 million from the state and federal governments each year. Despite these handouts and their huge resource bases, these elite institutions are pursuing parents who have fallen victim to the global financial crisis.

"While this is normal behaviour for a business, schools are supposed to demonstrate qualities like generosity and mercy. Instead these schools with luxury facilities are showing their students it is ok to kick people while they are down.

"Each of these institutions has plenty of capacity to cushion families against economic hard times. They could have spent some of their use the \$23.9 million dollars in government subsidies to allow these families to pay their fees after the economy had improved.

"NSW Education Minister Verity Firth should justify the continued funding of schools like Cranbrook, SCEGGS and Scotts. I think she would find it a difficult task," Dr Kaye said.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/nok6kf>

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## **CYBER-BULLYING**

### **Bullying in our schools under reported and cyber bullying on the rise**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 1 June 2009*

Research released today by the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard shows the prevalence and impact of covert bullying in Australian schools is under-reported and there has been a concerning increase in cyber-bullying.

The reports, the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study and Behind the Scenes: Insights

into the Human Dimension of Covert Bullying, provide valuable insights into the changing nature of bullying.

The research, which involved 7000 young people from 124 schools around the nation, found bullying and particularly cyber bullying to be cruel, torturous, ostracising and intimidating.

Most disturbingly, many of these young people said they did not report incidents of cyber bullying because they were scared their mobile phone or computer would be taken away from them.

Both reports recommend a review of the 2003 National Safe Schools Framework. The Australian Government has already commissioned Erebus International to undertake the review of the Framework. As part of the review process, school leaders, teachers, families and appropriate stakeholders will be consulted. The review is expected to be completed by the end of May 2010.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/oeshz3>

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## **South Australia strengthens power of principals to counter cyber-bullying**

*Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP, Minister for Education, 28 May 2009*

The power of principals to protect their students from bullying has been extended beyond the school gate, in response to the widespread reach of techno-savvy bullies.

Principals are now able to suspend or exclude students who threaten the safety or wellbeing of others in the school community, regardless of where and when incidents occur.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says cyber-bullies do not respect school hours.

“Through new technologies, students can become victims of cyber bullying at any time of the day, night or week,” Dr Lomax-Smith says. “We must do all we can to protect students’ rights to learn and feel safe and supported when they are at school.”

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/p6zxe9>

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## **PARENTS & SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP**

### **Tying Education to Future Goals May Boost Grades More Than Helping with Homework**

*Science Daily, May 21, 2009*

Helping middle school students with their homework may not be the best way to get them on

the honour roll.

But telling them how important academic performance is to their future job prospects and providing specific strategies to study and learn might clinch the grades, according to a research review.

"Instilling the value of education and linking school work to future goals is what this age group needs to excel in school, more than parents' helping with homework or showing up at school," said lead researcher Nancy E. Hill, PhD, of Harvard University.

She examined 50 studies with more than 50,000 students over a 26-year period looking at what kinds of parent involvement helped children's academic achievement.

"Middle school is the time when grades and interest in school decline," said Hill. "Entering puberty, hanging out with friends, wanting distance from parents and longing to make one's own decisions, win over listening to parents and studying."

Parents' involvement in school events still had a positive effect on adolescents' achievement, Hill said, but not as much as parents' conveying the importance of academic performance, relating educational goals to occupational aspirations and discussing learning strategies.

Read article: <http://tinyurl.com/rdztej>

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## **TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM**

### **A national curriculum needs national teaching standards**

*Australian Council for Education Research, ACER News, May 2009*

ACER's Dr Lawrence Ingvarson argues in a recent paper that because curriculum standards go hand in hand with standards for teaching, a partnership between these two areas would be of great benefit to Australian education.

Two significant developments in this area have recently taken place: the creation of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the National Partnership on Quality Teaching (NPQT).

The success of each of these developments depends on the success of the other. For example, national curriculum statements will have important implications for what teachers should know and be able to do. However, successful implementation of a national curriculum will depend fundamentally on the willingness and capacity of teachers to meet those standards.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mh74yp>

*National curriculum and national professional teaching standards: Potentially a powerful partnership* by ACER's Dr Lawrence Ingvarson is No. 184 in the Seminar Series of the Centre for Strategic Education.

The report is available at <http://tinyurl.com/mabwo9>.

