



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 28, 3 August 2009

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EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Introduction to Education Chapter

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, ALP National Conference, 31 July 2009

Two years ago this National Conference debated an Education Revolution.

Kevin Rudd and Stephen Smith laid out what it would mean to value education in this country properly.

To value it as an engine of economic growth and productivity.

To value it as a force for inclusion and tolerance.

To value it as a spark of democratic exchange and social equity.

They promised to overcome a decade of neglect and begin a new chapter, a revolution.

Delegates, today I am proud to stand before you and say that the Education Revolution is being delivered.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/lkkg2u>

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HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Mental health: silence the worst reaction in schools with cluster suicides

Lauren Wilson & Stephen Lunn, the Australian, July 23, 2009

PARENTS of teenage children have been warned that the risk of suicide increases among young people who know of someone who has taken their own life or talked about wanting to commit suicide.

Child and adolescent psychologist Andrew Fuller said about 5per cent of all youth suicides occurred in clusters because feelings of despair, especially among teenagers, were "contagious".

Dr Fuller's comments came as Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon and Victorian Premier John Brumby expressed sympathy for families at a Geelong high school where four students have killed themselves within a six-month period.

"Teenagers are such emotional, impulsive beings," Dr Fuller said. "Especially among vulnerable people, feelings are contagious. We have to make sure that hopefulness gets around and the despair doesn't.

"The most powerful way to do that is to promote those resilience factors that make people less inclined to self-harm and suicide and we need to make children realise that life is worth living."

Child psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg said parents who had children that had been exposed to suicide should open discussions with their teenagers about the issue.

But he said the focus of those discussions needed to be moved away from the tragic result of suicide and refocused on depression itself.

"When people are depressed they are not in their right mind. Depression distorts moods, it destroys the capacity of rational thought and it erodes the desire to live," he said.

Dr Carr-Gregg said parents needed to communicate to their children that depression was an illness that responded to treatment.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/l8tsup>

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Australia's taxpayers to foot bill for bankrupt private college closure

Simon Santow, PM ABC 31 July 2009

The Australian taxpayer will have to underwrite any shortfall after the collapse of a college that left more than 500 international students high and dry.

Sterling College in Sydney collapsed under the weight of huge debts earlier in the week. Many of the students had paid thousands of dollars in fees up front.

Education officials were left with the job of finding alternative courses but today it was revealed that the industry insurance scheme meant to cover the shortfall is itself uninsured.

It is hardly the outcome that the students, mostly of Indian background, wanted when they came to Australia to study at the college.

At a meeting yesterday, many were told they would be looked after by what is known as the Tuition Assurance Scheme, administered by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

It is a scheme which is meant to find them a comparable course at no extra cost or otherwise arrange a refund.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/l8q7zt>

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Swine flu concerns take toll on foreign student numbers

ABC News, Jul 30, 2009

There is evidence that swine flu is having an impact on foreign student numbers at Southern Cross University in northern New South Wales.

The university's deputy vice-chancellor, Bill McGilvray, says the virus outbreak has quelled overseas interest in the university's short courses.

But he says bad publicity from violent attacks on Indian students has not affected those committing to longer term studies.

He says enrolments in short courses are down at least 50 per cent as a result of the flu pandemic.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/l8tdlp>

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Education's dodgy operators must be shown door

Tony Pollock, the Australian, July 30, 2009

A NATIONAL regulator with teeth is urgently needed to weed out the few shonky colleges ripping off international students.

Media reports in recent weeks have told awful tales of international students who have come to Australia hoping to win residency under skilled migration rules, only to find that they are victims of shady schemes conducted by unscrupulous operators on the fringe of the international education industry.

Why is the Australian education sector, which has a long record of success in dealing with international students, now facing this problem?

First, let's put it in perspective. Most of the 500,000 or so international students in Australia are succeeding in their education. A recent survey of more than 2000 students placed in educational institutions by IDP Education has found that only 6.5 per cent are dissatisfied with their course and only 7.4 per cent are dissatisfied with their institution. (Bear in mind that this survey was taken in the past six weeks, during intense, critical media scrutiny of international education.)

