



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 42, 17 November 2009

- [COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: \(7 items\)](#)
- [EDUCATION REVOLUTION: \(2 items\)](#)
- [IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY: \(2 items\)](#)
- [STUDENT INCOME SUPPORT: \(2 items\)](#)
- [FUNDING: \(2 items\)](#)
- [SCIENCE EDUCATION: Australian students turn away from science](#)
- [EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: Early signs of success](#)
- [AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES: \(12 items\)](#)
- [PRODUCTS & RESOURCES: SoapStream Hand Hygiene System](#)
- [CONFERENCES & EVENTS: \(2 items\)](#)
- [REMINDERS](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Towards a new era of transparency in education

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, speech to Eidos Institute, 13 November 2009

Today I want to talk about our drive to create a new era of transparency.

This debate is not short of controversy, especially in relation to the reporting of information about the performance, income, staffing and student characteristics of individual schools. But it is a vital part of improving schooling for every child in every school.

We need to become a nation in which educational achievement is central to everything we do and those who contribute to educational excellence are respected and rewarded for it. Everywhere I go around the nation I am struck by what great schools, staffed and led by great teachers, are doing to lift achievement. But I am equally struck by how much more there is to do.

There are too many schools that do not manage to get the best from their students and too many students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are not achieving what they should. Our drive for improving every school and education for every child is driving our passion for school transparency.

As a result of that passion, in the first months of next year, for the first time ever you will be able to access information on Australian schools through the My School website which shows achievement in national testing, Year 12 attainment, attendance and numbers of staff.

Read entire speech at:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_091113_093343.aspx

[< top >](#)

Dear Minister

Australian Council of State School Organisations, Australian Education Union, Australian Government Primary Principals Association, Australian Parents Council, Australian Secondary Principals Association, 17 November 2009

As parents, teachers and principals we welcome the Australian Government's commitment to lift the achievement of all our students through the provision of quality education in schools.

In striving to meet that commitment, we all recognise that it requires strong evidence-based policy decisions around quality teacher training, skilled teachers in all schools, the provision of a curriculum which meets the needs of all students, and support for school communities as they work to provide the very best education for their children.

Any change must be managed with care and driven by sound evidence.

We are writing to you because of our shared concern that one aspect of your program threatens to harm the future opportunities of Australian students.

There is, we believe, a serious risk to school communities – students, staff and parents – through the publication of school data by ACARA.

NAPLAN testing provides a snapshot of academic achievement in a small, yet significant, part of the curriculum. Parents receive a picture of their child's skill development in literacy and numeracy and it gives teachers and principals a reference point for evaluating professional practice in their school.

Important as NAPLAN may be, its limitations are considerable and include the following ...

Read more at <http://www.acsso.org.au/091117.pdf>

[< top >](#)

Education stakeholders unite against ranking website

Naomi Woodley, AM, ABC News, 17 November 2009

Opposition is growing to the Federal Government's plan to publish comprehensive school testing results online. The Government wants the "myschool" website up and running by next year but principals, teachers and parents have united to express their concern that the information will be used to create league tables.

The Government insists that is not the case and that the website will contain the most comprehensive information ever provided to parents. It will show demographic information about a school's population, along with teacher and student numbers and attendance rates.

But it will also show the school's results from the NAPLAN tests - the national assessment of literacy and numeracy - and it will use that information to compare schools which have similar student bodies. The company that created the NAPLAN test has declared repeatedly that the tests are not intended for such a purpose.

Angelo Gavrielatos from the Australian Education Union (AEU) says parents have a right to know that schools are delivering effective teaching and learning programs. Mr Gavrielatos says the AEU is one of six representative bodies writing a letter to Education Minister Julia Gillard today, urging her to ensure the information is not used to publish league tables.

"It is the Government's policies that have created the preconditions for the creation of league tables," he said. "It is now incumbent on the Government to take action and stop that which they say they oppose. Sitting back and doing nothing about it is simply not good enough. It is in fact, hypocritical."

