



# 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 24, 7 July 2009

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### BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

#### Schools First

*Applications opened 1 July – close 14 August 2009*

Schools throughout Australia are invited to apply for a Schools First award and be in the running to share in the \$5 million pool of award money. Award applications open on 1 July and close on 14 August.

Schools First, developed by NAB, ACER and the Foundation for Young Australians, is designed to recognise excellence in school-community partnerships. It is Australia's largest ever corporate-backed education initiative and is open to all schools around the country.

- Sixty local Impact Awards worth \$50,000 each are available.
- The most outstanding state and territory school–community partnerships will each receive \$100,000, and
- one outstanding school-community partnership will be judged the national winner and will receive an award valued between \$500 000 - \$1 million.

In addition, a series of 20 Seed Funding Awards, worth \$25,000 each, will be available for schools that require initial funding to get their community partnership started.

To find out more about Schools First visit <http://tinyurl.com/lv9vzi>

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### COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

#### Professor Geoff Masters warns against league tables

*ACER E-News No. 78, June 2009*

Australia must avoid the allure of simple but potentially misleading approaches to comparing the performances of schools, according to the chief executive of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Professor Geoff Masters.

Speaking ahead of the first in a series of nation-wide seminars for school leaders on the use of student achievement data, Professor Masters said Australia had the opportunity to learn from overseas experience and avoid simple but problematic approaches to the construction of school league tables.

Professor Masters' comments follow an agreement in April by the Australian, State and Territory Education Ministers to provide parents, teachers and communities with access to nationally consistent information about each school's results, its workforce, its financial resources and the student population it serves.

His comments also follow last week's decision by the NSW parliament to ban the publication of league tables by newspapers.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/kvcl9h>

*Find out more about the 2009 "Evidence Led Leader" Seminars in which Professor Geoff Masters, Dr Gabrielle Matters and Dr Neil Carrington will examine the use of NAPLAN data in monitoring and evaluating school performances, the role and use of assessment evidence in enhancing professional dialogue, and school leadership practices associated with improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for individual students and schools - <http://tinyurl.com/kwswng>*

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## **Julia Gillard attacks class of clowns on school performance data**

*Bruce McDougall & Simon Benson, Daily Telegraph, July 02, 2009*

A BAND of Upper House "vandals" has hijacked plans to let parents see league tables showing how their children's schools are performing. Education Minister Julia Gillard last night accused the NSW Opposition of "political opportunism" after it joined a bizarre alliance of independents to force through laws banning the comparative tables from appearing in print.

Calling the ban "ridiculous, pointless and opportunistic", Ms Gillard added: "Barry O'Farrell has put his personal political opportunism in front of the needs of NSW school children. He has engaged in political vandalism.

A "fear campaign" by teacher unions is behind the controversial censorship of the public's right to know how schools compare on academic performance. Laws forced through Parliament by a bizarre alliance of Coalition, Greens, Shooters, Christian Democrat and independent MPs follow a relentless campaign by the NSW Teachers Federation and the Australian Education Union to stop the release of school performance data.

Ms Gillard said: "This is a political ploy with nothing of benefit to schools. The Rudd Government believes it is time we stopped averting our eyes from poor performance and ensure every Australian child is receiving a world class education."

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

*The June 2009 Australian Education Ministers council's 'Principles and protocols for reporting on schooling in Australia' is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m8jrky>*

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## **Transparency and relevant reporting of school performance**

*Interview with Hon Julia Gillard MP, 2 July 2009*

STEVE PRICE: Newspapers here under this law will be fined \$55,000 for letting parents in NSW know information that parents everywhere else can get. That's crazy isn't it?