Second, the cause of the problem is clear. It is due to well-intentioned government policy that did not work in the way it was intended. Fortunately, government has recognised this and is already working on a solution. Here's what happened.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nqe9w5>

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COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Publish school results

Greg Melleuish, the Australian, July 30, 2009

FORTY to 50 years ago in NSW the Education Department used to administer IQ tests to primary school students. The results of those tests were never revealed to the students. However, teachers were provided with the numbers and, in secondary school, it was not difficult to take advantage of a teacher's absence from the room to look them up.

At the same time it was standard practice to publish the results of the state's School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate in the newspapers. Hence it is quite easy to discover how any person who is now over the age of 55 performed in their external examinations. Nevertheless, the Education Department of the day refused to release the marks that students had received in those examinations to the students themselves.

Today, of course, that situation has changed. Students and their parents are provided with the results of the skills tests that are carried out in primary school. Students also are provided with the adjusted marks they receive in subjects for which they were examined in the HSC. However, the results of individual students are no longer released to the press, except for lists of students who have excelled in particular subjects.

I must say that I find it a puzzle as to why educational authorities choose to release the information that they do and in the way that they do. I do not know why I was not allowed to know the marks that I received for the HSC. I do not know why the practice of publishing results of public examinations ceased, although I suspect that it has something to do with our increasing obsession with privacy.

It always has struck me that state educational bureaucracies are more concerned with maintaining their power through control of knowledge than with assisting the students under their care.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/kk2kda>

Greg Melleuish is associate professor of history at University of Wollongong.

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CYBER-BULLYING

'No escape' from cyber-bullies

Stephen Lunn, the Australian, August 03, 2009

CYBER-BULLYING follows kids home, leaving those on the receiving end with no place to escape, Education Minister Julia Gillard said yesterday in launching a program to combat the growing social problem.

Ms Gillard said the government would spend \$3 million examining the safety of children in e-communications, including cyber-bullying, and study whether existing cyber-safety programs in schools work.

The announcement comes only a few weeks after the death of Geelong schoolgirl Chanelle Rae, 14, whose mother Karen said took her own life after reading something posted about her on the internet.

"There have been some very tragic examples here in Victoria and it's a problem right around the nation," Ms Gillard told ABC's The Insiders program yesterday.

"It's a new problem. Bullying has always been with us in the playground. The thing about cyber-bullying of course is it follows you home. So for kids it feels like there's no safe space."

Read entire article at: <http://tinyurl.com/nxkluf>

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\$3 million for National Pilot to increase Cyber-Safety in Schools

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education & Hon Kate Ellis, Minister for Youth, 2 August 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard and Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis today announced a \$3 million national pilot project aimed at addressing cyber-bullying in Australian schools.

The Rudd Government is deeply concerned at the emergence of cyber-bullying in our schools and the impact it is having on students.

At least 150 schools across Australia will be involved in the pilot program, which will be developed and conducted by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation (AMF). It will help confront safety issues in e-communications, including cyber-bullying and examine the effectiveness of existing cyber-safety programs in schools.

Government and non-government schools in urban, rural and remote Australia will participate in the pilot which will run until 30 April 2010.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/m92wxc>

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

A persuasive push all the way to university

Nick Galvin, Sydney Morning Herald, 3 August 2009

Four years ago it was a nervous Jack Manning Bancroft who walked into Alexandria Park Community School, in Sydney's inner south, accompanied by 25 other students from Sydney University.

Passionate about improving educational opportunities for indigenous young people, Manning Bancroft had a big idea and he was about to see if it worked in practice.

The plan was to set up one-on-one mentoring sessions between university students and indigenous pupils. With a combination of encouragement, practical assistance and good role models, he reasoned, maybe more young Aborigines could be persuaded to complete their schooling and even go on to university.

"Some of the mentors hadn't even met Aboriginal kids before," recalls Manning Bancroft of that first day. "The kids were kind of sitting there looking at them as if to say, 'So, what have you guys got?'"

But as the mentors began talking with the students, working through the "getting-to-know-you" section in the specially designed interactive textbook, Manning Bancroft suddenly realised that he was on to something.