The president of the Australian Council of State School Organisations, Peter Garrigan, is a signatory to the letter and says he is concerned about the website's reliance on the NAPLAN results.

"As parents we want to know how our children are going in comparison to others within the class," he said. "We are wanting to see the entire learning experience and development. It is not just the maths and the English that we should be looking at.

"We are wanting to see how our child is doing right across the spectrum of activities."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/17/2744666.htm>

[< top >](#)

Groups resist publication of school info

Bonny Symons-Brown, Sydney Morning Herald (AAP), November 17, 2009

Leading educational bodies have joined forces to demand the federal government stop the creation of school league tables.

Education Minister Julia Gillard will early next year launch a website comparing Australian schools based on students academic results.

Six groups, including the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the Australian Council of State School Organisations, are calling on her to guarantee league tables - which can be used to name and shame schools - won't be a by-product of the website.

In a joint letter to Ms Gillard on Tuesday, they warned schools which didn't score highly in national student testing would be stigmatised.

"Unfairly branding schools as failing does immense damage to the confidence and self-esteem of students, undermines the relationship of trust between teachers and parents and makes ... learning much more difficult," AEU president Angelo Gavrielatos said.

Read more at <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/groups-resist-publication-of-school-info-20091117-iiivv.html>

[< top >](#)

Stakeholders agree that Gillard's school rankings are bad for kids

John Kaye MP, Media release, 17 November 2009

The united front of parents, teachers and principals from across the education sector against the Rudd Government's school results website is further evidence of the need for action against league tables.

"Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard is obsessed with turning education into a competition between schools. Her 'myschool' website is based on the results of tests that were never meant to compare students, let alone schools.

"The designers of NAPLAN were trying to give snapshots to diagnose student learning issues and improve teaching, not data to measure a school's performance and compare it other schools.

"NSW Education Minister Verity Firth continues to hide behind Julia Gillard's assertion that 'myschool' will present 'rich contextual information' about schools as well as their results.

"Last week the Sydney Morning Herald proved how easy it is for the results to be separated from the information and presented as a league table. It is time to listen to experts and parents and drop the website that is about to expose schools to damaging and misleading comparisons."

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

[< top >](#)

Federal Government has a duty to prevent League Tables

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, Media Release, 17 November 2009

The onus is on the Federal Government to ensure any information released relating to school testing results cannot be used to create misleading "League Tables".

The Government has made it clear it wants to distribute information on schools via the MySchool website, but the Government's determination has to be tempered by the need to protect schools and children from misuse of the information to name and shame schools.

"Access to more information about schools and their performance is a valuable tool for parents, but the Government can't simply dump the figures out there and expect everything to be fine.

"All the research suggests that the creation of simplistic league tables - no matter who is responsible - only results in students and schools being stigmatised."

The creators of the national literacy and numeracy tests have repeatedly said that the tests are not meant to be used as a tool to compare schools, yet the Government is intent on using it for that exact purpose.

Parents and teachers have expressed deep concern about this proposal, and the Greens share that concern.

Read entire release: <http://sarah-hanson-young.greensmps.org.au/content/media-release/govt-has-duty-prevent-use-league-tables>

[< top >](#)

Promoting greater transparency

Hon Julia Gillard, Doorstop interview, 17 November 2009

Clearly today, one of the big issues that will be talked about in education is our drive for new transparency, our My School website which will give parents, teachers and community members more information than they've ever had before about the performance of Australian schools.

This agenda is controversial and it's making some people uncomfortable but shining a spotlight on performance is something that we have to do as a nation if we are going to ensure a great quality education for every child in every school.

The power of the My School website is it will enable parents, teachers, community members to look at their own school and to compare it with schools around the country that are serving similar sorts of student populations to see the difference the school is making. And I expect we will see some fantastic schools who are making a huge difference for the most disadvantaged kids in this country.

I also think we'll see some schools that are falling behind. We're standing ready with new resources and new reforms to lift the performance of those schools. This is about making a quality difference for every child in every school.

