



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 30, 18 August 2009

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SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

A needless and avoidable tragedy

David Cameron, Letter to the Editor, 6 August 2009

In today's newspaper the death of a child in Sydney is reported. She had gone to her school bus, and then remembered that she had forgotten her keys. She ran back across the street – and was hit while crossing the road by another school bus.

In North America this type of incident is not an accident – but a traffic violation.

All school buses are highly visible, being painted yellow. When they are taking on or letting off, warning lights flash at the front and rear and a STOP sign comes out into the path of traffic. All traffic is then required to STOP until the warning lights are off and the sign retracted.

Drivers are trained to hold the traffic until the bus is loaded and the door closed when picking up – or until the children have reached a safe spot off the road when dropping off.

North Americans would think it insane to allow vehicles to drive at 40k past buses loading or unloading schoolchildren – and we should also.

I urge you to stop the next death from happening – as it surely will under the present system – by passing legislation to make it illegal to pass a stopped school bus which has its warning lights flashing. This seems eminently do-able to me.

I'd also like the yellow school buses but have a feeling that I will be told it is too expensive – even though Canada and the USA can afford it.

While it probably falls under each state's separate mandate, these are all Australian children.

One more death – anywhere – is one which should not happen.

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IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

Reward performance

The Australian, 18 August 2009

Julia Gillard has shown decisiveness in education policy

Merit pay for teachers was an article of faith that successive education ministers were unable to put into place for almost 12 years of the Howard government.

It is a measure of Julia Gillard's ability to cut through obstacles that, less than two years in the job, she has won agreement in principle from the states to start paying teachers their worth.

The Deputy Prime Minister recognises nothing is more important to students' learning than the quality of their teachers.

Ms Gillard's plan will be informed by a report commissioned by the Howard government from Perth-based international services group Gerard Daniels. It calls for "differential remuneration for teachers who are assessed as high performers".

Details are yet to be decided, but the system will be more comprehensive and sophisticated than one based only on student results.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/qc4ju8>

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Recognising Great Teaching

Julia Gillard Interview, 17 August

JULIA GILLARD: My support for merit based pay is that I believe we need to recognise great quality teaching. One of the problems at the moment is people naturally want to progress through a career and in part that is about progressing to higher pay - that's a natural human aspiration and it happens in all sorts of careers - and we hit in many states and territories now a top salary band, where the only way people can really progress is to start to move away from face to face teaching. Well we want to better reward teachers, particularly teachers who are great quality teachers and are prepared to go to the disadvantaged schools where their excellent teaching skills can make the most difference.

MADONNA KING: A couple of questions there. How do you decide that this teacher, in this classroom in Melbourne is as good as this teacher in this class in Mount Gravatt or indeed two classes at the same school in Mount Gravatt?

JULIA GILLARD: That's a question that requires an expert answer, so Madonna it won't be me answering that question. Under the system that we're proposing and that we're driving with states and territories and indeed with all schools, we would have a national accreditation system where people could be judged against national standards. They would be written - the national standards - by education experts, obviously working with the consultation of the profession.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/o56db8>

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Rewarding Quality Teaching

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 16 August 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard has today released Rewarding Quality Teaching, a new research report that will inform the development and implementation of new teacher pay arrangements.

There is nothing more important to learning than the quality of the teacher standing in front of the classroom. That's why a key element of the Education Revolution is a \$550 million package to support and promote quality teaching.

The research report investigates ways to maintain and improve the quality of the teaching workforce through recognition and reward.

Rewarding Quality Teaching was accepted by the Ministerial Council in June and will form the basis of the reform of teacher remuneration arrangements in each State and Territory.

New South Wales has recently announced that it will identify its best performing teachers and offer them increased pay to teach in schools serving the state's most disadvantaged communities.

Read entire release at <http://tinyurl.com/o56db8>

Read the report <http://tinyurl.com/ocr25t>

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Report Finds No Support for Cash For Grades Model

Australian Education Union, 16 August 2009

The Australian Education Union today welcomed the findings of a new report on rewarding quality teaching that found no support for a cash for grades model.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said the union supported the creation of an enhanced career structure for teachers that recognized and rewarded high quality teaching, knowledge, skills and practice.