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

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PISA analysis shows Indigenous students face substantial disadvantage

ACER e-News, July 2009

A summary of Indigenous students' results in international tests of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy suggests that initiatives to improve the education of Indigenous students have, to date, had little effect.

According to the achievement of Australia's Indigenous students in PISA 2000-2006 released by ACER on 13 July, Indigenous students remain overrepresented at the lower levels and underrepresented at the upper levels of proficiency. The performance of Indigenous students has not improved over the time from 2000 to 2006.

The report brings together analyses of the achievement of Indigenous students in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy in each of the three cycles of the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted in 2000, 2003 and 2006.

The report shows that, across the three PISA cycles, Indigenous students have performed at a substantially lower average level in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy than their non-Indigenous peers. In each domain, the average for Indigenous students was more than 80 score points (or more than one proficiency level) lower than non-Indigenous students and more than 50 score points lower than the OECD average. In terms of proficiency levels, Indigenous students are overrepresented at the lower levels and underrepresented at the upper levels in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy.

A further report to be released later in 2009 will examine both the attitudes of Indigenous students towards school and the extent to which socioeconomic background and other factors explain their low average levels of achievement.

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

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DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

A book is a place

Bob Stein, The Age, 25 July 2009

Essentially, authors are about to learn what musicians have grasped during the past 10 years - that they get paid to show up. For musicians, this means live performances account for an increasingly significant percentage of their income in contrast to ever-shrinking royalties from sales.

With books, as we redefine content to include the conversation that grows up around the text, the author will increasingly be expected to be part of that ongoing conversation and, of course, expect to be paid for that effort.

For their part, readers will see the experience of reading expand to include a range of behaviours, all situated firmly within a social context.

To illustrate, here's a mother in London describing her 10-year-old boy's reading behaviour: "He'll be reading a (printed) book. He'll put the book down and go to the book's website. Then he'll check what other readers are writing in the forums, and maybe leave a message himself, then return to the book. He'll put the book down again and Google a query that's occurred to him."

I suggest that we revise our definition of reading to incorporate this range of activities, in addition to time spent absorbing the content of the printed page.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/l7gf5d>

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Immersive Learning

Education.au

In 2008 Education.au established an Immersive Learning Unit as a channel and professional network for information and collaboration around immersive learning tools and technologies that are relevant to education and training.

Immersive learning includes the use of virtual worlds and serious games, simulations, role plays, and virtual environments, technologies and activities that support collaboration and enable the learner to be immersed in their learning experience.

While many people think immersive learning is limited to virtual worlds and serious games, immersive learning opportunities may include offline as well as online components and a mixed range of technologies and user experiences.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lq7jjr>

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TERTIARY EDUCATION

Call for bids: Australian Government's \$550 million investment in universities

Hon Julia Gillard MP & Hon Kim Carr MP, Media Release, 4 August 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard and Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, today announced that universities may now bid for a share of \$550 million in funding to improve infrastructure for the benefit of students and the environment.

The investment is part of the Rudd Government's Nation Building program designed to provide jobs now in these tough economic times and deliver infrastructure for the future.

This round of the Education Investment Fund will provide \$300 million for infrastructure improvements at universities, vocational education providers and research institutes throughout Australia.

The Sustainability Round funding will provide \$250 million specifically for green university, vocational education and research infrastructure projects.

Program guidelines can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/nquqdn>.

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Universities facing 'perfect storm' before Rudd funds arrive

Luke Slattery & Andrew Troupson, the Australian, August 03, 2009

UNIVERSITIES are facing a financial crisis triggered by the faltering \$15.5 billion market for international students, the loss of millions of dollars in investment income and the axing of a full-fee program for domestic students worth more than \$116 million.

Andrew Norton, a Melbourne University adviser and research fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies, described the outlook for next year as a "perfect storm" generated by falling university revenues, rising costs and an 18-month wait for \$5.7bn in extra funding from the Rudd government's education revolution.