We're determined to deliver this new era of transparency and then we're determined to build on it for the future. This isn't about simplistic league tables but it is about the comprehensive information every Australian should have about the performance of Australian schools.

Read entire interview:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article_091117_143301.aspx

[< top >](#)



[< top >](#)

EDUCATION REVOLUTION

ANSN National Forum 2009: The Education Revolution - National to Local

Australian National Schools Network, November 16 2009

The Deputy Prime Minister the Hon. Julia Gillard meets with school practitioners at the Australian National Schools Network 4th Annual National Forum (November 17, Old Parliament House) to identify implications of the Education Revolution for local schools and communities.

The Australian National Schools Network has a 17-year history of engaging stakeholders in education - schools, students, academics, unions, teachers, families, communities and education systems – to make change.

'What we want is to be active, contributing participants in debate about change.' Says Viv White, Director of the ANSN.

The ANSN celebrates the federal government's aspirations to improve equity and quality of educational (and economic) opportunity. The challenge is HOW we are to move from national aspiration to local implementation.

Read more at <http://www.newsmaker.com.au/news/1853>

[< top >](#)

The Education Revolution - two years on

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, Address to the 4th Annual Australian National Schools Network Forum, 17 November, 2009

As you all know, the Government has been pursuing hard reform in education since coming to office two years ago.

This reform is essentially about developing the nation's human capital to safeguard Australia's future.

It's about equity and the quality of education.

It's also about our determination not to tolerate underachievement, especially among students from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds.

We are driven by the genuine belief that every child deserves a world class education, regardless of what school they go to or where they live.

The theme for this forum—The Education Revolution: two years on—gives me a chance to talk to you this morning and take stock of what we've achieved so far and outline where we are heading to next.

Just for a moment, turn the clock back two years. Try to remember what the education landscape looked like when I was first sworn in and the Rudd Government came to office.

Read more at http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_091117_171753.aspx

[< top >](#)

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

Teacher wages to be linked to test results?

Natalie Craig, the Age, November 15, 2009

VICTORIA will become the first state to link teachers' wages to their students' test results, despite concerns that the tests cannot accurately measure whether a student has improved.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike told The Sunday Age that results of the national literacy and numeracy test (NAPLAN) would be part of a scorecard to determine whether teachers are eligible for bonus payments of up to \$7,000.

Until now, it was uncertain whether the Teacher Rewards scheme, to be trialled at 25 public schools next year, would use the national test results to judge whether a teacher deserved a bonus.

Ms Pike said the School Rewards scheme, to be trialled in up to 50 schools next year, could also take NAPLAN into account in rewarding bonuses to entire schools.

The Australian Education Union said the decision to link pay to national tests was "nonsense" and that Victoria's decision was "out of step" with other Australian states.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/teacher-wages-to-be-linked-to-test-results-20091114-ifnw.html>

[< top >](#)

Teaching isn't only about test results

Peter Hodge, the Age, November 16, 2009

Victorian state Education Minister Bronwyn Pike's confirmation that national literacy and numeracy test scores will be used as part of a trial next year to determine teacher eligibility for bonus pay will be of concern to many of Victoria's teachers. In August, she said the system "is not about rewards for results. I'm interested in rewarding people for passion, commitment and professional competency." So, what has changed?

Most teachers know that quantitative methods, such as the latest proposal, will rarely provide a true reflection of what takes place in classrooms. They are right to fear that use of these test results may well be the thin edge of the wedge in a long-term drive to have teachers working under a performance pay regime, weighted towards quantitative data, such as test results.

As competition for tertiary places and employment opportunities has escalated over the past three decades at least, teachers have come under pressure to "deliver", finding themselves increasingly sandwiched between the expectations of government, their school, parents and students.

Read entire article: <http://www.watoday.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/teaching-isnt-only-about-test-results-20091116-ii62.html>

Peter Hodge teaches at the Kilmore International School in Victoria.

