



# 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 31, 25 August 2009

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### COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

#### Non-government school parents put performance tables low on list

*Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, 19 August 2009*

PARENTS of children at non-government schools say they are not as interested in school performance tables as the Federal Government claims they are.

The parents are more interested in the happiness, safety and social development of their children, says a position statement being drafted by the Australian Parents Council, a national federation of organisations representing parents of non-government school students. The council's executive director, Ian Dalton, said parents ranked happiness and safety way ahead of student results in public tests.

"Schools and teachers do need to be accountable for their performance in respect to supporting parents. From our point of view, governments and parents are looking at this from a different point of view," he said.

"For most parents, academic performance ranks below many other priorities. This is something the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority needs to get its head around."

The Australian Parents Council has surveyed parents and found they generally rank school performance criteria in order of priority as follows

- The happiness and safety of students.
- That the school is clear about its objectives and operates consistently in ways that reflect its stated mission.
- Whether the school and its teachers encourage a culture of partnership with parents.
- The kind of people the students generally turn out to be.
- How well the principal and teachers seem to know students.

- The academic qualifications of teaching staff.
- Behaviour management strategies.
- Participation of teaching staff in professional development.
- The atmosphere or “feel” of the school.
- Students' results in public tests or exams.
- The school's reputation in the community.
- Students' sporting or artistic achievements.

The draft position paper says the reporting of school performance "must be driven by data that respect the sensitive interactions between home, school and the community".

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ounv6h>

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### **Accountability and the appropriate reporting of school performance.**

Rupert Macgregor, ACSSO Editorial, 17 August 2009

There is a great deal of discussion and debate around the establishment of new and far more extensive and comprehensive processes for the appropriate measurement and reporting of school performance.

The driving and motivational forces behind these moves for change are broadly and rather simplistically summed up as: the need and desire of parents to know more.

Certainly every parent wants - and is entitled to expect - the best outcomes and best learning and development opportunities for their child; and needs to know - on a continuous and progressive basis - how their child is progressing towards the achievement of their full potential - against appropriate, realistic but challenging expectations of their capacity.

They also want to gain a clear and practical understanding of the ways in which they can work in partnership with the school to sustain progress against those outcomes.

It is therefore essential to each and every parent that they and the teachers of the school are jointly provided with the information necessary to underpin those proactive and formative discussions.

Parents also understand that the reporting should also encompass measurement against criteria that will inform – on their behalf – those other key stakeholders in the education processes to whom parents entrust the more systemic decisions that affect the provision and resourcing of an appropriate range of high quality learning and development opportunities for their child and all the other children and families in their community.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mtk4n9>

Rupert Macgregor is acting Executive Director of ACSSO.

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### **Comparable assessment programs boost education outcomes: expert**

Australian Teacher Magazine, 17 August 2009 (AAP)

National assessment programs help improve education outcomes, a leading Australian educator says.

University of Western Australia Dean of Education, Professor Helen Wildy, said that when

teachers used comparable information on student achievement they were able to improve teaching, learning and school management.

Prof. Wildy praised the federal government's National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the WA Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA).

"This powerful overview of school performance allowed school leaders to address weaknesses highlighted by the results and to see their achievements in context," she said on Monday.

Prof. Wildy said teachers used NAPLAN and WALNA data to compare the performance of year groups over time, identify the impact of interventions on minorities such as low-performing students and to assess the effects of organisational and cultural changes within schools.

"Schools that have performed relatively well are digging into the results to find areas for further development," she said.

"Schools that are not performing well are less defensive. Instead they are using the results to improve."

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

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## **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY**

### **Avoiding further preventable tragedies**

Dear Editor,

I read the (18 August 2009) letter by David Cameron with interest. The incident he described however drew a different response from me.

Rather than making more traffic rules in the attempt to keep our children safe, why not spend time teaching our children the dangers of vehicles on the road & how to anticipate possible accidents? In trying to create a safe environment for school kids, I believe we sometimes neglect to help children develop a sense of observation & of cautious fear.

Road crossing is a daily act & most of us can remember incidents when we've had near misses ourselves. Fatigue at the end of a day at school, excitement, are common reasons for overlooking safety practices when road-crossing. But with reminders from carers & experienced gained from daily practice, our children will gain appropriate confidence in handling various traffic situations.