"We have repeatedly stated our preparedness to negotiate around the construction of a professional pay structure.

"But governments have failed to allocate the necessary funds for this process.

"There is not the funding within the national partnerships on teacher quality to bring about the changes that are necessary."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/pl54qz>

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The view from America: what on earth are you thinking?

Sydney Morning Herald, 17 August 2009

The Teach for America program which sends top graduates who are not trained in teaching into poorer schools is about to start in Australia. Some educators in the US, such as David Berliner, are asking why.

The news that Australia is following the United States in introducing a program which puts untrained teachers in the classroom came as a real shock to us here.

Simply put, you are being conned. Teach for America (TFA), the model for your national program, is not effective in helping students in poverty learn more, though it is very effective at raising large amounts of money.

The facts are much tougher to dismiss than the feel-good announcements made by the corporate supporters and those who derive their income from the program.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/r5zwhx>

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COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Provide rich data - avoid "League tables" that would narrow curriculum

Australian Teacher Magazine, 10 August 2009 (AAP)

The former head of Britain's Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has waded into the row over school league tables, claiming England's education system has been ruined by their use.

Ken Boston, who held senior education posts across Australia before moving to the UK, says England's national curriculum has been narrowed by focusing on "high stakes" testing shaping league table results and employers now struggle to find high calibre candidates.

Mr Boston says Australia must avoid mistakes made in England and produce publicly available school reports providing raw data on performance which do not compare schools unfairly.

He warns that misuse of NAPLAN data could have a similar narrowing effect on the curriculum.

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

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

\$7 million to help close the gap in literacy and numeracy in remote WA

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 16 August 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced additional funding of more than \$7 million for projects to help close the gap in literacy and numeracy levels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the Kimberley region of Western Australia (WA).

The Rudd Government is committed to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Support for initiatives that have been shown to work, such as the Kimberley Reading Recovery project, builds the capacity of teachers and schools to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

The Government firmly believes that all Australian students need to be proficient in the basics like literacy to be able to fully participate in the world of work and further study.

The Kimberley Reading Recovery project provides intensive training for teachers in selected schools working with students who did not achieve acceptable literacy levels in their first few years of schooling.

Students participating in the trial and the extension have achieved significant improvement in their level of literacy.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/o56db8>

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DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Students to dump textbooks for e-books

Carmel Egan, The Age, August 16, 2009

HEAVY book-filled school bags could soon be a thing of the past, with the e-book industry claiming most of students' textbooks will be contained in light hand-held portable devices within three years.

The internet-linked reading devices will store hundreds of e-textbooks bought online or borrowed from school libraries.

"E-textbooks will be mainstream within three years," the executive director of DA Direct, Australia's largest distributor of portable reading devices and e-books, Richard Siegersma, predicted.

Mr Siegersma said digital technology would lead to the costs of e-textbooks falling in a year to 18 months.

"There will be just-in-time and customised delivery to flexible, full-colour screens; textbooks with audio and video components; touch screens for handwriting and margin note-taking and text highlighting," he said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mt38u7>

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CYBER-BULLYING

Surviving Cyber-bullies – what can you do?

Click - A Technology Guide for Parents, NSW Department of Education

When we were kids bullying was usually out in the open, in front of other people. Or it included things like notes being passed around about you in class. As horrible and upsetting as it was, you could usually escape the torment at home.

These days with the growing use of technology, the methods of bullying have changed. Some children will come home after being bullied at school, only to encounter more of the same from the supposed safety of their own bedroom.

Bullying occurs anywhere kids (and sadly, adults) socialise, and our kids are the first generation to socialise online through chat rooms, instant messaging, SMS and social

networking sites like MySpace.

Kids today love their technology and there's no doubt it can be fantastic for socialising and learning about the world. But technology can also be misused and the impact of cyber-bullying can be devastating as messages are able to be quickly - and permanently - spread to a wider audience.

Researchers such as Marilyn Campbell of the Queensland University of Technology have looked at how technology emboldens young people to bully others online "when they would not bully face to face."