[< top >](#)

STUDENT INCOME SUPPORT

Experts agree – Coalition should support Youth Allowance changes

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

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today joined with prominent vice chancellors and student union groups to call on the Coalition to pass the Youth Allowance legislation currently before the Senate and benefit 150,000 students across Australia.

Professor Ross Milbourne, Chair of the ATN Group of Universities, Professor Ian Chubb, Vice Chancellor of ANU, Professor Paul Johnson, Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University and David Barrow, President of the National Union of Students travelled to Parliament House in Canberra to call on the Coalition to pass the Government's changes to Youth Allowance.

Ms Gillard said the Liberal and National parties should stop their long-standing war against students and pass the legislation which would see 150 000 students receive \$2 254 start-up scholarships in 2010.

Instead, the Liberal and National parties want to continue the practice of letting students with parental incomes of more than \$150 000 receive Youth Allowance, even though they are living at home. Under the existing system, 18 per cent of students receiving Youth Allowance are from families with incomes of more than \$150 000, 10 per cent above \$200 000 and 3 per cent have family incomes above \$300 000.

If the Bill is not passed, no new student will receive a student start up scholarship or relocation scholarship in 2010.

Ms Gillard said the Liberal Party did its best to punish students during the 11 long years it was in Government and is now seeking to continue their ideological war against students from Opposition.

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091116_110318.aspx

Group of Eight Universities: "Call to Senate to pass student support legislation"
http://www.go8.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=267&Itemid=180

Australian Technology Network Universities: "Student Income Support Package Critical"
<http://www.atn.edu.au/newsroom/Docs/2009/Nov%2013%20Student%20Income%20Support%20Package%20Critical%20-%20ATN.pdf>

Innovative Research Universities: "Senate urged to support student income support package"
http://www.irua.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/179149/IRU-Media-Release-16-Nov-09-Senate-urged-to-support-student-income-support-package.pdf

[< top >](#)

Youth Allowance changes 'likely to fail'

The Age, November 16, 2009 (AAP)

The federal government's controversial changes to student income support look destined to fail in the Senate.

Labor is trying to tighten Youth Allowance eligibility criteria so that students would be required to work 30 hours a week for 18 months before they qualify for the benefit. Currently, they only need to earn \$20,000 in a gap year before starting university.

However the bill also establishes two new scholarships for university students, which replace ones axed in September. It raises the parental income test so that families can earn more before their children's allowance is cut off. The age of independence will be progressively reduced from 25 to 22 by 2012 as well.

The coalition will move amendments to the draft laws which, among other things, overturn the proposed work eligibility criteria. But Labor, which needs to win over all seven crossbench senators or the coalition to pass the legislation, is refusing to be dictated to. (Julia Gillard) said 150,000 students would miss out on scholarships next year if the bill was voted down.

Australian Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young moved an amendment which would bring Youth Allowance into line with other social welfare payments, such as Newstart, which provides a maximum fortnightly payment of \$456.

"We need to be investing in the education of those kids wherever they are from, metropolitan areas, country areas, remote, regional, rural," she said. "This package, because it's been so poorly drafted, misses the boat."

Meanwhile, the National Union of Students president David Barrow called on parliament to pass the legislation immediately.

"This package is a step toward addressing regional disadvantage, not a step back," he said.

Read entire article: <http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/youth-allowance-changes-likely-to-fail-20091116-igro.html>

[< top >](#)

FUNDING

Principals concerned that the National Partnerships \$2.2bn funding allocations far from transparent

Farrah Tomazin, the Age, 12 November 2009

PRINCIPALS have questioned the Federal Government's \$2.2 billion "National Partnerships" deal to improve teaching quality and lift education standards in schools, claiming the program is "shrouded in secrecy" and asking whether money is being properly directed to the neediest students.

Under the deal, more than \$1.1 billion has been earmarked to lift results in 1500 of the nation's poorest schools. A further \$550 million has been committed for reforms to improve teaching standards; and \$500 million has been set aside for new programs in literacy and numeracy.

The money is being administered by the states.