Why use the word "violation"? Surely the bus-driver was not deliberately looking for a target to hit? If one can understand that even the driver (yes, the man behind the wheel) is human & has failings as a human, surely it makes sense that education & legislation go hand in hand. Perhaps the man was tired; perhaps he was distracted by some kid in the bus throwing things about when the bus collided with the girl.

But no amount of rules & regulations can prevent human error. If we are aware of our own shortcomings, however, we can identify a point of weakness & seek assistance.

Please consider.

**Mae Chen**

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## **IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY**

### **Share the best teachers and pay well: report**

Stephanie Peatling, Sydney Morning Herald, August 17, 2009

THE best teachers would be given healthy pay rises and shared between schools as part of a performance-based system, a government report says. The report has backed pay based on merit, but not if it is linked exclusively to students' results.

Instead, it says, teachers should be able to opt in to a performance-based system that offers higher wages in return for teaching in demanding schools, taking part in training and being judged by a set of national benchmarks.

"The quality of the school system cannot exceed the quality of the people who teach in it, and there must be a thorough and ongoing commitment to teachers' development throughout their career," the report says. "Importantly, good teachers should be spread through the education system to ensure all students have access to great teaching."

The report was endorsed by federal and state ministers in June.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/kltdk4>

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## **Gillard's teacher pay plan: based on Howard era agenda?**

John Kaye MP, Media release: 17 August 2009

Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard's endorsement of a report advocating performance-based pay scales for teachers revives the agenda of the Howard Government.

"The Federal Government is recycling the ideological agenda of the Howard years", Dr Kaye said: "The Rees government should reject the push from Canberra to divide NSW staffrooms.

"Public education is, at heart, a cooperation between teachers, students and parents.

"Performance based pay undermines cooperation and morale, pressures teachers to teach to arbitrary tests and does nothing to address the real needs of public education.

"Teaching is a demanding profession that should be given greater respect by policy makers by increasing pay and conditions for all teachers."

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/mb58ab>

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## **BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

### **Gillard to rescue of school building program**

*Justine Ferrari, Education writer, The Australian, August 21, 2009*

EDUCATION Minister Julia Gillard was forced to step in to save the \$14.7 billion school building program from bureaucrats who threatened to derail the centrepiece of the federal government's economic stimulus package by delaying payments to schools for projects already under way.

Education Department officials overseeing the Building the Education Revolution program proposed to change the arrangements for handing over grants to schools, which would have forced many to borrow money and brought building to a standstill in hundreds of schools.

The decision to change the way money was handed over was made without reference to Ms Gillard. But it was resolved immediately her office was notified of the problem and its implications.

The issue came to a head about three weeks ago, when the second instalment of money to schools failed to flow through.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nbw3oe>

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## REGIONAL & RURAL EDUCATION

### Minister listens to gap year student concerns

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 24 August, 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today met with students from around Australia to discuss the Government's proposed changes to Youth Allowance.

Students, including many accompanied by their local MPs, attended from around Australia from the electorates of the Member for Eden Monaro Mike Kelly, Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom, Member for Corangamite Darren Cheeseman, Member for Ballarat Catherine King, Member for Bass Jodie Campbell, Member for Solomon Damian Hale, Member for Capricornia Kirsten Livermore and Member for Lyne Rob Oakeshott.

Also invited were Chair of Universities Australia, Professor Peter Coaldrake, President of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, Nigel Palmer and the National Union of Students National President, David Barrow.

The students took the opportunity to discuss the effect the changes were having including on those people who have taken a gap year in 2009 and were in the transition between the two systems.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lv6dco>

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## **Govt must heed students', Greens' concerns and amend Youth Allowance legislation before it reaches Senate**

*Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, 24 August 2009*

Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young says the Federal Government must amend its Youth Allowance Budget measures legislation to accommodate current gap year students who have been blocked from qualifying as independent by the Government's proposed changes\*.

Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard today held a roundtable meeting with young people affected by the Government's proposed changes to Youth Allowance, and announced afterwards that the Government would consider the students' concerns and respond "in due course".