JULIA GILLARD: [laughs] I think crazy is a pretty good word. What we're trying to achieve here Steve, and it's been hard fought for, is a new era of transparency. So by the end of this year we want parents and you know, people like yourself who are interested in the quality of education to be able to get online, to look at their local schools and compare their performance and importantly to compare the performance of schools who are serving similar student populations. So it mightn't tell you all that much to say that you know and an Indigenous school in the Northern Territory is in different circumstances from a school on Sydney's North Shore. But we would learn a lot if we compared similar schools and said well one's doing better, ones doing worse. How can we spread that best practice from the one that's doing better, and most importantly; how can we get in there and help the school that's doing worse. It seems to me that Barry O'Farrell isn't interested in all of that education debate and he's not interested in helping those kids who are in underperforming schools, he's just being involved in the business of politics and it comes at the cost of people being able to look to their newspapers in NSW and see all of this information debated.

STEVE PRICE: I get very confused about it and I made the point to Piccoli last week that it's not the place of politicians to work out how the media reports data that the Federal Government makes available to us.

JULIA GILLARD: Look that's right. I mean, I'm not a supporter of simplistic league tables...

STEVE PRICE: I don't think any of us are.

JULIA GILLARD: No, but we do want to get that full information out, we want the like school comparison information out and then the debate will rage. And I'm sure that there will be says when I pick up the newspapers and I think "that's a fantastic, accurate report", and there'll be days I pick up the newspapers and think to myself; "gee I reckon that one's missed the mark". But such is the nature of debate in a democracy and if we woke up every morning and the pages of our newspapers were filled with information about education and then we went on and debated it all day on radio and TV, I think that would be fantastic. Our role is to be there, getting out accurate information, that's what the Federal Government's going to do and presumably Mr O'Farrell doesn't want that accurate information and particularly doesn't want to know if a child is in an underperforming school. He'd rather avert his eyes from that, then go in and get something done about it.

STEVE PRICE: I think you're doing a great job with this and you're doing it in the face of some union opposition aren't you?

JULIA GILLARD: Well there's been long standing opposition from the Australian Education Union to league tables and I don't support league tables, but I do support the full information being available.

Read entire transcript: <http://tinyurl.com/ljkxw5>

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## **BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

### **Rudd Government funding spells death for school trees**

*Senator Rachel Siewert, media release, 2 July 2009*

Greens Senator for WA Rachel Siewert is concerned that trees in schoolyards across Australia are being cut down to accommodate standardised new buildings under the Rudd Government's Building the Education Revolution funding guidelines.

"Concerned parents in Perth have told me that many trees have already been cut down while the future of others hangs on a thread, only thanks to the intervention of such concerned parents.

"This problem cannot be blamed on the school principals, who are stuck between a rock and a hard place, trying to secure Federal funding to improve school facilities but not having the freedom to ensure that the new buildings fit into the school's existing surrounds.

"In some of the cases, trees under threat in Perth are tuarts, apparently hundreds of years old. Just by modifying the BER guidelines slightly, the new buildings could be built without destroying them.

"There is plenty of scientific evidence to show that trees and natural vegetation have a beneficial impact on human thought and wellbeing. Large, older trees also provide shade and a place to play. It seems utterly senseless to be cutting down trees in schoolyards just because of bureaucracy and red tape, when a bit of flexibility could ensure new facilities are built while preserving existing natural attributes"

To view schools in your State/Territory allocated funding under Rounds One and Two of 'Primary Schools for the 21st Century' BER funding go to: <http://tinyurl.com/njb822>

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## FUNDING

### **New resourcing strategies for education should fund kids not schools**

*Jennifer Buckingham, the Australian, July 02, 2009*

THE debate over funding to non-government schools has never really gone away. On the horizon is yet another review of federal funding arrangements and it is likely that big changes will be made.

There is widespread agreement that the existing funding system is flawed. However, the principle that underpins it is sound and should be preserved; if all children are legally required to attend school, then all children deserve public support for their school education, including those in non-government schools.

Non-government schools deserve public funding because they are educators of the public. Non-government schools can serve the key productive and social functions of public education

just as well as government schools.

The productive function involves transmitting to children the knowledge and skills they need to be active economic and civic participants. Non-government schools use the same curriculum, submit to the same testing regime and have teachers with the same minimum qualifications as government schools. Their students' academic and post-school outcomes are at least equal to government schools.

