



# 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 40, 3 November 2009

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### HEALTH & WELL-BEING

*Research and parliamentary inquiries over the last few years have confirmed something most parents have come to know first hand: good quality, well-fitting, comfortable schoolwear directly affects a school student's quality of life. It quite possibly help improves their school performance, and it definitely extends the life of the garment.*

*The problem for parents, of course, is where to obtain good quality, well-fitting, comfortable schoolwear - at a reasonable price.*

*ACSSO can't claim the knowledge that allows parents to share insights of the best available local products and shops, but when we do come across a schoolwear vendor who operates on a national scale, who satisfies and exceeds quality standards and who charges a fair price, we will bring that to your attention. Mostly, we will do this objectively, but occasionally a provider might come along to whom we offer our formal endorsement. Such as these:*



#### Classmate Socks

Grundies Pty Ltd in Melbourne has developed a new range of three different styles of sock for school students, variously available in white or college grey and in a variety of sizes. What makes these socks different is not only that they have been designed by a company that has spent 20 years in the school apparel business – but that these designs have been developed in consultation with parents and families.

ACSSO is delighted to provide a formal endorsement - look for the ACSSO logo.

The new Classmate range is being launched for sale initially to parents solely through their schools at a special wholesale rate. This provides school canteens or parent groups the opportunity to earn money for their school while still providing real value to parents and families buying quality socks.

This wholesale rate is only available for orders that are placed before 30 November, so do print out the order form, talk it over and see how many orders you can gather to raise some funds.

Take a look at the socks at [http://www.acsso.org.au/images/classmate\\_range.jpg](http://www.acsso.org.au/images/classmate_range.jpg)

Download the order form at [http://www.acsso.org.au/classmate/classmate\\_order.pdf](http://www.acsso.org.au/classmate/classmate_order.pdf)

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## Weigh-PAK

Most parents have worked out that a well-designed and comfortable back-pack can help protect their children's health and safety. Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry comments about the need for a really ergonomic back-pack come as no surprise.

The surprise is that hat manufacturer Mountcastle, Australia's second-oldest company, has come up with what may be an answer.

Rigorously examined, tested and endorsed by the Chiropractic and Osteopathic College of Australasia, the Weigh-PAK not only features an ergonomically friendly Y-shape yoke harness but has a unique integrated weight scale, allowing a parent to check the weight against the advised limit for their child's health & safety BEFORE the child puts it on.

It's a simple, clever idea attached to an advanced child-friendly design, a combination that also won it our formal endorsement - look for the ACSO logo.

Find out more at <http://www.weighpak.com/>

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## COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

### The minefield that is school league tables

*Maralyn Parker, Daily Telegraph, October 28, 2009*

But the blood started to flow when Hill jumped in to answer a question aimed at another of the forum speakers, NSW Education Minister Verity Firth. The question was: what evidence is there that publishing school performance data improves student outcomes?

You could expect a minister for education to answer such a question as her government's policy is built around it.

But much to the amusement of several forum guests Hill said he did not think it was fair to ask a minister a question about academic research. I doubt he will ever make that mistake again. More so - if she didn't already - I bet Firth can now quote exactly the research she needs to know.

But most surprising - remembering Hill is an academic and policy adviser where such research is very much in his field - was his answer. In short he said there is not much evidence at all really.

And that answer I predict will relentlessly return to torment Peter Hill, ACARA, Verity Firth and Julia Gillard \_ probably forever. Hill is stuck with it unless some new definitive study is released that proves publishing data works well or Australian standards do dramatically improve once the website is up.

It doesn't matter much that what we are doing in Australia is different to everywhere else in the world where school performance data has been published.

And to add to this feast the person who asked the question was Trevor Cobbolt, convener of Save Our Schools, a public school support lobby.

Read entire article:

[http://blogs.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/maralynparker/index.php/dailytelegraph/comments/forum\\_not\\_ready](http://blogs.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/maralynparker/index.php/dailytelegraph/comments/forum_not_ready)

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## **ACARA Head Admits There is Little Evidence for Reporting School Results**

*Trevor Cobbold, Save our Schools, 29 October 2009*

There is little research evidence to show that reporting school results leads to better student performance according to Peter Hill, the newly-appointed chief executive of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. His admission is a fatal blow to the case for publishing school results.