At a meeting in Canberra yesterday, principals warned Education Minister Julia Gillard that the Commonwealth's "national partnerships" scheme - a rewards-based funding agreement with the states designed to boost the teaching profession, enhance literacy and numeracy skills, and tackle disadvantage - was being undermined by State education departments, some of which are refusing to disclose where the money is going.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/principals-slam-22bn-deal-20091111-i9yk.html>

[< top >](#)

"Local Schools Working Together" - \$24 million for new shared school facilities

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 13 November 2009

Eleven projects across Australia will benefit from grants totalling \$24.1 million under the second and final round of the Local Schools Working Together pilot program.

- \$9.4 million for 4 projects in Queensland;
- \$4.9 million for 2 projects in Victoria;
- \$2.4 million for a project in Western Australia
- \$2.9 million for a project in New South Wales and;
- \$4.4 million for 2 projects in South Australia.

The projects selected will provide innovative and new education initiatives. These shared facilities will provide venues for teaching environmental education, science and technology, music and the arts, Indigenous studies and physical education.

The Local Schools Working Together pilot is helping government, Catholic and independent schools in every State and Territory work together with their local communities to develop important shared facilities.

For details of the successful projects and information on the program visit:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/LocalSchoolsWorkingTogether.aspx>

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091113_094151.aspx

[< top >](#)



[< top >](#)

SCIENCE EDUCATION

Australian students turn away from science

Lauren Novak, Adelaide Now, 11 November 2009

AUSTRALIAN students are among the least interested in studying science internationally, a report has found.

Students from Colombia, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand are the most interested in learning science, while students from the Netherlands, Finland, Korea and Australia have the lowest interest.

Based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development data, the analysis is in an Australian Council for Educational Research report.

The report noted lack of interest was "no handicap to performance" as Australia performs "very well" in international science tests. With 61 per cent of Australian students interested in science, the most popular subjects were biology, chemistry, astronomy and physics.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,,26332636-2682,00.html>

[< top >](#)

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early signs of success

Caroline Milburn, The Age, November 16, 2009

Australia should try to learn from Britain's mistakes in rolling out its plan to give all four-year-olds access to kindergarten, a visiting educator has warned.

Professor Iram Siraj-Blatchford, an internationally renowned early childhood researcher, says some of the £24 billion (\$A45 billion) the British Government has spent over the past 12 years establishing preschools has been wasted. This is because the Government focused on how to rapidly expand services, with not enough attention given to quality.

"In the UK we decided to improve quantity first, then ratchet up the quality," says Professor Siraj-Blatchford, co-author of a study tracking the preschool and school experiences of 3000 British children since 1997. "But the research we're doing is showing that low-quality services don't add value to a child's development. If programs are low quality, it's better if the child stays at home."

Australia has the second-lowest level of investment in early childhood education among industrialised countries, according to an OECD report.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/early-signs-of-success-20091113-ie7t.html>

[< top >](#)

AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: New student suspension bill too similar to debate

ABC News, Nov 12, 2009

The Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly has ruled an Opposition bill to give principals more power to discipline students cannot be debated.

Opposition education spokesman Steve Doszpot tabled the bill yesterday to allow principals to suspend students for up to 20 days without approval from the Education Department or the Catholic Education Office.

But Speaker Shane Rattenbury has ruled it is too similar to a Government bill that was defeated last month. The Government had put forward a proposal to give principals the power to suspend students for up to 10 days without referring up. But the Liberals and Greens voted it down.

Under Legislative Assembly rules, the same proposal cannot be debated twice in the one calendar year.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/12/2740751.htm>

[< top >](#)

NSW: Books dumped at Parliament in school closure protest

News.com.au, 12 November 2009 (AAP)

WHEELBARROWS full of books have been dumped at the gates of NSW Parliament in protest at the likely closure of a centre for children with severe learning difficulties.

Parents groups are worried about the future of the Dalwood Assessment Centre and Palm Avenue School in northern Sydney - the only specialist assessment centre and intervention school with boarding facilities for children living in remote areas.