Since it is not possible to argue that non-government schools, by definition, provide an inferior academic and technical education, critics therefore tend to question their role in society. Government schools are lauded as being the cornerstone of democracy and lighthouses of social inclusion. Non-government schools are accused of elitism and of creating intolerance.

This is a long way from the truth. The high-fee independent schools usually associated with non-government education are a small fraction of the 2700 non-government schools across Australia. Non-government schools serve a wide range of students, including some of the neediest children in the country.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/ngw2bq>

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## SINGLE-SEX EDUCATION

### Research shows teenage girls more competitive in single-sex school

*Caroline Milburn, the Age, June 8, 2009*

Going to a single-sex school makes teenage girls more competitive than if they attend a co-educational school, a study of adolescent behaviour has found. The findings reveal big differences in the competitive choices of girls from single-sex and co-ed schools and suggest a girl's environment is more important than her genetic identity in affecting whether she chooses to compete with others.

The study of gender differences and competitive behaviour found students from girls' schools behave more like boys when asked to enter a competition that involved a small financial reward. On average, they were just as likely as boys from single-sex or co-ed schools to behave competitively in the experiment designed by university researchers.

By contrast, girls from co-ed schools were much less likely to enter the competition when compared with boys and with their counterparts from all-girls schools. The differences in behaviour were stark, regardless of a student's family background.

The school setting for boys made no difference to their competitive behaviour. The study found males from single-sex schools were just as likely to enter the competition as boys who attend co-ed schools.

Professor Booth says co-ed girls' reluctance to compete reflects evidence from other economic studies showing women tend to shy away from competition. She is not surprised by the attitudes of girls in co-ed groups because education research shows girls in mixed-gender schools are under more pressure than their counterparts in single-sex schools to conform to gender stereotypes of feminine behaviour

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/n6rlb9>

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## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## **Former Health Minister Abbott slams as 'trivial' smoking ban to protect children from passive smoking**

*Jennifer Macey, ABC News, 2 July 2009*

Coalition frontbencher Tony Abbott says New South Wales is playing nanny state politics with its ban on smoking in cars when children are present. The former federal health minister has told a public health debate at Sydney University that smoking in front of children is a trivial issue and states should not intervene.

"I was a child that was regularly imprisoned in a car with heavy smokers," he said. "My parents both smoked heavily when I was a kid. Now has it done me any harm? You be the judge... Maybe ... I would have had much greater intelligence, who knows?"

"I personally would not get hung up on something, in my view, as trivial as smoking while the kids are in the car."

Long time anti-smoking campaigner Professor Mike Daube from Curtin University disagrees:

"We found that a child in a car exposed to two cigarettes was getting 70 times the level of toxic exposures they would be getting that are reckoned to be dangerous by the US EPA."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/lr3pmc>

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## **Protecting children from tobacco harm is not a "trivial" issue, Mr Abbott**

*ASH media release 2 July 2009*

A national coalition of child welfare, health, medical, church, social equity and research organisations has expressed strong concern at reported comments by Opposition frontbencher Tony Abbott that legislation to protect children from tobacco smoke in cars is "trivial".

The 40-member Protecting Children From Tobacco (PCFT) coalition\* is seeking clarification and reassurance of support for child health protection from Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull and the Liberal and National Parties - after Mr Abbott reportedly told a Sydney University audience that the NSW Government was playing "nanny state politics" by mandating smoke-free cars carrying children.

Says PCFT co-ordinator Stafford Sanders: "This is a measure supported by very good, independent worldwide health research evidence.

"It's known that children are exposed in cars to levels of tobacco smoke exposure much higher than levels known to cause serious health harm.

"Children are especially vulnerable to health harm from second-hand smoke. Teenagers exposed to tobacco smoke in cars can double their risk of asthma attacks. Does Mr Abbott see these as 'trivial' consequences?"