"The Deputy Prime Minister must amend her Youth Allowance legislation before it reaches the Senate – or else the Greens will do it for her," said Senator Hanson-Young, Greens spokesperson for Education and Youth.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/n2pfph>

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## **National Party abandons regional students**

*Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Youth, 21 August 2009*

The National Party has been caught out blatantly making things up in a desperate attempt to justify their sell out of regional students in the Senate this week.

National Party Senators failed to support the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities and Other Measures) Bill 2009 which aimed to rebuild important student services and amenities on regional campuses.

Under the previous Government close to \$170 million has been slashed out of university funding resulting in the decline and in some instances complete closure of vital services and amenities.

This morning on ABC New England radio, National Party Senator John William's attempted to justify his vote against the Bill by claiming that the Minister had the power to '...approve additional amenities and services that may be funded with the \$250 fee'.

This is completely wrong.

The Bill is very clear that any revenue raised by universities from the fee – can only be used to deliver services and amenities outlined in the Fee Guidelines.

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

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## **Minister to meet with gap-year students on changes to Youth Allowance**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 20 August 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, has today announced that she will meet with students

from around Australia to discuss the proposed changes to Youth Allowance at Parliament House on Monday.

The Minister will meet with gap year students from a number of electorates and their local Members of Parliament, including the Member for Eden Monaro Mike Kelly, Member for Corangamite Darren Cheeseman, Member for Ballarat Catherine King, Member for Solomon Damian Hale, member for Capricornia Kirsten Livermore and Member for Lyne Rob Oakeshott.

The round table will also include the Chair of Universities Australia, Professor Peter Coaldrake, President of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, Nigel Palmer and the National Union of Students National President, David Barrow.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/oeshz3>

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## **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

### **\$652,000 for Northern Territory Books in Homes project**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 21 August 2009*

Minister for Education, Julia Gillard today announced that the Australian Government will continue its support for the work of the Books in Homes Australia organisation within Northern Territory Indigenous communities.

The Australian Government will contribute \$652,000 for the project's work in designated Northern Territory schools into 2010.

To halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade we must invest in initiatives that build the capacity of whole communities; parents, teachers and schools.

Books in Homes Australia is currently supporting Indigenous students and schools in communities which are part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response.

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

For more information, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/llqcqy>

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## **Action Plan for Batchelor Institute to secure future**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 21 August 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced that the Australian and Northern Territory Governments have taken steps to secure the future of the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory.

The Institute has advised the Australian Government that its financial circumstances are critical and that the Institute will require the assistance of the Northern Territory and Federal Governments.

A priority of the Action Plan will be to ensure that students continue and complete their studies, and that the process will invigorate the Institute's mission in Indigenous education, particularly in remote communities.

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

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## **\$5 million to give Indigenous girls a Sporting Chance**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 19 August 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today opened a new funding round for Sporting Chance Program academies focused on projects for Indigenous girls and young women.

As announced in the 2009-10 Budget, the Rudd Government has committed \$10 million to expand the Sporting Chance Program over the next four years.

This \$5 million round of funding will be invested in targeted projects aimed at improving the participation and engagement of around 700 girls in secondary schools. The program has been highly successful in maximising the participation of boys and this funding round will help to increase the number of girls participating in the program.

The Sporting Chance Program uses sport as a basis to engage Indigenous students in education. In particular, Sporting Chance has been proven to encourage Indigenous students to complete their schooling, increasing their ability to take up future training or employment opportunities.

Applications for this round open today and close at 5.00pm on Friday 25th September.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ml7sef>

For more information, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/n7xtks>

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## **Disability diagnosis wrong for indigenous students**

*Justine Ferrari, the Australian, August 17, 2009*

ABORIGINAL children falling behind at school are being diagnosed as intellectually disabled and placed in special education classes when their underlying problem is hearing loss or speaking English as a second language.

Research conducted in indigenous communities reveals an over-diagnosis of intellectual impairments in Aboriginal students as a result of the inappropriate use of hearing and intelligence tests in English.

The tests fail to account for language or cultural differences and label the students as having low IQs, which enables the school to then claim disability funding for the students.