Hill told a forum on league tables in Sydney last Friday (23rd October) that the evidence is mixed (see Daily Telegraph report). He said that while some studies show that student achievement does improve, many studies show little or no impact. He also said that the effects are generally small, and he noted that there was no evidence that racial inequalities were reduced by public reporting.

This is a stunning admission from the executive charged with implementing Australia's new curriculum and reporting system.

The Federal Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, has never conceded these points. Instead, she has relied on selective and misleading evidence to show positive results from reporting school results. She has simply ignored evidence from studies that show little or no impact or declines in achievement. Obviously, she is not going to let facts get in the way of a simplistically appealing policy.

Read more at <http://www.saveourschools.com.au/league-tables/acara-head-admits-there-is-little-evidence-for-reporting-school-results>

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## **The Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority**

Professor Barry McGaw is chair of the Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority. He spoke recently at a seminar hosted by Learning Difficulties Australia.

Professor McGaw gave a quite detailed account of how a parent might use a reporting website that ACARA will establish, being able to compare a school with up to sixty others around the country that are appropriately comparable.

The reporting website Professor McGaw spoke about seems to be on track, it's expected that school profiles will be published online before the start of the next school year.

Of course many people opposed to 'league tables' will have something to say about that in the meantime.

Listen online or download the audio at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/edpod/stories/2009/2727324.htm>

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## **PROFESSOR CALDWELL LETS RIP**

### **Education revolution failing: expert**

*Emma MacDonald, Canberra Times, 2 November 2009*

The Rudd Government's education revolution is all talk and very little action, education commentator Brian Caldwell says.

The professor and former dean of education at the University of Melbourne said Australia risked ending up with one of the most centralised and bureaucratically organised systems of education in the world.

Also, the \$16billion spent on Building the Education Revolution would largely be seen as squandered.

A year since he co-wrote the book *Why Not the Best Schools?*, based on workshops he conducted across more than 4000 schools in 11 countries, Professor Caldwell will deliver a blunt assessment today, rating the Rudd Government a failure in overall educational reform.

"When it comes to changing education, the Rudd Government is faltering. We've been through all the areas they are tackling in education and on 10 key criteria, we can only score it 43 out of 100 at best. A number of education policies can only be described as missing in action," he said.

Read more at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/education-revolution-failing-expert/1665180.aspx?storypage=0>

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## **Education revolution fails grade**

*Brian Caldwell, National Times, 2 November 2009*

Finnish students top all international tests, New York's charter schools have helped disadvantaged students succeed and England has brilliant programs that allow specialist schools. But these are not lessons the Rudd Government is heeding. The much-vaunted "education revolution" is heading for failure because it has not adopted key strategies that international experience tells us are important for success.

Most of what has been achieved has simply merged state and territory bureaucracies into a single framework of decision-making that may ultimately have no impact on how students learn. Australia may end up with one of the most centralised and bureaucratically organised systems of education in the world, with ministers left flailing for explanations as performance flatlines and expectations are unfulfilled.

A five-year study by Educational Transformations of successful school reform around the world assessed 10 strategies in seminars and workshops with more than 4000 school and school system leaders in 11 countries.

Read more at <http://www.nationaltimes.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/education-revolution-fails-grade-20091101-hrvj.html>

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## **Memorised essays a poor test of HSC skills, says expert**

*Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, November 2, 2009*

HIGH-STAKES testing can distort the school curriculum and encourage students to memorise essays instead of thinking on their feet, an education expert has warned.

Brian Caldwell, the former dean of education at the University of Melbourne, said Australia was on the way to having one of the most centralised and bureaucratically organised systems of education in the world.

Professor Caldwell welcomed moves towards a national curriculum, but said there were signs it would be too tightly prescribed. His warning follows an outcry from Higher School Certificate students about changes to this year's exam format for some subjects, which caught many off guard.

Students complained they were caught out when English and studies-of-religion exam questions failed to follow the predictable format of previous years.

Professor Caldwell said the movement towards the memorising of exam essays was a symptom of high-stakes testing.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/memorised-essays-a-poor-test-of-hsc-skills-says-expert-20091101-hrl2.html>

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## Poor marks for education revolution

*Justine Ferrari, The Australian, November 02, 2009*

THE education revolution announced by Kevin Rudd almost two years ago is drifting off course, having failed to adopt key strategies critical to improving schools, including giving principals greater autonomy, improving teacher education and introducing different models for running schools as in the US and Britain.