"All our organisations, and the community, deserve clarification from Mr Turnbull and from the Liberal/National Parties as to how they view this matter.

"We'd hoped such attitudes were long gone from mainstream politics and that we could all get on with the business of taking shared social responsibility for protecting our children from harm – as we've done with child welfare laws for many years."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/m3l5ew>

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## Illegal cigarette trade has plenty of puff

*John Stapleton, the Australian, July 04, 2009*

RIGHT in the middle of Australia's biggest city, you can walk into a shop and buy an illegal packet of under-the-counter cigarettes for \$7. Apart from being much cheaper than the mainstream brands, which sell for about \$13 a packet, they don't have any of those confronting health warnings.

The ready availability of illegal cigarettes, which are understood to be in stock near many housing commission estates around the country, runs counter to a blizzard of government policies designed to discourage smoking. These include a NSW government ban on smoking in cars carrying children that started this week.

Anne Jones, chief executive of anti-smoking lobby group ASH Australia, said selling cigarettes without health warnings was illegal in itself but on top of that the sellers of illegal cigarettes had evaded federal excise duty, which normally made up 69 per cent of the retail price, and had no doubt also failed to pay customs duties.

Ms Jones said price was the single biggest issue affecting tobacco consumption. "Children are the most price-responsive of all," she said. "Illegal cigarettes are being sold to low-income people, who not only as smokers will die a decade earlier than the average citizen, but will spend the last 10 years of their life with a chronic disease

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/m7yah8>

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## IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

### New approaches to teacher training

*ABC Radio "Life Matters" 1 July 2009*

Teacher training is on the brink of being revolutionised.

Melbourne University's Graduate School of Education is in its second year of running a Masters Degree in Education, where the students begin teaching in a classroom at the outset of their course. It is a response to longstanding complaints from teachers that they do not get enough classroom experience in their training.

The Melbourne Graduate School of Education will also soon train the first batch of 'Teach for Australia' students: high-performing graduates who will be fast-tracked into schools in disadvantaged areas.

Guest: Field Rickards, Dean of Education at Melbourne University

Download audio: <http://tinyurl.com/nxsomx>

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## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### Education is the key to closing the gap

*Editorial, the Australian, July 03, 2009*

THE latest Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report from the Productivity Commission is a salutary reminder of how far Aborigines, supported by the federal and state governments, have yet to travel to overcome chronic disadvantage.

Kevin Rudd was not exaggerating when he described the report as "devastating", but its comprehensive detail provides pointers for addressing major areas of concern in health, education, employment and child protection.

The report's key finding, that substantiated cases of child abuse in the indigenous community more than doubled from 16 per 1000 children in 1999-2000 to 35 per 1000 in 2007-08, vindicates the necessity of the continuing Northern Territory intervention and other "tough love" reforms. Improved reporting has drawn out the problem "from behind the shadows", as Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said.

But authorities will continue to face an uphill battle, with indigenous children six times more likely than others to be abused or neglected.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nn7bna>

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### Child care to ensure young children are "school-ready"

*Stephanie Peatling, the Age, July 3, 2009*

ALL child-care centres will be required to begin baby learning and child development programs as soon as possible as part of a Federal Government push to make sure children are ready to learn when they start school.

Yesterday's meeting of state and federal governments agreed to a national childhood strategy, the first step towards a nationally consistent child-care system.

"The strategy represents a significant down payment on the early childhood development strategy and its goal of delivering high quality care for children," Education Minister Julia Gillard said.

The Federal Government wants more child-care workers to have TAFE and university qualifications and a greater number of workers looking after children in each centre.

It will also begin a rating system for the centres.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/m77jk3>

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## AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

### **NSW: How Premier Nathan Rees ripped off Federal funding of primary students**

*Bruce McDougall, Daily Telegraph, June 25, 2009*

MILLIONS of dollars earmarked for primary school students have been seized by the Rees Government to pay for a teachers' pay rise.

Principals were shocked to learn yesterday that funding approved by the Rudd Government for primary students had been hijacked because of a shortfall in covering the pay rise.