Speech pathologist Judy Gould, who has worked and conducted research in indigenous communities in NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory for the past two decades, said if a French child struggled in class, it was assumed their difficulties were due to not being able to speak English.

"There's a lack of knowledge that Aboriginal English is a separate dialect and also a lack of information about how to deal with children who have a hearing loss," she said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/l4rhhl>

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## SCIENCE EDUCATION

### **\$2 million for innovative initiative to engage students in science**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 17 August 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced support for an innovative new school science education initiative to encourage more students to study science.

The Rudd Government has committed \$2 million towards the roll out of the Science and Technology Education Leveraging Relevance (STELR) program to around 180 secondary schools next year.

The STELR project, designed by the Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering, aims to increase participation in science-related careers by getting Year 9 and 10 students excited about science.

STELR focuses on the topic of renewable energy and takes a hands-on, inquiry approach to the teaching of science.

Teachers will be provided with the professional development and curriculum materials required to ensure a stimulating learning environment for their students.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/m6hpzj>

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## HOMework

### **Has Canberra done its homework?**

*Caroline Milburn, the Age, August 17, 2009*

Surging demand for after-school homework clubs has led two of Australia's leading charities to criticise the Federal Government's approach to helping disadvantaged students.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Melbourne City Mission are dismayed the Government has failed to help fund a national network of clubs, despite its policy documents since 2007 suggesting support for the after-hours learning programs.

Homework clubs provide volunteers to tutor pupils in primary and secondary school. The free programs are mainly run by welfare agencies, councils, churches and other community groups. The clubs are located in libraries, community halls or at schools.

Most are aimed at refugee and indigenous students. But the Brotherhood and Melbourne City Mission say the need for extra tuition is so dire among other disadvantaged children the Commonwealth should broaden help beyond these groups to jointly fund a national scheme with the states and territories.

Unless it does so, the Government is unlikely to reach its goal of lifting the year 12 retention rates to 90 per cent of all students, the Brotherhood warns in a new report, Education Reform Beyond School. It says learning support programs, or homework clubs, are a proven way to help the 15 per cent of Australian students at risk of dropping out.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nruu7m>

Download the report at <http://tinyurl.com/nxvwd8>

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## FUNDING

### **\$21 million for grants to community organisations to support their volunteers**

*Hon Jenny Macklin MP & Senator Ursula Stephens, Media Release, 14/08/2009*

Non-profit organisations, who are supported by volunteers, can apply for Australian Government grants of up to \$5,000 to purchase equipment and cover the cost of petrol.

\$21 million will be distributed across Australia in the 2009 round of volunteer grants, supporting more than 7000 organisations and 900,000 volunteers.

The Australian Government values the enormous contribution volunteers make in our community and this funding will ease the financial pressure on non-profit organisations and volunteers. Organisations will receive grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to purchase equipment, including computers, tools and air conditioners and also help with fuel costs.

Applications are open for six weeks from Friday 14 August to 25 September 2009.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lha8gy>

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## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

### **Consuming Kids: The Commercialisation of Childhood**

With virtually no government oversight or public outcry, the multi-billion dollar youth marketing industry in America has been able to use the latest advances in psychology, anthropology and neuroscience to transform American children into one of the most powerful and profitable consumer demographics in the world.

American kids now influence an estimated \$700 billion in annual spending, targeted virtually from birth with sophisticated commercial appeals designed to sell everything from Hollywood merchandise and junk foods to iPods, mobile phones, and the family car.

The result is that childhood itself has been commercialised. Consuming Kids traces the evolution and impact of this disturbing and unprecedented phenomenon, exposing the youth marketing industry's controversial tactics, and exploring the effect of hyper-consumerism on the actual lived experience of children.

Dr. Susan Linn, the Director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, explains: "This generation of children is marketed to as never before. Kids are being marketed to through brand licensing, through product placement, marketing in schools, through stealth marketing, through viral marketing. There's DVDs, there's video games, there's the internet, there are iPods; there are cell phones. There are so many more ways of reaching children so that there is a brand in front of a child's face every moment of every day."