International education consultant and former dean of education at Melbourne University Brian Caldwell yesterday said the education revolution was heading for failure and risked giving Australia one of the most centralised and bureaucratically run systems in the world.

Professor Caldwell assessed the Rudd government's education policies against 10 strategies considered critical for improving education systems, marking the education revolution 43 out of 100.

"We've hardly loaded our rifles for four of the key strategies that our research tells us will help create success for all students. Top-performing nations are leaving us behind," he said.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,26291412-2702,00.html>

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## BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

### Changes to BER to benefit Australian schools

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 2 November, 2009*

The Government will adjust the funding for the Building the Education Revolution (BER) and the Education Investment Fund (EIF) as new updated economic forecasts in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) show the powerful benefits of economic stimulus.

The Government has announced that \$500 million of BER funding will be re-phased from 2010-11 to 2011-12 and \$200 million of funding will be returned to the EIF for allocation in the future.

The adjustments to the BER and EIF will allow flexibility in managing the demand for individual programs and continued value for money whilst ensuring that an appropriate level of support is provided to the economy.

The Government has always said that we would recalibrate our stimulus measures, if and when required, to ensure they remain suited to changing economic circumstances during the global recession.

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_091102\\_155618.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091102_155618.aspx)

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### School building program schedules put back by a year

*Dan Harrison and Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, November 3, 2009*

THE federal Education Minister, Julia Gillard, has been forced to change her school building program to respond to complaints that its tight time frames were inflating prices and leading state governments to foist unsuitable buildings on schools.

The Opposition claimed this was an admission that the \$16 billion schools stimulus package had led to waste and profiteering.

Ms Gillard said yesterday that \$500 million worth of projects for the 2010-11 financial year would be put back a year.

The change was contained in the Government's mid-year outlook, which said it would "allow construction timetables to be varied where cost pressures from labour or material shortages would reduce value for money".

Two months ago the Government announced it was diverting \$1.5 billion from other parts of its stimulus plan - including \$178 million earmarked for science and language centres in needy schools - to cater for a higher than expected demand for primary school buildings.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/school-building-program-schedules-put-back-by-a-year-20091102-htfv.html>

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## TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

### Show us parents how you are spending our money...

*Caroline Milburn, the Age, October 26, 2009*

Simon Smith has the sort of dogged determination likely to be handy in his occupation as a consumer protection lawyer and author. When the 59-year-old father of two teenage daughters wanted to know how their school was spending its large income, he approached the task with his customary thoroughness.

The girls attend the prestigious Wesley College, one of Australia's biggest and oldest private schools. More than 3000 students are enrolled at the school's three campuses in the middle-class suburbs of St Kilda, Elsternwick and Glen Waverley.

Like all families at private schools, Wesley parents are major financial stakeholders: paying about 82 per cent of the school's annual income (\$58 million in fees). And like many parents used to the transparency of Victorian government primary schools, where parents are elected to school council and an audited financial report is publicly available, Dr Smith was surprised to find his daughters' private secondary school had a different approach to reporting financial information to parents.

Wesley's annual report on its website has several pie charts and tables, showing general categories of income and spending. "It gives you a Women's Weekly summary of the school's financials," says Dr Smith. "You can't see where the money goes, like why the laptop program is so expensive. There's no detailed data, so you can't do any cost-benefit analysis."

Dr Smith is satisfied with the quality of his children's education. But paying about \$50,000 after tax each year in school fees is motivating him to improve the school's accountability mechanisms to parents. "That amount of money is like driving a very expensive car over a cliff every year," he says. "You don't do that unless you think you're getting value for money."

Frustrated by the school council's refusal to provide him with a copy of its audited financial report, Dr Smith started a parents' petition earlier this year.

Despite being owned by the Uniting Church, Wesley is governed independently by a school council responsible for governance practices, policy and appointment of the school principal. Most of Australia's 1024 not-for-profit independent schools, founded by religious or other community groups, operate the same way.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/call-to-schools-open-your-books-20091023-hd48.html>

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## MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

### Mathematics skills going out for the count

*Bruce McDougall, Daily Telegraph, 26 October 2009*

AUSTRALIA is falling seriously behind other nations in mathematics, with leaders in the field saying greater emphasis on the subject is needed to lift standards in schools.