"I think this is the single most difficult period in the last 20 years," Mr. Norton said. "This could be the start of something big if the fears over the international student market are realised because there is no fall-back."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nfx8fg>

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University of Queensland hit by plagiarism, drop outs

Margaret Wenham, Courier Mail, July 23, 2009

THE University of Queensland is battling rising first-year student drop-out rates and a perception among its student body that plagiarism is rife. The two issues, the latter described as a "significant academic and reputational risk", were identified in a major audit of the University of Queensland by the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

While the audit report, released yesterday, gave the 100-year-old university thirteen commendations and praised its "robust academic quality-assurance system", it also made six recommendations for improvement, including the need for better student data analysis to cut the drop-out rate and for a review of plagiarism policies.

The report said UQ had reviewed its policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism in 2004 but acknowledged that concerns remained.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/myh75p>

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The future of higher degrees by research

ACER e-News, July 2009

Australia's economy is increasingly reliant on highly skilled workers, so it is crucial that supply keeps pace with demand. Governments and industry stakeholders need to understand the relevant issues across industries and disciplines in order for Australia to remain internationally competitive.

A recent report Supply, Demand and Characteristics of the Higher Degree by Research Population in Australia examines those in Australia who have a higher degree by research, with particular emphasis on involvement in the labour force and future levels of supply and demand.

The research found that in the past decade there has been notable growth in the number of completions of higher degree qualifications by research at Australian universities and given recent policies relating to increasing support and funding for research in universities, that this growth could be expected to continue.

Among those in Australia who have a doctorate, this research shows high labour force participation and low unemployment, suggesting that there is a relatively strong demand for people with these qualifications. Among those employed, there are good links between the qualifications and the employment they are engaged in.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/krkz7h>

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

NSW: Top boarding schools are full of city kids

NEWS.com.au, August 03, 2009

Hundreds of parents pay more than \$28,000 a year to send their children to boarding school in the city - although some live within walking distance of the college gates.

More than half of the boarders at prestigious St Joseph's College in Hunters Hill are from families living in Sydney, the Daily Telegraph reports.

Parents' busy lives, the long school day and arduous bus and train rides across Sydney were cited as major reasons for the trend.

The news comes as experts warn parents are becoming irrelevant in children's lives and fathers need to take a more active role in raising their kids.

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

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NSW: Fifty schools to be designated as excellence centres

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, July 31, 2009

Fifty schools in NSW will be designated "centres of excellence" and link with universities to specialise in teacher training and development.

The initiative, to be announced today for primary and high schools, aims to improve teacher quality as part of a \$750 million Federal Government partnership with NSW over five years.

The schools, which will include Macarthur Girls High in Parramatta, will be required to share their expertise with a further 200 schools with video conferencing.

The NSW Minister for Education, Verity Firth, said the centres would play a similar role to teaching hospitals.

"Each centre for excellence will be linked with a university teaching faculty and we will select schools in disadvantaged communities that are consistently achieving strong results – an indicator of high-quality teaching," she said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/l7a2hk>

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NSW: Containing misbehaviour in schools

Ainslie MacGibbon, Sydney Morning Herald, July 27, 2009

As punitive measures have been rejected over the past decade, new models of behaviour management in schools have surfaced. But are they working?

According to NSW Department of Education and Training statistics for government schools last year, almost 3.5 per cent of students in the year 7-10 range received at least one long suspension (up to and including 20 days).

A long suspension follows a serious incident, usually involving physical violence, weapons or possession of an illegal substance. Most long suspensions, 74 per cent, came from this age group, followed by 21 per cent from kindergarten to year 6. The number of long suspensions has steadily grown over recent years as a percentage of enrolments.

The department's statistics do not reflect the more common short suspension (up to and including four days), imposed for continued disobedience - disobeying staff instructions, disrupting other students, or alcohol and tobacco use - or aggressive behaviour, including verbal abuse and abuse transmitted electronically. Individual schools maintain a register of students who have received short suspensions.

But suspensions and expulsions are a last resort - the preference is to have schoolchildren in school and to deal with the underlying causes of misbehaviour. Learning results are inextricably linked to behaviour.