If you missed this on TV last week, you can still view it at <http://tinyurl.com/nanabh> or <http://tinyurl.com/nsneor>

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## **Families who play board games are winners**

*Cheryl Critchley, Herald Sun, August 19, 2009*

FAMILIES that play board games together improve their social, educational and life skills, new research has found.

Playing board games at least weekly helped improve the children's concentration, social interaction and co-operation with siblings.

It also boosted their patience, concentration, teamwork, sharing, social interaction, communication, sportsmanship, critical thinking skills, maths and spelling.

OMD Insights got 125 families around the nation with children aged five to 12 to down the Nintendo and play board games at least once a week for a month. Family relationships improved and parents were amazed children did not need to be glued to the TV.

Time-poor parents whose kids usually spent too much time on computer and console games vowed to continue the ritual and noticed themselves becoming more patient and organised.

"Putting a family games night on to the agenda each week definitely strengthens family bonds with comments such as 'It really strengthened our family unit' typical of many," the study found.

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

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## **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

### **Measures to safeguard education for overseas students studying in Australia**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 19 August 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today warned education providers that they risk being shut down if they don't comply with rules relating to international students.

Ms Gillard was speaking in Parliament at the introduction of an Amendment Bill to the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000.

Under the new rules being considered by the Parliament, all institutions currently registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) will be required to re-register under new, tighter criteria by 31 December 2010.

The Bill adds two new criteria for registration: the provider must have the principal purpose of providing education; and the provider must have demonstrated a capacity to provide education of a satisfactory standard.

The process will allow the Government to review the registration of education providers to ensure they are providing quality education services to international students visiting Australia.

Most providers are doing the right thing, but this change will help weed out the shonky operators.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/p89deu>

More information is available on the AEI website at <http://tinyurl.com/ny4ev2>

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## RESEARCH

### ICT in pre-service teacher training

*Greg Black and Kerrie Smith et al, Education.au, 2009*

This report is part of the Strategic ICT Advisory Service, funded by the Australian Government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Following the ICT in Learning Symposium held on 1 May 2009, DEEWR requested a hot topic investigation that reports on the current experience of student teachers in applying ICT in pedagogy, any barriers to using technology at University, challenges in the practicum and ways to improve their experience of ICT in their pre-service.

In developing the hot topic we attempted to consider current and recent research into the issues, to consult lecturers in teacher education, pre-service teachers, and teachers in schools who had acted as mentors to pre-service teachers.

The evidence presented in this paper strongly points to fundamental systemic flaws in the pre-service teacher education system in Australia in terms of developing teacher competence in embedding ICTs in pedagogy and practice.

Unless a radical approach is taken, it is unlikely that a grab bag of individual changes will make any real difference.

There are critical points of resistance to be overcome.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mtjx32>

Read more about Education.au's Strategic ICT Advisory Service reports at <http://blogs.educationau.edu.au/jmillea/>

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## AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

### ACT: Lobby group questions Islamic School plan

*Natasha Rudra, Canberra Times, 24 August 2009*

Lobby group Save Our Schools has questioned the ACT Government's proposal to offer the private Islamic School new premises on a former public education site.

Save Our Schools spokesman Trevor Cobbold said the move contradicted government policy and the community should be consulted on a wider range of uses for the site.

Last week the Government announced it would consider moving the Islamic School to a new, bigger site at the Canberra Institute of Technology's Weston campus.

The CIT horticultural school will vacate its Heysen Street campus in Weston for a new home in Bruce next year.

Community consultation on the site will begin next month but Mr Cobbold said the community should be allowed to consider a wider variety of uses for the Weston site.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/kovd2h>

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### **ACT: More Than 750 Apply to Become ACT Public School Teachers**

*Andrew Barr, MLA, August 20, 2009*

ACT school principals and teachers are about to start sifting through more than 750 applications from across Australia and around the world from people who have applied to teach in ACT public schools.

"Many have applied to be one of the extra 70 teachers ACT Labor is hiring to deliver on our election commitment to further reduce average class sizes in ACT public schools," Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr said.

"The ACT public education system has a great reputation nationally and internationally which is why we traditionally receive between 2 and 3 applications for each job we advertise.