Professor Anthony Dooley from the University of NSW said yesterday the number of advanced maths students across Australia had dropped 25 per cent between 1995 and 2008, while university maths majors had fallen by 15 per cent between 2001 and 2008.

"The reason is a combination of things, but students aren't getting so turned on by maths at school now and we need more and better-trained teachers," Professor Dooley said.

His warning came as more than 30,000 Year 12 students prepared to sit the HSC general mathematics exam today.

Read more at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw-act/mathematics-skills-out-for-the-count/story-e6freuzi-1225791113494>

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## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### Aboriginal content will keep kids at school

*Sean Gorman, The Age, November 2, 2009*

If you go into any country town or remote area you will find Aboriginal people.

On pension day you don't need to look too hard to find some of them playing cards under a tree, or in a town's pub playing darts.

Some people believe the dual influences of idleness and passive welfare mean that many indigenous lives are not being fully realised.

But if you look closer at both these activities, they involve social maintenance (ie maintaining relationships) and complex mathematical problems.

I have often stood in awe of the calculator-like sharpness of indigenous people when playing darts and chalking their score on the board.

To do this requires an education.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/politics/aboriginal-content-will-keep-kids-at-school-20091102-hrto.html>

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## OPINION

### Teacher who spurns fame the real idol

*Jane Caro, Sydney Morning Herald, November 3, 2009*

So universal is the emotional kick of primary school choirs that I think they have helped remove one of the more promising finalists from the latest Australian Idol competition.

Toby Moulton, a 30-year-old primary school teacher from Adelaide, saved one of his fellow contestants from departure on Sunday night by announcing his withdrawal from the competition. He claimed he'd rather be a teacher than a pop star. "I now know who I am," he said. "I am a teacher."

There has been much agonising about teacher training and recruitment. In the "blame the teacher" mentality that seems to rule in the big end of town, the growing inequality of our education system has been partly blamed on the

low quality of teachers. Much has been made of their relatively low entry marks for university and the low numbers of men who go into the profession.

Solutions that have been suggested include performance pay, special deals for male applicants, and the recruitment of high-performing graduates from other disciplines to spend two years teaching before they leave for fame and fortune elsewhere. None of our business or government hard-heads, however, expected that the recruiter of their dreams could turn out to be a pleasant-voiced, clean-cut man from South Australia.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/teacher-who-spurns-fame-the-real-idol-20091102-hocr.html>

Jane Caro is co-author of *The Stupid Country: How Australia Is Dismantling Public Education*.

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### **Survey shows Australia demands better quality childcare**

*Early Childhood Australia (ECA) release, 29 October 2009*

The Australian public is ready for action to improve the quality of early childhood education and care with a new poll showing 84 per cent of people want quality child care to be a priority for the Federal Government.

ECA National President Margaret Young will today launch the first national campaign mobilising parents, service providers and staff to show their support for changes to early childhood education and care at the Early Childhood Centre in Parliament House, Canberra.

"Through the Hands Up For Quality campaign, parents are sending a clear message to all levels of Government that they want better quality standards in early childhood education and care. They know quality matters, and they want action," said Margaret Young.

ECA is calling on the State and Federal Governments to agree to urgent reforms in the sector, including qualifications for all childcare staff and an increase in staff-to-child ratios, at the COAG meeting in Brisbane on 7 December.

Find out about Hands Up for Quality: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/handsupforquality.html>

The results of the Survey commissioned by ECA will shortly be online at: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>

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### **Government recognises demand for quality care and education for young children**

*Hon Kate Ellis MP, 29 October 2009*

The Minister for Early Childhood Education and Child Care Kate Ellis has welcomed a report showing strong support for improving the quality of early learning and childcare.

The report was commissioned by peak industry group Early Childhood Australia and presented to the Minister at Parliament House today.

The report shows that 84% of the 1097 people surveyed earlier this month believe that improving the quality of early childhood education and care is a priority.

"Raising the quality of early childhood education and childcare is a priority for the Rudd Government too, that's why we're leading reform in partnership with the States and Territories," Ms Ellis said.

Read entire release: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_091029\\_125541.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091029_125541.aspx)

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## Higher quality child care must be the top priority

*Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, 29 October 2009*

A new survey showing overwhelming public support for quality childcare reinforces the message to the Federal Government that childcare is an essential service which needs appropriate funding.