The anonymity bullies can enjoy through technology and the wider audience they can reach are part of the problem, Ms Campbell says. "[Also] written words can seem more concrete and 'real' than spoken words... there is less escape from the bullying, as it can happen anywhere and at any time."

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

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ART EDUCATION

Venice Biennale Australian Schools call-out

This is a call-out open to all Australian primary and secondary schools.

The aim is for students to work together in designing themes and producing works of art around issues that are important to them.

It's an opportunity to consider cross-curriculum projects with other subject teachers in the school, and to engage in the ABC's social media space Pool.

This project is part of the Australian Venice Biennale Education Resource.

Imagine a group show of your students' artwork presented by Australia at the Venice Biennale. We invite your school to contribute.

Curate an exhibition of up to five students' artwork (one artwork each). Give the exhibition a name, write a curatorial statement about the theme of the exhibition and include a description of each work & why it has been included. The exhibition should reflect the interests of the students & what is important in their lives.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/o94zmm>

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Creativity in schools: Every story needs a picture

Anthony Browne, The Guardian, Tuesday 30 June 2009

On a recent school visit I was greeted by a teacher who proudly informed me that the children at this particular school were two years further ahead in their reading compared with those in other schools. I was impressed.

Then I began talking to various classes. The children were indeed bright, articulate and enthusiastic, and keen to play the shape game, a drawing game that I always play in schools. It's a game that my brother and I thought we'd invented when we were small boys, but it seems that children play their own version of this game all over the world. It's very simple. The first person draws an abstract shape, without thinking about it. Sometimes I quote Paul Klee and say it's like "taking a line for a walk". The next person transforms the shape into something recognisable.

All children seem to love playing this game, and they're very good at it - much better than most adults. Although on one level it's just a game, I believe that it encapsulates the act of creation. Every time we paint a picture, write a story or compose a piece of music, we are, in effect, playing the shape game. Everything comes from something else, inspiration is everywhere.

But at this school I saw that the shapes the children were drawing tended to be very carefully drawn small triangles, squares and circles - "proper" shapes.

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

Anthony Browne is a UK author recently appointed Children's Laureate.

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OPINION

Public education matters: reclaiming public education for the common good in a global era

Val Klenowski, Australian Educational Researcher

This article argues that public education needs to be reclaimed to fulfill its role as a "democratising force" to address social and economic inequality and to respect and recognise diversity and difference.

By analysing historical developments in federal policy, funding and economic contexts a case is developed to demonstrate that the role of the state has been dismantled and the public nature of education has been reduced.

The factors responsible are articulated and discussed with particular reference to the impact of neo-liberal policy, the "marketisation" of education and new public management.

Measures such as those taken by Education Queensland that support the development of school leaders and teachers to engage in research, development and critical debate are supported.

International examples of how systems have revitalised and supported the public nature of education are discussed. These include more intelligent accountability systems that respect the professionalism of teachers and collaborative curriculum development strategies that engage with all, including those who are least powerful such as the students.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/qdaj8n>

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RESEARCH

Report shows inequities and inadequacies in school library resourcing

Georgia Phillips, the Hub Campaign for Quality School Libraries, 13 August 2009

A new survey by Edith Cowan University for the Australian Library and Information Association and the Australian School Library Association, has released its initial report.

What it shows is a great inequity between private and government school library staffing and funding.

The survey found that the majority of school library budgets are abysmal!

In particular, 75% of government schools have annual budgets of under \$20,000, 50% are under \$5000, and some 17% of budgets are under \$1000.

Altogether, nearly one third of all schools surveyed have budgets of less than \$5000. And in the NT, which includes many remote schools, over half have budgets under \$500!

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/opxse8>

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State of Australia's Young People

Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Youth, 12 August 2009

In an address to the National Press Club today, the Minister for Youth Kate Ellis released a snapshot of the upcoming inaugural State of Australia's Young People Report.

The Report will highlight the issues that impact on young people and also provide key statistics about the current generation of Young Australians.

While the Report identifies that young Australians have a positive attitude towards the future overall, the Snapshot sets off alarm bells in relation to some emerging health and safety issues.