"The ACT Government is investing more than \$22 million to employ an additional 70 teachers and reduce class sizes to an average of 21 in primary and high school, and to an average of 19 in colleges.

The fact we have so many applicants for these positions is proof that education professionals support Labor's policy to deliver smaller classrooms in the best equipped schools in Australia.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lr37hw>

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### **NSW: Corrimal parents urge Wollongong Council to axe food inspection fee**

*ABC News, Aug 17, 2009*

Canteen volunteers at the Corrimal Public School are calling for Wollongong City Council to drop a food inspection charge that will see them and other schools billed the same as commercial enterprises.

The charges are part of amendments to the New South Wales Government's Food Inspection Program which is administered by local councils.

The president of Corrimal Public School's Parents and Citizens Association, Susan Musgrove, says the inspections are necessary but Wollongong council is effectively treating small community organisations the same as large commercial food retailers.

She says other councils have introduced different billing structures.

"It's happened to all schools in the Wollongong council area," she said. "It's actually happened state-wide but it's Wollongong council who are deciding to charge these rates, some councils are not charging anything, or a minimal fee."

Ms Musgrove says the fees as they are threaten the operation of small school canteens in the Wollongong area.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/nj5sn9>

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## **NSW: Integral's solar school fiasco sends wrong message**

*John Kaye MP, Media release: 18 August 2009*

Energy Minister Ian Macdonald should move quickly to ensure that solar panels installed on NSW schools are connected to the grid.

"Uncertainty about the NSW government's feed-in tariff caused electricity retailer Integral to leave panels at ten Sydney schools unconnected for several months.

"The Rees government has botched the introduction of the additional payment for renewable energy, creating confusion and delay.

"Whole schools are receiving funds from the Rudd government to install PV panels, but the NSW government has created a roadblock to their use.

"Students are watching with disbelief as their schools' plans to lower their carbon footprint are frustrated by the NSW government's failure to move quickly to a feed-in tariff that works.

"Minister Macdonald should order Integral to immediately connect the panels. His government must resolve ambiguities about the state's feed-in tariffs".

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/mjf955>

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## **NSW schools 'ignoring government ban on junk food'**

*Amelia Adams & Kelvin Bissett, Nine News, 17 August 2009*

The war on childhood obesity is being lost in many NSW school canteens with a secret survey revealing barely one in four government primary schools have complied with a ban on foods like chocolate bars, soft drink and traditional meat pies.

Government high schools appear to be even worse at following the rules with just 6.8 per cent of menus fully meeting the standard of healthy food, despite it being mandatory.

A Nine News investigation has found widespread disregard for the NSW Fresh Tastes @ School policy, launched with widespread publicity in 2004, with the NSW Department of Education and Training itself even reluctant to support the distribution of posters promoting healthy menus in tuckshops.

A random survey of 1060 primary and high schools last year by NSW Health -- focused on the Hunter New England area but also taking in other areas of NSW -- found just 26 per cent of public primary schools had complied with requirements to ban or severely restrict high fat, sugar and salt foods.

The results of the survey, obtained under Freedom of Information from NSW Health, found an even worse compliance rate of just 6.8 percent among government high schools.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mhu73s>

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## **NT: Building a Bright Future**

*Paul Henderson, Minister for Education and Training, 21 August 2009*

More than 1200 Darwin students will be deciding their futures today at the Territory Government's Darwin Careers Expo.

The Northern Territory Education and Training Minister Paul Henderson attended the Expo at the Darwin Showgrounds where he met some of the exhibitors and students.

Today's event is the last of five Careers Expos for Years 10 -12 held across the Territory.

"I want every young Territorian to get the best possible education, move into a fulfilling career and make the best of the opportunities the Territory has to offer," he said.

"As the Territory economy continues to grow and develop, new opportunities and career pathways are opening up all the time.

"There are many identified skills shortage areas and industries that need to recruit more skilled staff. The annual Careers Expo is a perfect opportunity to find out where some of these opportunities are.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mn3ly5>

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## **QLD: Independent teachers' union considers strike action**

*ABC News, Aug 18, 2009*

Teachers in Queensland's Catholic schools are considering industrial action, claiming they are underpaid compared to their interstate colleagues.

The Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) says teachers in New South Wales and Western Australia earn about \$7,000 a year more.

The QIEU says Catholic Education has until the end of the week to agree to better pay rates for teachers or the union will consider industrial action.

The union is seeking increases of up to 21.5 per cent over three years to bring Queensland teachers into line with their interstate colleagues.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lb7rtc>

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## **SA: Threat to lift class sizes**

*David Nankervis, Daily Mail, August 16, 2009*

STATE school class sizes are being primed for a potential increase next year, in some cases by as many as 11 extra students.

The capacity for class size increases has come to light in the State Government's 20-month-long battle with the Australian Education Union over pay, conditions and resources.

Documents submitted last week by the State Government to the Industrial Relations Commission, and obtained by the Sunday Mail, show the "average maximum class sizes" proposed by the Government are significantly higher than current average class sizes.

Under its proposal - to apply from 2010 - the Government would be able to increase class sizes, including to:

- 26 students in Reception to Year 2 - currently averaging 19 per class;
  - 30 students in Years 3 to 7 - currently 25;
  - 29 students in Years 8 to 10 - currently 20;
  - 26 in Years 11 and 12 - currently 20; and
  - 26 students in area high schools - currently 14.6.
- The "average maximum" class sizes were detailed as part of the Government's enterprise bargaining offer to teachers.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ncsw66>

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## **SA: Survey seeks to shape a blueprint for SA's education future**

*Lauren Novak, the Advertiser, August 17, 2009*

SMALLER class sizes, better training for teachers and cutting red tape should be the top priorities for improving South Australia's education system.

Educators, parents and independent observers have told The Advertiser that the state's education system is struggling under excessive bureaucracy and needs to be more innovative.

Many felt education was not a high enough priority for state and federal governments and identified teacher training, class sizes, technology, maintenance and support for children with special needs as the areas in need of most urgent attention.

More money also should be put into lifting educators' wages and allowing teachers and principals more one-on-one time with students, they said.

The main concern was the quality of teaching staff.

Parent representative and SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey said it "makes sense to identify schools which are struggling, so that resources and assistance can be allocated to them". Mr. Knuckey said many teachers deserved a 21 per cent pay rise but others "shouldn't be in the classroom".

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ncsw66>

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## **TAS: Koreans plan Hobart school and village**

*Yahoo7 Finance, August 24, 2009*

A Korean consortium wants to build a \$500million residential and education village on Hobart's eastern shore.

The project Paranville is proposed by property development group MB Kim on 160 hectares of

land located on Pass Road between Howrah and Rokeby.

Paranville would include a 209-lot community living village, a language school, a fitness centre, a business and restaurant district and parklands.

The language school would cater for about 200 Korean students and up to 500 Korean teachers annually.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/n4pwf8>

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## **TAS: Bartlett Must Act on Banning School League Tables Publication**

*Nick McKim MP, 24th August 2009*

The Tasmanian Greens today reiterated their call for Premier and Education Minister David Bartlett to legislate to ban the publication of school league tables after the state conference of the Tasmanian State Schools Parents and Friends association voted overwhelmingly against publication.

Greens Leader and Education Spokesperson Nick McKim MP said Premier Bartlett appears to be too busy rehashing statements about his long-term visions for the future of the Tasmanian education system, instead of actually taking action to address issues that are damaging the system right now, such as the publication of school league tables.

“Premier Bartlett claims to listen to the people, and if he is a man of his word he must move to legislate to ban the publication of school league tables following the State Schools Parents and Friends Association State Conference voting against publication this weekend,” Mr McKim said.

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

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## **TAS: Bold Strategic Plan For Literacy And Numeracy**

*David Bartlett MP, Premier and Minister for Education and Skills, 22 August 2009*

Tasmania will lead Australia in literacy and numeracy by 2016, Premier David Bartlett told the Tasmanian State Schools Parents and Friends annual conference in Hobart today.

“The Education Department has completed its Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Plan and I am confident its implementation will see Tasmanian students at the top of the national scale.

“It will take time, but we have already started and will get there by 2016.”

Mr Bartlett said that the plan involved key initiatives designed to work together to boost Tasmania’s literacy and numeracy results.