84% of people surveyed wanted the Federal Government to make quality childcare a priority, emphasising the growing dissatisfaction with the pace of reform in early childhood education and care.

"It is obvious that the public is tired of waiting for the Government to take action to improve the standard and conditions of childcare," Senator Hanson-Young said.

Read entire release: <http://sarah-hanson-young.greensmps.org.au/content/media-release/high-quality-childcare-must-be-a-top-priority>

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## RESEARCH

### The Signposts report: how Victorian Government schools have improved student performance

*DEECD Victoria, 30 October 2009*

This article summarises the report Signposts: Research Points to How Victorian Government Schools Have Improved Student Performance, published by Victoria's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

A major program of research has investigated the practices of selected high-performing Victorian schools. The schools, catering to students from a variety of social backgrounds, have shown consistent gains in student achievement over a sustained period.

One of the projects focused on eight metropolitan schools with high enrolments of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that were identified as performing above 'like' schools with similar student characteristics.

Each school has developed its own strategic responses to specific local circumstances; these responses are described in a number of case studies available in the full report. While each of the schools examined has a distinct context and features, there is enough commonality in the approaches of these schools to draw conclusions that will help improve other schools in disadvantaged areas.

Another project examined schools whose enrolments spanned a wider range of SES backgrounds.

Read entire article: <http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=29327&issueID=11963>

Download the report at [http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/nws/Signposts\\_report.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/nws/Signposts_report.pdf)

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## AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

### NSW: TAFE strikes defy IR ruling

*Heath Gilmore, Sydney Morning Herald, October 30, 2009*

HUNDREDS of TAFE teachers across the state are staging wildcat strikes, defying an Industrial Relations Commission judgment on work conditions in return for pay rises.

Strikes without union authorisation occurred at the Sydney Institute TAFE yesterday; the Wollongong, North Wollongong, Miller, Shellharbour, Dapto, Liverpool, Yallah and Hornsby TAFE colleges plan the same this week.

The teachers are walking out in protest against a judgment by the full bench of the commission, which increased their workload in return for a 12.5 per cent pay rise over three years.

Under the ruling, face-to-face teaching hours will increase by almost two weeks a year, the cap on teaching hours in any one week will be eliminated and required attendance time will be increased from 30 to 35 hours a week, plus a number of other cost-saving measures.

The NSW Teachers Federation assistant general secretary, Phil Bradley, said statewide meetings of TAFE members would be held from November 9 to consider united strike action.

The dispute may widen to include NSW primary and high schools.

Source: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/tafe-strikes-defy-ir-ruling-20091029-hnr5.html>

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### **NSW: Rees govt drives TAFE to the edge**

*John Kaye MP, Media release, 30 October 2009*

Education Minister Verity Firth has mismanaged a dispute with the state's TAFE teachers resulting in widespread industrial unrest and massive damage to skills training and NSW's economic future.

"Minister Firth allowed her department to use the public sector pay rise cap as an excuse to declare war on TAFE education staff."

"While the attention of the community was elsewhere, working conditions have been slashed and the teaching workforce thoroughly demoralised."

Read entire release: <http://www.johnkaye.org.au/>

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### **NT: Bilingual education changes 'defy commonsense'**

*Anna Henderson, ABC News, Oct 29, 2009*

A group of educators and academics say they have started lobbying the Commonwealth over a Northern Territory Government policy to limit bilingual education.

The Australian Society for Indigenous Languages says the policy forces all remote Aboriginal schools to teach classes in English for the first four hours of the school day.

The Territory Government says Indigenous languages can still be spoken during all classes and learning English is vital for future employment, education and training.

But one of the academics opposing the move, Professor Charles Grimes, says the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages is now appealing directly to federal ministers because the policy defies research and national and international trends in education.

"It actually defies commonsense," he said.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/29/2727377.htm>

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### **QLD: Police probe students' Facebook hate group**

*Greg Stolz, Australian/Courier Mail, October 30, 2009*

GOLD Coast high school students who created and joined a Facebook "hate group" against a teacher could face stalking charges and be sued for defamation, police have warned.

Police and Education Queensland launched investigations yesterday after the veteran female teacher was subjected to a torrent of vitriolic abuse on the social networking site.