In December last year the Commonwealth agreed to boost funding for government primary students to the same level as high school pupils. The decision should have delivered an extra \$100 per student for underfunded primary students.

But the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) has indicated it will only pass on half the money - \$50 per student.

DET general manager Ken Dixon told principals the federal money was needed to cover a shortfall in the salary budget. "Part of the extra funding is being used towards the cost of the pay rise for primary school teachers which will cost in the order of \$450 million per annum. While almost all of this funding is provided by the budget and by a range of trade-offs, there is a small residue which still needs to be funded," Mr. Dixon said in an email.

Primary Principals' Association president Geoff Scott said he was surprised the pay rise had not been fully budgeted. "We believe the full \$100 was intended (by the Federal Government) to be spent on primary students," Mr. Scott said.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/mdv9xm>

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### **NSW: Greedy Government takes money from public primary school students**

*Maralyn Parker, Daily Telegraph, June 24, 2009*

It is no wonder teachers become cynics. The NSW state government has taken half of the increase for each primary student in federal AGSRC funding to help pay for its NSW teacher salary increases.

Primary schools should be getting an extra \$100 per student each year to bring funding levels up to high school student level. It was part of the Rudd government wonder-money promises.

The federal government increased its Average Government School Recurrent Cost (AGSRC) funding for public primary school students from 9% to 10% in order to match funds given to public high schools. In real terms this is about \$100 extra per child for every primary public school student.

However the increase was given to state governments lumped in with other block federal funds for education. So principals have been locked in battle with their state governments ever since to get them to pass on the cash to schools.

The NSW Education Department sent out a letter to schools today telling teachers it is keeping half of the funds to pay for state increases to teacher salaries. NSW public primary school teachers are forgiven for being disgusted at such action.

No money has been withheld from high schools to help pay for state high school teacher salary

increases.

The intent of this federal funding was to bring parity to public primary school coffers - not the cash-strapped incompetent state government coffers.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/n9yo85>

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## **NSW: Education Minister Verity Firth knows which schools perform...**

*Bruce McDougall, Daily Telegraph, July 03, 2009*

SECRET academic results show schools with students of similar backgrounds have "starkly" different levels of achievement. Education Minister Verity Firth revealed yesterday that student results withheld from the public indicated some schools dramatically outperformed others.

She said online publication of national data this year to allow parents to compare "like schools" could be "uncomfortable" for state governments" "...but I think it's a good thing for democracy that a light is shone on that and they are held to account," she said.

"As Minister I already get access to this information . . . what it shows is in some schools with really similar characteristics, one does much better than another."

Ms Firth said the difference in results between some schools was stark but a number were adding huge value to their students.

"What this does is enable us to find those schools that are best practice and make sure we use that information to make other schools better," she said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/li2jng>

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## **NT: Top indigenous students join program to encourage others**

*NT News, June 20th, 2009*

BRANIAC indigenous students will drop in on schools and community groups across the NT to inspire their younger peers.

Thirteen of Charles Darwin University's top indigenous students have been employed to take part in the program, which started this month in Darwin and has just expanded to include Alice Springs.

Alice Springs students Jessica Laruffa, Brooke Wheeler and Jessica Procak have joined nine Darwin-based ambassadors.

Bachelor of Education student Jessica Laruffa signed up to the program earlier this year and also works part-time for the NT government. She said she looked forward to telling others about the support and assistance on offer to prospective indigenous students.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/nubv6s>

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## **NT: Reading, writing, arithmetic a must to get your NTCE**

NT News, June 23rd, 2009

TERRITORY students will not be allowed to finish school without passing English and maths under proposed changes to the syllabus.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson said students from 2011 would need to earn a C grade in English and maths to complete Year 12 - regardless of their performance in other subjects.

"I don't think there are many employees out there who would like to think there are students leaving with an NTCE who are not at least proficient in English or maths.