Parent Michelle Bolte said she was dumping the books at state parliament because her children will not need them. "Our children won't be given a chance to read," she said. "So there is no need us hanging on to them."

She said half the clinical staff employed at Dalwood by Northern Sydney and Central Coast Area Health would be made redundant by the end of the year.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,27574,26340196-29277,00.html>

[< top >](#)

NSW: Bush kids deserve chance to read so don't close remedial facility

John Kaye MP, Media release, 12 November 2009

The Rees government's attempt to close Dalwood Assessment Centre and Palm Avenue School will deny rural students with literacy difficulties the chance to be successful in education.

"The state's only specialist assessment centre and early intervention school with boarding facilities for children from remote areas with severe learning difficulties is at risk of closing.

"While the Rees government has been embarrassed into extending the 'consultation' period, parents and the Greens have no confidence that this is not just window dressing.

"Dalwood and Palm Avenue work in tandem to diagnose and treat severe literacy problems. Each year up to a hundred young people are given the chance to be successful in education and in life. The record of Dalwood and Palm Avenue's achievements is spectacular. The reading improvement statistics are deeply impressive but the stories of young people building their learning outcomes and careers are even more moving."

Read more at <http://www.johnkaye.org.au>

[< top >](#)

NSW: Hurlstone Agricultural High School faces "overhaul"

Jessica Mahar, Sydney Morning Herald, November 16, 2009

THE State Government may be forced to spend almost \$13.8 million improving facilities and increasing land size at Hurlstone Agricultural High School if it follows the recommendations of an inquiry report released today.

One chapter of the report, which the Herald has seen, recommends rebuilding and a land swap, under which 10.6 hectares would be sold for \$15 million, and 30 hectares leased from the Department of Planning - increasing the school's size from 160 hectares to 180 hectares.

The chairman of the inquiry, Mal Peters, said capital investment and changes to management and direction were required to realise the school's potential.

The report recommended that management of the farm and boarding houses no longer remain school responsibilities, but should be "considered resources and facilities" of the Education Department's south-west Sydney regional branch.

The president of Save Hurlstone's Educational Agricultural Property, Tiffany Spiers, said the report rebuffed claims that up to 140 hectares of Hurlstone's farm was unused or surplus.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/hurlstone-high-faces-overhaul-20091115-igdk.html>

[< top >](#)

NT: Darwin Australian Technical College to join NT Education & Training System

Hon Julia Gillard MP & Hon Paul Henderson MLA, 12 November 2009

The Australian and Northern Territory governments today announced that the Australian Technical College (ATC) – Darwin will be integrated into the Northern Territory education and training system.

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard and Northern Territory Chief Minister and Minister for Education and Training, The Hon Paul Henderson, today welcomed the agreement. The Australian Government has decided to move funding from the ATC to the trade training model in the Northern Territory.

The Australian Government has worked closely with the Northern Territory Government and the Board of the ATC to ensure that all currently enrolled students complete their education and training pathway.

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091113_145406.aspx

[< top >](#)

QLD: Creationism ruled out of science lessons at North Queensland High School

ABC News, Nov 11, 2009

A north Queensland high school has been directed not to teach creationism during science lessons.

Bowen State High School invited a Seventh Day Adventist church pastor and creationist to address a Year 11 biology class about the religious-based theory of "intelligent design".

An official school newsletter said it was part of the study of the origins of life.

A spokesman for Education Queensland said although there had been no formal complaints the science classroom had been used inappropriately.

The school has been directed to keep science and religious studies separate in the future.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/11/2739157.htm>

[< top >](#)

SA: State school retention rates highest in fifteen years.

Hon Jane Lomax Smith MP, SA Education Minister, 13 November 2009

More young South Australians are staying in high school to complete Year 12, with the State's government school retention rate reaching its highest level since 1994.

New retention rate figures for 2009, released at a Secondary Principals' Summit in Adelaide, show that 77.5% of students were retained in State schools from Year 8 to Year 12.