The Snapshot shows us that:

- One in four young Australians aged 16-24 years old have a mental health disorder with young people, especially girls highlighting self harm and unhealthy body image
- More than a quarter of year 8 Australian students report that they know someone who had been cyber-bullied
- Young people are more likely than others to be affected by particular crimes, such as violence.
- Teenagers aged 15-19 years had the highest hospitalisation rates for acute intoxication from alcohol among all age groups.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has also found that hospitalisation rates for intentional self harm among young people increased by 43% between 1996 and 2006.

"This is our Young Australia – so lost, so isolated and frustrated that they take to slashing their own flesh or other serious forms of harm and mutilation. If these stats aren't a call to arms – then I don't know what is," said Minister Ellis.

"Of course it's not all doom and gloom – we have a remarkable generation of young people who are truly inspired. But what these issues point to is the need for us to ensure the self esteem, self confidence and empowerment of our young people."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/l27zor>

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Belonging, being and becoming - the early years learning framework for Australia

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children's learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

The Early Years Learning Framework is part of the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government's National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care. It will underpin universal access to early childhood education and be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

The first national curriculum framework for early childhood, recently presented to the Australian government by a Charles Sturt University-led consortium, is the product of extensive nationwide consultation with those working in the early childhood sector and a diverse range of other people interested in children's learning in early childhood settings, including parents.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ogrvq7>

Translated versions of the framework and supporting documentation are also available.

Mapping young people's early development

You may have noticed lately that pre-primary teachers have been collecting information on children in their classes. This information is being gathered as part of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). So what is the AEDI?

Teachers from schools around Australia complete a checklist of more than 100 questions for every child in their class. The results make up the AEDI which is designed to give each community in Australia an overall snapshot of how children have developed in the years before school.

The areas looked into are physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional material; language and cognitive skills; communication skills; and general knowledge. Rather than being about an individual child's performance, the AEDI is more about how communities are travelling.

It tells us where resources can be better directed to give children the best chance of being successful when they reach school.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nnsd57>

Childcare Inquiry & Govt's need to articulate vision for childcare as part of 'Education Revolution'

Senator Henson-Young, Media Release, 14 August 2009

The current Senate Inquiry into the provision of childcare has already revealed a need for more attention from the Federal Government to the essential service, including its funding and quality controls, to avoid a repeat of the childcare crisis triggered by ABC Learning's collapse.

The Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee's Inquiry into the provision of childcare, established by Senator Henson-Young in the wake of the ABC Learning corporate collapse late last year, held its final hearing in Canberra today.

"The turmoil and heartache inflicted upon the Australian childcare sector by the collapse of ABC Learning in 2008 could have been avoided if the Federal Government had played a more hands-on role in overseeing the care and education of our youngest children," said Senator Hanson-Young, Greens spokesperson for Childcare and Early Childhood Education.

"Planning, monitoring of compliance and regulation are areas where the Federal Government could have kept a closer eye on the warning signs that this inquiry has heard were raised with the Education Department."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/l7q9t7>

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HIGHER EDUCATION

Coalition fails Australian students

The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, 18 August, 2009

Australian students will pay the price of the Liberal and National Parties' decision to vote down the Government's Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities and Other Measures) Bill 2009 today.

"The Coalition has delivered a serious blow to Australian students," the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth, Kate Ellis said.

The Coalition's decision to oppose the Bill will mean the demise of more critical university services – such as child care, counseling, health, sport and fitness services.

Under the current arrangements, close to \$170 million has been ripped out of university funding resulting in the decline and in some instances complete closure of vital health, counselling, employment, child care, sporting and fitness services.

The Bill proposed a balanced and sustainable approach to restoring student services on university campuses, while precluding a return to compulsory student unionism.

"The passage of this Bill would have secured a long term future of critical support services on university campuses including child care, counseling and welfare support," Ms Ellis said.

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

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: School building projects employing hundreds of Canberrans

Andrew Barr, MLA, August 18, 2009

Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr said today the Building the Education Revolution (BER) package has already seen about 340 ACT workers and staff engaged on projects. This includes about 45 workers on site at ACT public schools undertaking internal upgrades such as painting and building modifications or installing shade structures.

Mr Barr said the \$150 million investment in the first rounds of the BER's National School Pride and Primary Schools for the 21st Century initiatives is expected to create 250 'on site' jobs for Canberrans, including about 50 apprentices.