"I am confident it will be well supported by employers. It is about improving the rigour, strengthening the rigour, of the NTCE," the Chief Minister said.

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

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### **QLD: Silent shame of Cherbourg school where pupils can't hear teacher**

*Janelle Miles, Courier Mail, July 01, 2009*

TEACHERS at a primary school a few hundred kilometres northwest of Brisbane wear microphones in the classroom because so many of the children have hearing problems. Up to 90 per cent of Cherbourg State School students have some form of treatable hearing loss because of chronic ear infections.

The issue is a challenge in indigenous communities across the country where overcrowded living conditions can foster the spread of disease, a situation Brisbane surgeon Chris Perry says is a "national disgrace". "It's a shame on the country that this is allowed to continue," he said. "If people don't hear, then they don't get an education. They leave school at 14 with the reading age of somebody in grade one or grade two and they're unemployable."

Queensland Health's Deadly Ears Program aims to cut the rate of ear disease among indigenous children, taking treatment normally performed in Brisbane or provincial centres to rural and remote communities. Without the Deadly Ears Program, Dr Perry said many indigenous children would miss out on surgery, with the trip to Brisbane too onerous and expensive for carers.

"Queensland Health deserves a pat on the back for this" he said. "They're doing something groundbreaking. But we need more money."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/n6jppqu>

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### **QLD: 'One class size does not fit all'**

*Tony Moore, Brisbane Times, July 2, 2009*

Abandoning the flawed philosophy of 'one class size fits all' would do more to lift literacy and numeracy standards in Queensland schools than new tests for teachers, their union says.

Queensland Teachers Union president Steve Ryan told [brisbanetimes.com.au](http://brisbanetimes.com.au) schools in lower socio-economic areas that had more children with learning difficulties should be given a bigger slice of the teaching pie.

Current class sizes in Queensland are 25 students for Prep to Year 3; 28 students for Years 4

to 10; and 25 students for Years 11 and 12. Teachers are appointed by dividing the number of enrolments by 25 or 28, depending on the year.

But Mr. Ryan said the current system was too uniform to help schools and children with special needs.

However, a spokeswoman for Education Minister Geoff Wilson said schools were already given a range of assistance to help students who they felt were falling behind.

Mr. Ryan said he knew of these programs, but said help was not widespread.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/m9ug5f>

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## **SA: Plans for some super schools shelved as families don't want them**

*ABC News, 2 July 2009*

The Education Department has confirmed that plans for super schools in Whyalla and Port Pirie will not be going ahead because people there do not want them.

The plan was to combine 44 schools into 17 super schools across the Spencer Gulf region.

The department is still collating the Port Augusta votes.

The vice-president of the Education Union in South Australia, Anne Crawford, says the rejection of the proposal was partly due to a lack of consultation.

"We would want to see ongoing consultation with the communities because education services do have to be revamped and refurbished and maintained well," she said.

"There probably is some scope for genuine reconfiguration but that should be done in genuine consultation with communities."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/mx2t48>

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## **SA: Boost to Industry Skills in Schools**

*Hon Dr Jane Lomax-Smith MP, SA Education Minister, 30 June 2009*

New industry-endorsed training programs in areas of strategic importance to the State, such as defence and manufacturing, will be introduced in each of the State's high schools. The move is part of the Rann Government's new \$19 million Industry Skills Program, the latest in a suite of 'school to work' initiatives to improve the job skills of high school students.

Releasing details of the four-year program for the first time today, Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says it will help students start work on high-level Certificate 3 qualifications.

"We want to prepare a workforce of young people who are ready, skilled and able to take up jobs as the global economy improves," Dr Lomax-Smith says. "These new programs will allow students to walk straight from school into ongoing study at TAFE or straight into employment."

Seventeen Industry Skills Managers will be appointed this year to work with communities to establish an Industry Pathway Program, endorsed by industry, in each school. Programs will be developed in defence, construction, automotive, health, business services, community

services, electro-technology, engineering, manufacturing and primary industries.