Dianne Giblin, president of the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW, says "misbehaviour is just a symptom of something else. We need to take the next step to find out what that is. Parents and teachers need to work together; there is no place for blame when something goes wrong ... I hear calls to bring back the cane from parents all the time, but just not for their child."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/m7f8h8>

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NSW: School zone visibility to be boosted after study

ABC News, Jul 29, 2009

The New South Wales Government will upgrade school zone signs across the state after the motoring organisation the NRMA raised concerns about their visibility.

Fluorescent yellow and green will replace the yellow and black banner at the top of the signs to make it clearer for motorists when they are entering a school zone.

The Government is also rolling out a program to install flashing lights in school zones.

NRMA Motoring president Wendy Machin says fluorescent signs will be easier to spot.

"We did an audit of a selection of signs in a southern Sydney region and we found that only one in ten is meeting the current standard," she said.

"We feel that there's a real case for upgrading the signs. We've been urging the Government to do this for some time."

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

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QLD: Anger grows over State 'double-dipping' for school funds

Natasha Bita, the Australian, August 01, 2009

DINMORE school will close at year's end, yet it has been granted \$75,000 of taxpayers' money to refurbish its classrooms. Queensland Education has now given Dinmore's money to another school nearby -- for a different purpose -- in what appears to be a case of double-dipping.

Guidelines for the federal government's \$14.7billion program to upgrade schools -- known as "Building the Education Revolution" (BER) -- expressly ban any funding going to schools set to close.

Dinmore school principal Belinda Leavers yesterday told The Weekend Australian her school would close under the "State Schools of Tomorrow" program.

"We are closing," she said, when asked if Dinmore was officially amalgamating. But Ms Leavers refused to discuss the funding application, citing a new Queensland education department directive gagging principals from speaking to the media.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/laxtd4>

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QLD: Stimulus cash handed to schools destined to close

Natasha Bita, the Australian, August 03, 2009

EIGHT tiny schools have been handed \$400,000 in taxpayer funds for new fencing, spruced-up classrooms and playground upgrades this year - even though the Queensland government has shortlisted them for closure.

The schools on death row, which have between four and 57 students, were told last month they were being reviewed for closure or "mothballing". Yet each has won a \$50,000 slice of federal government funding, to be spent by the end of the year.

The money is being doled out to all of the nation's 9540 schools under the government's \$14.7billion Building the Education Revolution policy to stimulate the construction industry.

The Whitsundays school of Mount Charlton, 60km from Mackay in north Queensland, has only 11 students and was told last week it might have to close. A few months ago it applied and won approval for a \$20,000 steel cover over its new playground, \$20,000 to replace fencing at its main entrance and prevent erosion on the school boundaries, and \$10,000 to repaint the inside of the classrooms, library, toilets and stairwell.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/luj9bj>

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SA: Pay dispute 'worsening teacher shortage in South Australia'

Joanna Vaughan, Adelaide Advertiser, 4 August 2009

THE long-running dispute between public school teachers and the State Government will not be resolved until late October at the earliest, amid fears it is contributing to a growing teacher shortage.

The Australian Education Union returned to the Industrial Relations Commission yesterday, more than 18 months after it first announced calls for a 21 per cent pay rise.

AEU SA president Correna Haythorpe said SA teachers were the lowest-paid in the nation and it was more attractive for them to work interstate.

"Teachers have endured almost two years of being denied nationally competitive wages by a state government that appears entirely dismissive of their professionalism," she said.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/mjj2wf>

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TAS: Govt defends school psychologist numbers increase

ABC News, Jul 30, 2009

The Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett says the government is increasing the number of psychologists in the state's school system.

The Australian Psychological Society wants the government to fund high quality training programs to attract and retain psychology graduates who want to work in schools. The society's David Stokes says there is a critical need for more resources especially in the south of the state.

He says some school principals are often told they cannot have access to more school psychology services even though there is an ever increasing need.

Mr Bartlett says front-line education services were quarantined from cuts in the May budget.

"This year we have increased the number of school psychologists by ten per cent. We've gone from the mid 60s to the mid 70s when it comes to the number of school psychologists," he said.