"The level of employment being generated by Labor's investments shows the Building the Education Revolution package is having an immediate impact, helping to keep our economy strong by keeping hundreds of Canberrans in jobs," Mr Barr said.

"Because Labor is the party of education and jobs, we are working with Federal Labor to invest more than half a billion dollars in every school in the ACT. We also moved to further cut planning red tape to ensure students, ACT building companies and their employees could get the full benefit of Labor's record levels of investment.

"Not only are schools getting new libraries, gyms and classrooms, but by working together the ACT and Federal Labor Governments are creating jobs for Canberrans and importantly training opportunities for young apprentices and trainees."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mn6qz4>

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NSW: Experts fear class heater tests not up to scratch

Paul Bibby, Sydney Morning Herald, August 16, 2009

TESTS taking place to determine whether public school students are being exposed to dangerous levels of gas could be flawed because the State Government bought cheap

equipment that does not meet the Australian standard.

Thousands of schools in NSW are fitted with unflued gas heaters, which can fill classrooms with nitrogen dioxide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde fumes if windows and doors are not kept open as is required by regulations.

Two weeks ago medical researchers commissioned by the Department of Education began a \$2 million study to test whether the heaters had an adverse impact on children's health.

But serious doubts have emerged about a crucial element of the study - testing the level of nitrogen dioxide in the classrooms - because of the inferior air-quality testing equipment being used.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lp4ud6>

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NSW: Rees govt puts budget ahead of needs of vulnerable students

John Kaye MP, Media Release, 15 August 2009

The Greens are calling on NSW Education Minister Verity Firth to abandon changes to the funding of students with disabilities and other special needs.

"While the existing system of funding needs to be greatly improved, the Rees government is implementing a number of changes that will have devastating impacts on many students and teachers.

"This is all about cutting costs. The future for some of the most vulnerable children in NSW is being put at risk.

"Education Minister Verity Firth is proposing to freeze funding for autism and mental health and to allocate money between schools according to the prevalence in the general community.

"Not only will the total amount of money decline in real terms but some schools with a higher proportion of students with autism or mental health problems will be forced to deliver less support to each child."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mb58ab>

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NSW: Capped funds for pupils with disabilities

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, August 15, 2009

SCHOOL funding for students with special needs will be capped and no longer distributed according to the number of individual students, under NSW Department of Education proposals.

Principals and teachers are concerned that funding for students with autism and mental health disorders will be capped for the next three years at 2009 levels. The State Government plans to allocate grants based on the prevalence of disorders in the wider community.

Schools attract funding of up to \$6000 for each child with a low-level of special needs. Children with severe needs will continue to attract at least \$6000 each.

Cheryl McBride, the head of the independent Public Schools Principals Forum, said schools

would receive a fixed amount of funding regardless of any fluctuations in the number of students with disabilities.

This would contain costs and prevent budgets increasing with an expected rise in the number of children being diagnosed with special needs.

"The need is growing, but the pot of money isn't," she said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/m7d82f>

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NSW: Rees' TAFE package amounts to \$350m cut to skills education

John Kaye MP, Media release: 11 August 2009

The Rees government's attempt to slash TAFE teachers' conditions will cost the state \$350 million in vocational education outcomes, according to Greens NSW MP John Kaye.

Dr Kaye said: "The Rees government is penny pinching on public investment in TAFE by trying to force teachers into longer hours while giving them less control over how they organise their time. These trade-offs amount to \$55 million being taken away from the NSW TAFE system.

"A report by the Allen consulting group showed that every dollar spent on TAFE returns \$6.40 on the investment.

"The Rees government's package will cost the state \$352 million in lost investment returns for NSW.

"Taking the razor to a critical area of skills education in the current economic climate is reckless and irresponsible."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mb58ab>

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QLD: DG's View

Julie Grantham, Director-General, Department of Education and Training, August 2009

Earlier this year I announced seven key priorities for the Department of Education and Training (DET) to help us meet our objective of offering Queenslanders a modern, responsive education and training system.

Our department is working hard to deliver major programs and reforms in areas such as student performance, early childhood education, infrastructure and training.