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## **SCIENCE EDUCATION**

## Teacher Earth Science Education Programme

The Teacher Earth Science Education Programme (TESEP) is designed to help middle school [upper Primary and lower Secondary] teachers make better use of their time teaching Earth Science in their classrooms through the provision of

- Professional Development workshops
- Updates to existing resources
- New resources
- Ideas for field trips
- Access to teachers experienced in this field

While aimed at middle school teachers, teachers from all school levels will benefit from attending the programmes on offer.

TESEP operates under the auspices of the Australian Science Teachers Association (ATSA) and is funded through donations from a wide variety of partners. TESEP activities are managed through the ASTA head office with oversight by the TESEP Chairperson, Jill Stevens, the TESEP Executive Officer, Greg McNamara, and an advisory board comprising personnel from ASTA and key industry, government and professional societies. TESEP is managed at a state level by experienced teacher coordinators.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mbj3mv>

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## TERTIARY EDUCATION

### Higher Education Support Amendment (2009 Budget Measures) Bill

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Second Reading Speech, 28 MAY 2009*

Mr Speaker, the Government is launching a reform agenda for higher education that will transform the scale, potential and quality of the nation's universities and open the doors of higher education to a new generation of Australians.

It is an integrated policy approach that provides for structural change and improves the financial sustainability of our universities. An approach that guarantees quality in a system that delivers funding for growth and participation by students from all walks of life and recognises the vital importance of research by our best and brightest.

The Bill amends the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act) to implement the Australian Government's reform to the higher education system as announced in the 2009-10 Budget.

It responds to the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review) which affirmed that the reach, quality and performance of a nation's higher education system will be the key determinants of its economic and social progress.

Read entire speech: <http://tinyurl.com/lldj64>

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### Uni degrees pay off in workforce - for men more than women

*Australian Council for Educational Research, ACER E-news, May 2009*

The Graduate Pathways Survey, conducted by ACER for the Department of Education,

Employment and Workplace Relations, canvassed more than 9,000 bachelor degree graduates five years into their careers.

The survey has found that most bachelor degree graduates are in employment five years after completing their studies.

Around 90 per cent of graduates are employed within five years of completion. Three quarters of graduates are in full-time work.

Undertaking paid work during study appeared to have a positive influence on vocational outcomes.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/lv5tyl>

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## **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

### **Integration of Colleges ensures high-quality trade training for NSW secondary students**

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, The Hon Verity Firth MP, NSW Minister for Education, 20 May, 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and Verity Firth, NSW Minister for Education and Training, today announced that four Australian Technical Colleges will be integrated into the NSW education and training system.

New arrangements have been agreed for Central Coast, Central Western NSW, Illawarra and Queanbeyan Australian Technical Colleges.

The integration will expand access for young people in these regions to the Higher School Certificate and a simultaneous trade training program, allowing them to make a head start on an Australian school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

The Federal and NSW governments have worked closely with the boards of the Australian Technical Colleges across these regions to oversee the integration.

Through this collaboration, each region has built on its education and training facilities and expertise to meet its particular needs.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lbv8do>

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### **Developing human capability, vocations and economic renewal**

*John Buchanan, prepared for the Australian Education Union, June 2009*

Current education and work arrangements did not cause the economic crisis.

They must, however, be central to its solution.

Policies that only focus on restoring growth will merely entrench deep-seated problems.

Prime among these are an ecological unsustainable growth path, deepening wage inequality, retarded productivity growth and the paradox of 'skill shortages' coexisting with 'wasted skills'.

Central to any serious economic renewal will be overcoming deep-seated fragmentation in flows of learning and labour.

Fragmented flows of learning arise from the often arbitrary distinction between university and vocational education and training (VET).

Much of this occurs because insufficient recognition has been given to the depth and complexity of vocational knowledge.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/l2wr8z>

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## BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

### Building on the Education Revolution

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 26 May, 2009*

It's wonderful to be with you again at the Christian Schools Policy Forum.

When I spoke to you at last year's forum, I said that we could bring about a long-term change in the way Australians view the value of education and the way we invest in it for the future through the Education Revolution.

Today I'm going to share with you where we are up to in putting together the pieces of our reform agenda.

And let me tell you, we've come a long way.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/muucmo>

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## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

## **International education – its contribution to Australia**

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 26 May, 2009*

International education has made a significant contribution to Australia. It has grown to now be our third largest source of overseas earnings, generating \$15.5 billion in 2008 and supporting more than 125,000 jobs. In 2008, nearly half a million students came to Australia. It is the lead sector in terms of export earnings in Victoria and the second largest in New South Wales.