Specially designed curriculum will be developed in these areas for Year 11 and 12 students and combined with training delivered out of school through a Registered Training Organisation.

"The program enables students to complete Year 12 and their SACE and be ready for a high-level apprenticeship or training when they leave school," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/krnc4b>

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## **TAS: Review of School Funding Planned**

*David Killick, Mercury, July 03, 2009*

THE Education Department will conduct a three-month review of how money is allocated to government schools.

School budgets are currently determined by a complicated formula which takes into account factors such as the number of students, the school's sector, its remoteness and the socio-economic status of the school population.

But Education Department general manager of strategic policy and performance Jenny Gale said the department wanted to make sure money was being spent where it was most needed.

"It's really to make sure that resources are being distributed equitably according to the needs of schools," she said. "We're not convinced that the current model is the best model for that, but it might be that the research shows it does work pretty well."

The Resourcing Review Steering Committee has commissioned University of Melbourne researcher Stephen Lamb to examine if money was spent effectively.

The review is expected to be complete by the end of October.

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

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## **VIC: School closures list released in Government about-face**

*Farrah Tomazin & Miki Perkins, the Age, 4 July 2009*

MORE than 150 Victorian public schools have closed or merged since Labor has been in government, with the Education Department reaping millions of dollars from schools that have shut down.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike yesterday bowed to pressure and released a list of schools that have closed or merged since 1999, insisting each one had been a voluntary decision by the local community.

According to the figures, 39 schools have closed throughout the state, and 96 schools have been merged into 54 new schools. At least 18 other schools are also merging but were not included on the list.

Most of the changes were due to falling enrolments, and in three of the schools that closed there were no students attending by the time they were shut down. But with more mergers and closures to come, Ms Pike rejected Opposition claims the Government had a "hit list" of

schools.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/n3w58g>

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## **WA: Teachers threaten walk-out over school violence**

*Bethany Hiatt, West Australian, 3rd July 2009*

Narrogin Senior High School teachers have threatened to effectively close the school if violence flares again next term.

The school was at the centre of claims of racism and bullying last month when some Aboriginal parents withdrew their children after a fight between students.

State School Teachers Union members at the school passed a resolution, endorsed by union leaders on Wednesday, that staff would consider exercising their right under the Occupational Health and Safety Act "to remove themselves from their hazardous workplace".

Teachers have also proposed restricting students' mobility around the school, reducing their lunch breaks and reinstating a school-based police officer to help reduce violent incidents at the school.

Narrogin Aboriginal Community Reference Group chairwoman Priscilla Kickett said parents walked out of a meeting with the Education Department last week because it did not seem to be getting anywhere. She said it was unclear how the department was going to make the school safe for all students.

The department said it had already implemented or was considering most of the teachers' suggestions to increase safety.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/ldz7gm>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

Queensland Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

Annual State Conference 2009 : "Education – be in it!"

11th - 13th September 2009 at Royal on the Park Brisbane.

For more details including registration <http://tinyurl.com/mj7pg8>

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## **REMINDERS**

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

9 July - Registration closes for Environmental Song for Australia Contest - <http://tinyurl.com/pp4yjq>

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

14-15 July - Educational Leadership and Coaching Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/kk3ree>

31 July - Nominations close for NEiTA 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>

18-19 August - Parents Victoria Annual State Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/mw5faq>

22 August - Tasmanian Parents & Friends Association State Annual Conference - <http://tinyurl.com/lzqrpn>

29-30 August - Western Australian Council of State School Organisations Annual State Conference - Burswood, WA - <http://tinyurl.com/nydplr>

31 August-6 September - Reach for the Stars - <http://tinyurl.com/l3zh3e>

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>

24-26 November - Family Relationship Services Australia National Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/lz433t>



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## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://tinyurl.com/d2o8zu> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://tinyurl.com/cswpka> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dls7rv> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://tinyurl.com/c59eda> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dedyz4> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : <http://tinyurl.com/qvleza> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://tinyurl.com/cy7s78> (quarterly)

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