The seven key priorities will ensure that we, both individually and collectively, have the direction, structure and support to deliver on these important initiatives.

These priorities were developed to align with education and training targets set by the Federal Government and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), as well as those contained in the State Government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland strategy and our own strategic plan.

To give teachers and administrators the support and resources needed to implement these new priorities, I have changed the structure of the department.

The new structure will help us focus on what is needed, meet the challenges of the future,

avoid duplication, reduce bureaucracy and encourage innovative thinking.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/loq27j>

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SA: Skills push begins in SA primary schools

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith, 17 August 2009

A major new program to boost the mathematics, science and literacy skills of the State's primary school students is underway, with \$7.8m in 'primary skills' grants distributed to schools.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says South Australia's 523 State schools with primary age students will this week receive a per-capita amount for every student enrolled.

Announced to coincide with National Science Week, the funds are part of the new Primary School Skills for the Future strategy to improve the skills of young South Australians.

The strategy is backed with State and Federal funds totalling more than \$105m over four years.

"Through this strategy, the three main priorities for our State primary schools will be science, mathematics and literacy," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/m29ze2>

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SA: Premier's 2010 Anzac Prize for Senior Students now open

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith, SA Education Minister, 12 August 2009

Less than two months remain for the State's Year 9 and 10 students to enter the 2010 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith is encouraging eligible students to apply before the 25 September deadline for their chance to be part of a study tour of Europe's battlefields in 2010.

"We want young people to discover the ANZAC spirit through researching the life of a fallen South Australian WWI serviceman or woman," Dr Lomax-Smith says.

"The ANZAC Spirit School Prize is an outstanding opportunity to understand a part of Australia's history and I would encourage every eligible student to consider entering."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/n9fb9x>

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TAS: Short notice for school closure

ABC News, Mon Aug 17, 2009

The Tasmanian Government has decided to close a small primary school in north-west Tasmania, with only two weeks notice.

Waratah Primary School has four students who are already attending classes at nearby Ridgley Primary School two days a week.

It is closing at the end of term two and arrangements have been made for those children to be enrolled at Ridgley full time, from the start of term three.

The Premier and Education Minister, David Bartlett, says there has been a sharp decline in Waratah's student numbers over the last few months.

He says this decision will best serve the interests of all students in Waratah and Ridgley.

The Parents and Friends Association's president, Jenny Branch, says the 40 minutes it takes to commute to school is too long for young children.

"We know that they're not an isolated school that there are other schools across the state with small numbers and decreasing numbers that are in a similar position," she said.

"It's probably the beginning of how we can set the scene for conversations to take place with other schools."

Read more at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/mpx2d5>

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VIC: Outstanding Leaders Appointed for New Schools

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike, 11 August 2009

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike today announced five high-calibre principals to lead Victoria's first public-private partnership schools, opening in Melbourne's growth corridors next year.

The five schools will be the first of 11 to be established under the Brumby Labor Government's \$255 million Partnerships Victoria in Schools Project, with the six remaining schools opening in 2011.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to make education our number one priority and I'd like to congratulate these outstanding school leaders on their appointments as principals," Ms Pike said.

"I am sure they will do a fantastic job leading these state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly schools, which will offer innovative learning with cutting-edge technology and epitomise 21st century education.

"We are working together with communities to deliver the biggest schools rebuilding program in Victoria's history to drive jobs in tough economic times and to ensure local communities get the 21st Century school buildings they need."

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

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WA: Public schools to be able to turn independent

Chalpat Sonti, WA Today, August 12, 2009

A plan by the Government to allow public schools to switch status to become independent will create more problems than it solves, teachers say.

Premier Colin Barnett and education minister Liz Constable this morning unveiled details of the plan - which honours a Liberal election promise - to create "independent public schools".

Mr. Barnett said schools would be able to operate with greater autonomy and flexibility to set their direction. Among the benefits for turning independent were that it would allow schools to make their own staff and disciplinary decisions, freeing them from the "suffocating red tape" of central governance.

"This initiative will enable school principals and senior staff to lead and make decisions to tailor their school for the best education outcomes for their students," he said.