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

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TAS: Future of Tasmanian Education Foundation in doubt

Alison Andrews, Examiner, 23/07/2009

A DECISION is still to be made on whether the Tasmanian Education Foundation continues after the resignation of all but two of its six-member board. The private body was set up a year ago by Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry managing director Andrew Scobie as a separate organisation that would work alongside and support the state's education system in research and public information campaigns.

A distinguished board of directors including the Governor's wife, Frances Underwood, Federal Hotels executive Brendan Blomley and financial analyst Saul Eslake attracted a significant State Government funding commitment of up to \$1 million over two years.

But this week, three of the six inaugural foundation board directors confirmed that they had resigned. Mr Eslake, counted as a fourth director, said that he had not attended meetings and been a director in name only so that his profile could support efforts to source private sector funds.

Mr Blomley, the former foundation vice-chairman, said that he had resigned from the board last month over governance issues and financial management, which a number of directors had raised but which had not been satisfactorily addressed.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/kr8xg6>

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TAS: Education Foundation required to hand over documents

ABC News, Jul 29, 2009

The Tasmanian Premier has forwarded documents to the Auditor-General about the state's embattled Education Foundation.

The foundation was set up with a \$250,000 government grant but there has been a string of resignations.

The only remaining board member is the chairman, Andrew Scobie, who is the Managing Director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It has been revealed the chamber billed the foundation for almost \$90,000, prompting the Premier to demand Mr. Scobie hand over the foundation's books.

David Bartlett says he received some documents from Mr. Scobie this morning, but not everything he had asked for.

"I am disturbed about some of the reports about how public money has been spent in the Education Foundation and therefore, the appropriate measure is to take all the information I have, forwarded it on to the Auditor-General," he said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/kofrg7>

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VIC: Boost of \$15 Million for Needy Non-Government Schools

Bronwyn Pike, Minister for Education, Tuesday, 04 August 2009

Needy non-government schools will share in \$15 million in capital grants to improve outdated education facilities, Education Minister Bronwyn Pike announced today.

Ms Pike said 35 needy Catholic schools will share \$10.4 million and 13 needy Independent schools will share \$3.6 million as part of the Brumby Labor Government's \$30 million Needs-Based Capital Funding for Non-Government Schools initiative.

"Education is the Brumby Labor Government's number one priority and we are committed to providing every child with every opportunity to access the best possible education regardless of where they live," Ms Pike said.

"A key part of this is to ensure that our school facilities are of the highest standard to meet the needs of all Victorian students into the future.

"This funding will enable needy Catholic and Independent schools to undertake capital works to not only improve education facilities and student outcomes, but to also enable greater community use of education and sporting facilities."

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/ks7ro3>

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VIC: Victorian school wins battle with State Government bunglers

Rick Wallace and Natasha Bitá, the Australian, August 01, 2009

A DISSIDENT primary school principal who blew the whistle on bungling within [State government management of] the government's \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution program has won his way. The school, in Melbourne's outer southeast, was originally offered a \$3 million gym, even though it already had a gym. It was told to accept the gym or lose its share of money in the first funding round in March.

But now, after spilling the beans in *The Australian*, Berwick Lodge Primary School principal Henry Grossek says Victorian education authorities have caved in to his demands for a library and new classrooms instead. Mr. Grossek has urged other schools to resist bureaucratic bullying.

"In speaking out we haven't been penalised," he told *The Weekend Australian* yesterday. "It's a tick for the federal government. Some principals are now ruing the decision to keep quiet."

Mr. Grossek said Victorian officials had since been instructed that his school be given the library and six classrooms it had originally sought. And it could spend any leftover funds on a "companion project", up to the total value of \$3m.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nku8az>

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WA: Mixed reaction to school transition program

ABC News, Jul 31, 2009

Schools in Perth which have shifted their Year 7 classes into high school say the change is working well.

St Stephens in the northern suburb of Duncraig has joined the growing number of private schools welcoming Year 7 students into their secondary schools. The Principal Carol Roberts says St Stephens began the transition process in 2001 after noticing that Year 7 students had outgrown primary school.