Almost 200 people claiming to be current and former students signed up to the group dedicated to denigrating the Benowa State High teacher.

The group, which was shut down yesterday after media exposure, contained expletive-ridden threats and rants against the woman. It also boasted of physical and mental abuse including claims she had been assaulted, locked in the boys' toilets until she cried and her office trashed.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,26279038-5006786,00.html>

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### **QLD: Mackay students punished for hugs at school**

*Tanya Chilcott & Rodney Chester, Courier Mail, October 30, 2009*

A CONTROVERSY over hugging has erupted in Queensland schools after Mackay high school students were given detentions for the practice.

Experts say schoolchildren today are closer than ever because of technology and hugging is just a by-product of that.

But education officials say the physical boundaries can sometimes be breached by students and strict boundaries are needed.

It follows reports that two girls were made to sit detentions because they had hugged others at Mackay North State High School.

One girl was made to repeatedly write "personal displays of affection are not allowed".

Read entire article: [http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,20797,26278822-3102,00.html?from=public\\_rss](http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,20797,26278822-3102,00.html?from=public_rss)

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### **SA: Leaders sought for two new schools**

*Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP, 31 October 2009*

The State Government's \$323 million Education Works program to reshape public education took another step forward today, with applications being called for two principal positions at the new Education Works schools being built in Blair Athol and Woodville Gardens.

"We're looking for dedicated and inspirational education professionals to lead their schools and develop innovative curriculum now and into the future," says Education Minister Dr Jane Lomax-Smith.

Opening in Term 1, 2011, the new Birth to Year 7 School at Blair Athol will cater for up to 440 students and 45 childcare places, while the Birth to Year 7 School at Woodville Gardens will cater for 665 students and 45 childcare places.

Both the schools will incorporate a Children's Centre offering health and family services, child care, preschool, early years (Reception to Year 2) as well as primary education (Year 3 to 7).

Read more at <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/images/stories/mediareleasesNOV10/ew-principals.pdf>

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## **TAS: Annual Report confirms that Tas Tomorrow mess is hurting students**

*Sue Napier MP, Shadow Minister for Education, 29 October 2009*

The Department of Education's Annual Report tabled today confirms in black and white that the Premier's bungled Tasmania Tomorrow experiment is failing Tasmania's students.

These 2008-09 numbers are the first figures to include Tasmania Tomorrow, which commenced earlier this year.

The Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rate has fallen from 63.7% in 2007-08 to 61.8% in 2008-09.

The percentage of 15 to 19 year olds not employed, not at school and not in fulltime tertiary education has risen, from 9.6% in 2007-08 to 10.8% in 2008-09.

And the daily average absentee rate has increased from 8.31% in 2007-08 to 8.85% in 2008-09, a clear indication that David Bartlett should be focussing on reforming our High Schools where absenteeism is at its worst, and ensuring that children are literate and numerate before leaving Primary School.

Read more at <http://tasmaniantimes.com/index.php?pr-article/annual-report-confirms-that-tas-tomorrow-mess-is-hurting-students/>

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## **TAS: More flak over education changes from rural industry**

*ABC News, Thu Oct 29, 2009*

Criticism is growing of changes to post-year 10 education and TAFE in Tasmania. The changes to the TAFE system in particular have upset both the agriculture and industrial sectors.

Mike Badcock from Rural Industry Training and Education says it has reached the point where the system is so disorganised and confusing, it is driving students away.

"It appears as though it's an absolute disaster for rural industry in Tasmania," he said. "We want work-ready employees and at the moment we're just not getting people to sign up to take these, to sign up for educational purposes."

He says student numbers in rural-based studies have dropped from 30 to zero this year.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/29/2727242.htm>

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## **TAS: Teachers step up pressure to dump changes**

*ABC News, Fri Oct 30, 2009*

Tasmanian college and TAFE teachers in the north and north-west are demanding the State Government scrap its post-year 10 education changes.

About 120 teachers met in Ulverstone yesterday and this morning 160 teachers in Launceston backed motions criticising Tasmania Tomorrow. They have called for a return to the senior secondary model.

The Ulverstone meeting described the changes as wasteful and divisive.

The education union says its members are upset a Hobart college may not have followed proper process in signing up to the changes.