Up to 30 schools would be able to turn independent next year, with a final decision announced at the end of the Third Term.

But State School Teachers Union president Anne Gisborne said no consultation had been made on the changes, which would have a "massive impact" on teachers.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lzmj2b>

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WA: Wrong Path For Public Education in WA

Australian Education Union, 12 August 2009

The Australian Education Union said today the Barnett Government's plans for so-called independent public schools would not improve education and were an attempt to avoid its obligations to properly resource and staff public schools.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said today's announcement was a step in the wrong direction for public education in the state.

"The primary responsibility of any government is to ensure that properly resourced and staffed schools operate in every community," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"Here we have the Barnett Government attempting to abrogate its responsibilities by creating so-called independent public schools.

"Instead of putting more resources into schools we have a government trying to hand-pass its responsibilities to local school communities."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mthk56>

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WA: MPs recommend WA schools focus on grammar

Linda Cann, Perth Now, August 13, 2009

Big changes to the way children are taught reading and writing in schools have been recommended by a WA parliamentary committee. Chairwoman Alannah MacTiernan said the most important proposal was for children to be taught reading and writing the old-fashioned way – by focusing on grammar and phonetics.

The committee found literacy levels were inadequate in WA and many children were not prepared when starting primary school.

"We found many children were presenting at school with a large number of developmental

vulnerabilities, and it seems that these numbers were getting worse," Ms MacTiernan said.

"We need to strengthen parents' understanding of child development because they're the best people to deal with it, so that means creating better programs for parents. "

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nha9rd>

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FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Bendy Friends: the ultimate fat-free fundraiser -

Magnetic foam greeting cards

Whether you are looking for a birthday card, thank you card, a really exciting party invitation, greeting card or postcard that young children really appreciate, the new Bendy Friends range is the unique and perfect choice to send an unforgettable message to a young friend.

And because all young people love to receive them, this provides a fun alternative option to help raise money for your school. A great product to make your fund raising activities interesting – and fat free!



Bendy Friends are a unique and exciting new way to send a message through the mail. Made from strong, flexible coloured foam, Bendy Friends don't need to be placed in an envelope – they can be posted just as they are.

Simply write your message, affix the correct postage – and drop in the mail. They are Australia Post friendly – and can be posted anywhere in Australia for 55 cents – or overseas for \$1.10.

They also include a small magnet, so can end up on a fridge at the other end – which is perfect for birthday party invitations.

To find out more about how Bendy Friends can help with your fundraising, contact a consultant on (02) 9331 0946 or email Rebecca@bendyfriends.com.au

Website: <http://tinyurl.com/mgv5dc>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Indigenous Literacy Day

2 September 2009

All Australians are invited to participate in the third Indigenous Literacy Day. ILD aims to help raise urgently needed funds to address the literacy crisis in remote Indigenous communities.

What will happen on ILD:

- Indigenous Literacy Day events will be held across Australia.
- Participating publishers will donate 5% or more of their takings from titles invoiced on September 2 2009.
- Participating booksellers will donate 5% or more of their takings from September 2 2009. Booksellers can also donate to ILP.
- Bookshops and schools will initiate different awareness raising events in their local communities to support Indigenous Literacy Day.
- Schools can participate in The Great Book Swap, or other fundraising activities.
- Businesses are invited to pause at work and read to support Indigenous literacy and make a gold coin donation. Businesses can also participate in The Great Book Swap.
- Individuals can help by attending activities in their local area; buying a book at a participating bookshop on September 2 2009, getting involved in their local Great Book Swap or organising their own private fundraising literary lunches and morning teas.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ksfyv4>

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REMINDERS

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

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>

11-12 September - Future Directions in Literacy Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/n8ldcx>

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

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>

11-17 October - Anti-Poverty Week - <http://tinyurl.com/rbnlxh>

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

20 October - Symposium: Building school partnerships with commerce & industry - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/m6r5mb>

24-25 October - Asian Conference on Education - Osaka, Japan - <http://tinyurl.com/lahwja>

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>

9-10 April - National Coalition against Bullying Conference - Melbourne, VIC -
<http://tinyurl.com/m78qyt>

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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/qyleza> (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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