But international students do much more than contribute to our economy and create jobs. They build on Australia's long multicultural history that has created a friendly, tolerant and secular country.

International students enrich our society. They help to provide a diverse and rich education experience for Australians. This diversity enables our education institutions to offer a much wider range of courses and campus facilities.

People coming to Australia to study and Australians studying abroad promote cross cultural experiences that benefit us both now and in the future, building understanding that underpins tolerance and stability here and abroad.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/kl63xq>

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## **Allan Backs Gillard on International Education**

*Jacinta Allan, VIC Skills and Workforce Participation Minister, 27 May 2009*

Skills and Workforce Participation Minister Jacinta Allan today welcomed the Federal Government's recent moves to increase scrutiny of education providers for overseas students and further improve the overall experience of overseas students studying in Australia.

The Commonwealth yesterday announced it would establish a strengthened national approach to regulating the international education sector and also hold a roundtable for international students to discuss key issues impacting on their study experience in Australia.

Ms Allan said the Commonwealth's announcements were consistent with the Brumby Labor Government's sustained efforts to ensure international students enjoyed quality academic and support programs and that their safety and welfare were protected.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to ensure Victorian education providers working with international students meet stringent quality assurance standards," Ms Allan said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/kvbl4l>

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## **AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES**

### **NSW: Banned heaters in NSW schools**

*Ben Cubby, Sydney Morning Herald, May 28, 2009*

The NSW Government will continue to fit-out public schools with gas heaters that have failed World Health Organisation tests, as it awaits further tests taking place in schools this winter.

The unflued gas heaters, which emit carbon monoxide, nitrous dioxide, carbon dioxide and formaldehyde fumes, can only be used safely if classroom windows and doors are left open.

Michael Coutts-Trotter, the Director-General of the Department of Education, said he had been told by NSW Health that the heaters were safe. That contradicts the results of a 2004 Health Department study.

In the meantime, the department has authorised a new \$2 million study, despite existing Australian and international research which has led to the heaters being banned in other states and many other nations.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nn4ss2>

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### **NT: No homes for teachers at Nhulunbuy High School**

*Nick Calacouras, NT News, May 25th, 2009*

Teachers applying for jobs at Nhulunbuy High School are being turned away because of a lack of housing in the town, the union said.

The Nhulunbuy branch of the Australian Education Union in a statement yesterday complained that the school could only hire teachers who already live in town.

"There are unfilled teaching vacancies on our staff," the statement claimed. "Is this because there are no appropriately qualified teachers available to fill them? No, it is because appropriate housing is not available to us."

The union warned that the global financial crisis could make matters worse and "our crisis will deepen".

The Department of Education yesterday issued a statement confirming there was a shortage of publicly available land in Nhulunbuy.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/n7xc9p>

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### **QLD: Gold Coast school trials paperless classroom**

*Charmaine Kane, ABC News, May 28, 2009*

The internet, wireless calculators and electronic writing tablets and whiteboards have taken the place of books and pens at Arundel's AB Patterson College.

The school's head of science and maths, Trevor Redman, says the aim is to make maths more relevant and engaging. "They'll develop their solutions directly onto the computer screen," he said.

"Once they have got it there they can email it to the teacher, the teacher can annotate it and then give feedback and then they can send it back.

"It allows us to build an electronic profile of the work the students have been doing."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o5ryfc>

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### **SA: Extra fee upsets Catholic school parents**

*ABC News, May 27, 2009*

Catholic schools are being forced to charge parents a levy for each child, angering many parents who say the funds will be used to prop-up the Adelaide diocese in tough financial times.

A letter will be sent to the parents of about 42,000 Adelaide children asking for an annual levy of between \$15 and \$40 per child, the amount based on the school's socio-economic profile.

The church hopes to raise \$500,000 per year. It will use the special fund to give loans for school capital works, but also to cover expenditures for such things as parishes, social justice programs and even compensation payments to child abuse victims.

Not all parents are happy about the idea.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pu3v83>

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### **SA: Call to double university intakes from among 'working class'**

*Maria Moscaritolo, Advertiser, May 28 2009*

Schools and bureaucrats have to change their attitude that it is "too hard" to entice more students to aim for university - especially when it comes to students from "working class" backgrounds.

Speaking at a Committee for Economic Development of Australia lunch yesterday, university leaders said South Australia will have to work hard to lift the proportion of the population with a tertiary education.