"We modified our program for them, to make it more of a transition between primary and secondary school," she said.

This year we made it a formal program across the two campuses and it is now going to be our intake year for secondary school.

The Primary Principals Association has serious concerns about the move.

The Association's President Steven Breen says research shows that Year 7 students could be subjected to bullying, and that could affect their education.

"It's quite clear that it's going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars to do this across WA," he said. "This money will probably be coming from the primary budget and the secondary budget. So obviously we will have fewer resources in our schools because of this."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/n3ewen>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Future Directions in Literacy Conference 2009

11-12 September 2009, Harold Park Function Centre, Sydney, NSW

This year's program aims to stimulate professional conversations about future developments in literacy pedagogy and practice in a national and international context. The program will:

- provide an opportunity for teachers, academics and policy makers to share concerns as well as potential solutions to the current challenges facing literacy educators
- thematically link keynotes to other presentations and workshops to clearly establish links between theory and practice. This will be modelled through the work of successful research-based partnerships
- add fresh perspectives on current issues.

The scope of papers, workshops and presentations will cover issues pertinent to the age range K–8: infants to the middle years. Our new approach will support early career teachers who have teamed up with school mentors.

Keynote Speakers are Professor Allan Luke (Centre for Learning Innovation, Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology) and Professor Peter Freebody (Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney)

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/n8ldcx>

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Asian Conference on Education

24-25 October 2009, Ramada Hotel, Osaka, Japan

The aim of ACE is to encourage academics and scholars to meet and exchange ideas and views in a forum encouraging respectful dialogue.

This international conference will bring together a number of university scholars working throughout Japan, Asia, and beyond to share ideas. ACE will afford the opportunity for renewing old acquaintances, making new contacts, and networking across higher education.

It is hoped that academics working in Japan and Asia will be encouraged to forge working relationships with each other, as well as with colleagues from Europe and the US, facilitating partnerships across borders.

The conference theme is 'Local Problems, Global Solutions?'

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

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National Coalition against Bullying (NCAB) Conference 2010

“Navigating the Maze”

9-10 April 2010, Hilton on the Park, Melbourne, Victoria

Never before in the history of education have more students had access to so many resources. The use of electronic communication technologies is expanding rapidly – instant messaging is growing much faster than email. This expanding range of new technologies offers vast educational potential for teachers and students – but also some serious challenges.

It is more than ever important to provide schools (principals, teachers, welfare staff, and administrators) and their communities (and particularly parents, families and young people themselves) with the support they need to address these challenges and potentials, and navigate successfully through the risks along the way.

For more information about the international array of presenters and other details: <http://tinyurl.com/lahwja>

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REMINDERS

5 August - Education with Muslims: Moving Forward and Engaging Communities - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/nxug7p>

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

5 August - Education with Muslims: Where to My School? - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/nxug7p>

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

14 August - Schools First applications close - <http://tinyurl.com/lv9vzj>

14 August - Education with Muslims: Moving Forward and Engaging Communities - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/nxug7p>

15-23 August - National Science Week - <http://tinyurl.com/nm4f5f>

16 August - Australian Museum Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award nominations close - <http://tinyurl.com/npt3ls>

16-18 August - ACER Research Conference - Perth, WA - <http://tinyurl.com/leo54l>

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 - National Literacy & Numeracy Week - <http://tinyurl.com/mzesro>

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

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

3-4 September - CHERI Annual Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/n3wq4y>

11 September - Education with Muslims: Moving Forward and Engaging Communities - Shepparton, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/nxug7p>

16-18 September - flexible.learning@schools - Adelaide, SA - <http://tinyurl.com/lregl2>

26-28 September - ACEL International Conference - Darwin, NT - <http://tinyurl.com/pgf6cc>

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>

9-12 November - London International Conference on Education - London, UK - <http://tinyurl.com/ckcrmp>

18-21 November - NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo - Washington DC, USA <http://tinyurl.com/muhe24>

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

25-27 November - International Conference on Primary Education 2009 - Hong Kong - <http://tinyurl.com/lqt8rm>

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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)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at 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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