The Greens Leader Nick McKim told parliament yesterday that Elizabeth College staff suspect their school association's vote to join the new system may not have been legitimate.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/30/2728287.htm>

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## **TAS: Northern Tasmania ATC to join Tasmanian education and training system**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 30 October 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today welcomed the agreement to integrate the Australian Technical College - Northern Tasmania into the Tasmanian education and training system.

The agreement was reached after Catholic Education Tasmania made a decision to not proceed with its proposal to take ownership of the Northern Tasmania ATC.

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have worked closely with the Board of the Australian Technical College to develop plans for the integration of the ATC into Tasmania's system.

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_091030\\_152407.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091030_152407.aspx)

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## **VIC: Supporting refugee & migrant students**

*Bronwyn Pike, Education Minister, 22 October 2009*

Refugee and migrant students who have had their education interrupted will be the biggest winners as the Brumby Labor Government invests more than \$1.13 million to help them with their studies.

Minister for Education Bronwyn Pike today announced 65 Learning beyond the bell grants to support homework clubs with large numbers of refugees and migrant students.

Learning beyond the bell Best Practice grants of \$45,000 over three years will go to schools and community organisations that provide refugees and migrant students with after school tutoring.

Read entire release: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/component/content/article/8499.html>

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## **VIC: Work starting on new Marysville school and community hub**

*Bronwyn Pike, Education Minister, 30 October 2009*

Works on a major new \$7 million community health, recreation and learning hub in Marysville will begin in November in a significant step forward for the fire-devastated town.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike said stage one would involve construction of a primary school and early learning centre, with the school ready for students to move back in for term two next year. "We will continue to stand by communities as they recover and rebuild their homes, communities and lives following the worst natural disaster in our nation's history."

"We know that Marysville families want their children to return to school here as soon as possible and we've been working closely with the community to progress this important project.

"This is not just rebuilding the school – we are building a brand new community centre which will provide spaces for social and arts activities, meetings, functions, sports and recreation. It will be home to the new school as well as a

kindergarten and children's centre and health centre, providing top-quality education opportunities and health services for Marysville families."

Read entire release: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/newsroom/8586.html>

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## **WA: Striking addition promised for Ellenbrook**

*Elizabeth Constable, Minister for Education, 29 October 2009*

The community can catch a glimpse of the future of Ellenbrook Secondary College after artist impressions of extensions to the school were released today.

Education Minister Liz Constable said the \$25million Stage Two project would transform Ellenbrook Secondary College into a senior high school for the first time.

"Ellenbrook is a fast-growing suburb with families who will benefit from the high-quality facilities being built at Ellenbrook Secondary College," Dr Constable said.

"The school was designed to be an integral part of the townsite and its progression to a senior high school is yet another milestone for the community to celebrate.

Read more at

<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/WACabinetMinistersSearch.aspx?ItemId=132707&minister=Constable&admin=Barnett>

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## **REMINDERS**

9 November - Innovation in Education One-Day Conference - London, UK - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/innovation-education>

9-12 November - London International Conference on Education - London, UK - <http://www.liceducation.org/>

17 November - Forum of Australian National Schools Network - Canberra, ACT - [http://www.ansn.edu.au/4th\\_annual\\_national\\_forum\\_2009\\_the\\_education\\_revolution\\_two\\_years\\_on](http://www.ansn.edu.au/4th_annual_national_forum_2009_the_education_revolution_two_years_on)

18-21 November - NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo - Washington DC, USA <http://www.naeyc.org/conference/>

24-26 November - Family Relationship Services Australia National Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://www.frsa.org.au/site/>

25-27 November - International Conference on Primary Education 2009 - Hong Kong - <http://www.ied.edu.hk/primaryed/>

27 November - Literacy in Education Conference, Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.childrenscharity.com.au/>

17-18 December - Behaviour Schools Conference - Brighton-le-Sands, NSW - <http://www.gemsevents.com.au/behaviourschoolsconference/>

24-26 March - Going Global 4 - London, UK - <http://www.britishcouncil.org/goingglobal.htm>

9-10 April - National Coalition against Bullying Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.amf.org.au/NCABConference/>

4-7 July - National Conference for Teachers of English & Literacy - Perth, WA - <http://www.englishliteracyconference.com.au/index.php?id=46&year=10>

## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : <http://www.familyschool.org.au/news/> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at [letters@acsso.org.au](mailto:letters@acsso.org.au). Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information only; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

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