SA will need to almost double the number of students going to university in the next 15 years to meet the national target of 40 per cent of 25-34-year-olds with a degree by 2025.

Making her point to education department chief executive Chris Robinson, who was in the audience, she said: "We're really going to have to go back to school teachers and school systems and say 'we can't have a 19th century school system trying to serve a 21st century economy' and I'm really quite concerned about that, the notion that working class kids get a technical education and better-off children get an academic curriculum that's leading them into tertiary education."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/n5q8b3>

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### **TAS: Education gap widens for young Tasmanians under federal budget changes**

*Editorial comment, Hobart Mercury, May 24, 2009*

Tightening of work criteria for Youth Allowance announced in the Federal Budget is going to make it harder -- if not impossible -- for many Tasmanian students to go to university.

The nation risks a return to the dark days when only the wealthy could afford the option of pursuing higher education -- ironic at a time when young people are being urged to undertake tertiary study.

Changes are aimed at cracking down on students who live with affluent parents and take a gap year off after grade 12 to work in order to qualify for the full amount of Youth Allowance as independents.

However, many rural students -- those who have to live away from home to attend university and cope with the cost of rent and extra living expenses -- will be caught in the net and will find it difficult to meet the new criteria.

Many Tasmanian students from rural areas have to live away from home to attend university in Hobart or Launceston and many find it necessary to attend interstate universities to pursue chosen courses.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nujk3d>

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### **VIC: Mini Laptop Computers for Children's Hospital Students**

*Education Minister Bronwyn Pike, 20 May 2009*

Students receiving treatment at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) will stay up to speed with their peers thanks to the Brumby Government's delivery of 41 new high-tech mini Netbook computers.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike said the delivery of the Netbooks worth almost \$20,000 highlights the Brumby Government's commitment to supporting the educational needs of children regardless of their circumstance.

"These students at the Royal Children's Hospital are often living through incredibly difficult circumstances, and it is important we help them in every way we can, to ensure they are offered every opportunity to learn and prosper," Ms Pike said.

"Information and communication technologies play a key role in supporting children and young people as learners and facilitate easy access to their teachers, schools and peers during hospital stays."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/m975xy>

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### **WA: Male teachers lose out 3 to 1 in gender stakes**

*Bethany Hiatt, West Australian, 1 June 2009*

The WA College of Teaching said that this year, 26 per cent of its 45,804 members from State, independent and Catholic schools were male, compared with 74 per cent female.

In 2005, when WACOT first began collecting data on the three school sectors, 28 per cent were male and 72 per cent female.

WACOT director Suzanne Parry said the trend was continuing. Of the 6838 teachers who joined the college this year, three quarters were women.

WA Primary Principals Association president Stephen Breen said primary school children

needed male role models.

He said men were put off going into primary school education because there was a perception that high school teaching was more demanding and that society would question their motives for wanting to work with young children. "The concern is that it is getting worse," Mr Breen said. "We have primary schools that have no male on the staff."

He said the problem belonged to the community as well as educators. "We have to raise the status of the teaching profession so that people would want to go into it," he said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mnj9g9>

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## **WA: Child porn crackdown nets six teachers**

*Education Minister Liz Constable, 27 May 2009*

A crackdown on teachers who access images of child pornography has yielded six arrests since it was launched last year.

Operation Richmond, an initiative of the Department of Education and Training to identify suspicious internet sites being accessed by employees, claimed its first scalp within days of its introduction in June 2008.

Education Minister Liz Constable said the department's child protection investigators and information technology experts worked closely with WA Police to ensure anyone caught with material exploiting children was removed from child-related work immediately.

"I think the vast majority of the Western Australian community would share my disgust at anyone who exploits children, or supports the exploitation of children, in this way," Dr Constable said.

"Such people have no place in our schools and we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to remove them from any contact with children."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nx6k3o>

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## **AWARDS & PRIZES**

### **ATOM Awards 2009**

*Closing 15 June*

Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) is a professional organisation of media educators and industry professionals who are dedicated to the ongoing development of an innovative and diverse screen and media culture in Australia.

This year, the ATOM Awards program will recognise and celebrate excellence, featuring thirty six awards across three categories - Student, Educational / Vocational and General.

"The ATOM Awards program is designed to acknowledge the work that our current and future talent is contributing to the big screen, across a wide range of media. The program is open to anything that has been created for the screen - be it the movie, television, PC, games console or even mobile phone screen."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ngb3my>

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## CONFERENCES & EVENTS – NEW POSTINGS

### National E-security Awareness Week

*5-12 June 2009*

Every year, there's more information about you online—from the PINs and passwords you use for online transactions to the family photographs and personal details you share on the internet.