“Launching into Learning is a key plank and we should be starting to see the impact of that successful program on NAPLAN results in Year 3 for the first time in 2012,” Mr Bartlett said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lkv23u>

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## **VIC: Maths and Science Education Boost for Victoria's Future**

*Education Minister Bronwyn Pike, 21 August 2009*

The Brumby Labor Government is investing \$90 million dollars to help students become Victoria's next generation of innovators and scientists.

Launching the strategy at Williamstown High School, Education Minister Bronwyn Pike commended the school on its marine science programs.

Ms Pike said the Energising Science and Mathematics Education strategy would make students workplace ready for the 21st century, and is a Brumby Labor Government five year plan to raise the focus on science and maths education.

"This new strategy ensures Victoria's best teachers will team with our brightest scientists and mathematicians to provide every student with the skills they need for 21st century jobs and inspire students towards specialist careers in these fields," Ms Pike said.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/nq3fus>

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## **VIC: Trial to Pay Bonuses for Top Teachers**

*Education Minister Bronwyn Pike, 21 August 2009*

Victorian students will be better off with the piloting of two teacher pay bonus models at up to 75 selected Victorian government primary and secondary schools.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike said the trial, launching in 2010, strengthened the Brumby Labor Government's commitment to helping students reach their potential.

"Education is the Brumby Labor Government's number one priority. We know parents want the best results for their children and excellent teaching is a critical factor in lifting student achievement," Ms Pike said.

"We will further reward high-performing teachers who help our children to reach their potential and shine."

Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Kew Primary School are the first two schools to sign up for the trial where the two model system will reward teaching excellence, retain high-quality teachers and spawn greater student results. The list of other schools participating in trial will be finalised by October.

The Teacher Rewards model will be trialled in 25 schools and provide an annual bonus to the top 30 per cent of high-performing teachers assessed by their schools.

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

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## **WA : Rising number of students missing too much school - Auditor General**

*Linda Cann, Perth Now, 19 August 2009*

ALMOST 30 per cent of WA public school students are at educational risk because they miss too much school, a report has found - and the problem is getting worse.

Auditor General Colin Murphy's latest report, tabled in Parliament today, found that attendance had been declining steadily, with about half of Year 10 students missing school regularly.

The Education Department was failing to improve attendance for students who were persistently absent, the report found.

'Every Day Counts: Managing Student Attendance in Western Australian Public Schools' found that while the overall attendance for public schools was 91 per cent, some 49 000 children in Years 1 to 10 were at educational risk because they were often absent.

The number of students at educational risk as a result of non-attendance had grown to 28 per cent in 2008 – a six per cent increase from 2007. On any given day in 2008, around 15,500 students were not at school.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/llmmz3>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2009**

*31 August-6 September 2009*

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 24 August, 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today officially launched National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2009 at Wiley Park Public School in Sydney with the NSW Education Minister, Verity Firth and the Member for Watson, Tony Burke.

National Literacy and Numeracy Week (NLNW) will run from 31 August to 6 September and aims to raise community awareness of the importance of developing effective literacy and numeracy skills.

Schools across Australia will participate in a range of activities and recognise the achievements of local students and teachers, parents and members of the community who support young people to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

The theme for NLNW 2009 is Getting the Basics Right, reflecting the fact that literacy and numeracy skills are the key that unlocks the door to a successful education and the best start in life.

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

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## **U & Web 2.0**

### **New South Wales Computer Education Group State Conference**

*26-27 September, St. Mark's Catholic College, Stanhope Gardens, NSW*

The New South Wales CEG is a professional association representing educators from pre-school to tertiary using computing technology to enhance their teaching and student learning.

Keynote speakers are Greg Whitby (Executive Director, Catholic Education Office Parramatta) who explores "the key areas underpinning a new model of schooling for today's world: de-privatising teacher practice, personalising student learning and ICTs as enablers to facilitate

deep learning", and Martin Levins (Director of IT at The Armidale School) who specialises in "the enhancement in learning that can happen with appropriate immersion in Information Communications Technologies".

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

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## REMINDERS

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 September - Indigenous Literacy Day - <http://tinyurl.com/ksfyv4>

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](mailto: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 -



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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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