Unfortunately, that also means people are finding more ways to use your personal and financial information to harm you, or even pretend to be you.

That's why ACSSO is proud to partner with the Australian Government for National E-security Awareness Week, which this year is being held from Friday 5th to Friday 12th June 2009.

We share a commitment to helping you secure your identity, privacy and your information on the internet.

Take these simple steps—and take them today:

- Get a better, stronger password and change it at least twice a year
- Get security software, and update and patch it regularly
- Stop and think very carefully before you click on links or attachments from unknown sources or from people you don't know
- Information is valuable. Be careful about what you give away about yourself and others online

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/l2fvjk>

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## ACT Currie Lecture 2009

*16 June 2009, University House, ANU, Canberra*

### “Thinking past the Standards Movement: An Educational Reflection”

*Prof. Marie Brennan*

Neoliberal and neo-conservative social and economic movements have left a legacy to education which valorises narrow forms of an ‘audit culture’.

Core to the audit culture is an emphasis on benchmarking, with attendant testing regimes, registration, league tables and comparative performance data. All of this requires the setting of ‘standards’.

This paper raises questions about the role of standards in educational reform and their capacity to contribute to educational improvement?

Further information and to register: <http://tinyurl.com/njnblb>

*Professor Marie Brennan is currently a member of the School of Education at the University of*

South Australia, where she was Dean and Head of School between 2002-2007. Since 1991, she has worked at the University of Canberra, Central Queensland University and Deakin University. This followed many years in the Victorian Education Department as a Humanities teacher in technical schools, a researcher in Curriculum and Research Branch, a manager of the School Improvement Unit, policy officer, and member of the Senior Executive Service.

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## **Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT)**

13-16 July 2009: Fremantle, Western Australia

### **“Mathematics: It’s Mine”**

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.

Further details and registration: <http://tinyurl.com/qgjf9f>

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## **Tasmanian Parents & Friends Association State Annual Conference 2009**

22 August 2009

### **'Future Directions in Life Long Learning: Birth to Infinity'**

The 2009 Annual Conference of the Tasmanian Parents & Friends Association will be held on Saturday 22 August 2009 in the State's southern region.

Venue and program and other information about conference, accommodation etc will be published shortly on the Conference website.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lzqrpn>

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## **Reach for the Stars**

31 August-6 September 2009

This year, the seventh Reach for the Stars project as part of National Literacy and Numeracy Week will see students of all ages making predictions and exploring data about our first

names.

Reach for the Stars involves tens of thousands of students from pre-school to secondary school.

This initiative is conducted by the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) with support from the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Further information is available at <http://tinyurl.com/l3zh3e>

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## REMINDERS

5 June - Education, Policy and Research Forum - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/ob36xs>

15-16 June - Communities in Control Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/r8np4d>

19 June - Nominations close for Australian Awards for Teaching Excellence - <http://tinyurl.com/peahdl>

4-7 July - Contasta Science Education Conference - Launceston, TAS - <http://tinyurl.com/r4yluh>

5-8 July - World Conference on Higher Education - Paris, France - <http://tinyurl.com/p3624s>

5-10 July - Youth ANZAAS 2009 - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/oroyk4>

8-10 July - SPERA National Conference - Flinders University, SA - <http://tinyurl.com/qtifkn>

9 July - Registration closes for Environmental Song for Australia Contest - <http://tinyurl.com/pp4yjg>

13-16 July - Conference of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers - Fremantle, WA - <http://tinyurl.com/gqjf9f>

31 July - Nominations close for ASG Inspirational Teacher Awards - <http://tinyurl.com/ojih3z>

31 July-1 August - NSW Federation of Parents' & Citizens' Associations Annual Conference - Penrith, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/ofzcvv>

6-7 August - Professional Development Network School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://tinyurl.com/qrfnoh>

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

2-4 September - ARACY Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/qljgzw>

26-28 September - ACEL International Conference - Darwin, NT - <http://tinyurl.com/pgf6cq>

2-4 October - Australian Curriculum Studies Association Biennial Conference - Canberra, ACT - <http://tinyurl.com/pcslmo>

12-13 October - ACSSO National Conference - Hobart, TAS - <http://tinyurl.com/q8njl3>

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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) (monthly)
- 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. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

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