Premier Mike Rann says it's the best result in 15 years and the State's high school principals and teachers can take full credit for the achievement.

"Young people who stay at school to complete Year 12 are giving themselves the best chance of a bright and successful future," Premier Rann says. "That's why it's been an absolute priority of the Labor Government to help more young South Australians to stay in school for longer."

Read entire release: <http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/images/stories/mediareleasesNOV09/school%20retention.pdf>

[< top >](#)

SA: Tougher truancy laws planned

ABC News, 17 November 2009

There are plans to toughen the laws allowing prosecution of the parents of truants.

Proposed changes to the Education Act in South Australia would include higher fines on parents who fail to ensure their child attends school.

SA Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says the changes also would allow for court orders requiring parents to support the efforts of school attendance officers.

"We particularly want to make sure we have the power to compel a parent through the courts if necessary to attend the school counselling sessions, speak to the attendance officers, to actually be engaged in trying to get their children back into schooling," she said.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/17/2744613.htm>

[< top >](#)

TAS: New \$4 million community services "hub" for west coast

Hon David Bartlett MP, Premier & Education Minister, 12 November 2009

Premier and Minister for Education and Skills, David Bartlett, today announced a new and innovative approach to service delivery for the West Coast.

"The \$4 million Queenstown Hub will combine services from all levels of government and the private and community sectors to meet the specific needs of the community," Mr Bartlett said.

"The Hub, to be located at the West Coast Council's premises in Driffield St, will include a Child and Family Centre, Service Tasmania, a Learning and Information Network Centre (LINC) and a range of other services in one location.

"This is about embedding services where they are most needed – deep in the heart of communities. The Hub will include dedicated services for children and families, education and training including post-year 10, literacy support, library services and internet and computer access and more than 540 services provided by Service Tasmania."

Read entire release: <http://www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=28396>

[< top >](#)

TAS: Tassie Education asks burning NBN question

IT News, Nov 16, 2009

What do we do with it?

Tasmania's Department of Education wants help from the IT industry to "broaden its thinking" on what it could use the national broadband network for.

The Department issued a tender request for written submissions of "potential opportunities" and the technology or services needed to achieve them.

It also said it was interested in collaborative trials with industry, but wanted to know what sort of financial or resource contribution it would be required to make.

The Department's own thoughts on applications appeared to revolve around videoconferencing and on-demand learning.

They included better access to learning resources for students in remote areas and remote access to interstate or overseas skills "to supplement the teachers located at their local school."

Expressions of interest close on December 4.

Source: <http://www.itnews.com.au/News/160652.tassie-education-asks-burning-nbn-question.aspx>

[< top >](#)

VIC: Teachers' survey reveal opinions on Vic education

CathNews, November 16, 2009

Only 13 percent of teachers think the standard of education at Victorian Catholic schools is world class, 25 percent consider the level of education at Victorian independent schools to be so, while 21 percent think state school children get a world class education.

The findings of a survey by the Herald Sun also showed most teachers described the level of education at Victorian state, independent and Catholic schools as "acceptable".

Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard was most popular among Catholic school teachers, with 41 percent describing her performance as above average or excellent. She was least popular among primary teachers at independent schools, with 27 percent of them describing her performance as below average or poor, the paper reported.

Government plans to introduce a new national curriculum into classrooms in 2011 got support from 80 percent of teachers surveyed.

Read more at: <http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aeid=17709>

[< top >](#)

VIC: Australia Ensures High Quality Trade Training For Victorian Secondary Students

Government Monitor, 15th November 2009

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and Victorian Education Minister, Bronwyn Pike, today welcomed the agreement to integrate the Australian Technical College – Eastern Melbourne into the Victorian education and training system.

The facility at Ringwood Secondary College will be a trade training centre for programs at the Certificate II and III levels, delivered by TAFE. The facility will be available to students from all local schools.

The facility at St Joseph's College, Ferntree Gully, will continue to offer trade training in partnership arrangements with local training providers.

The integration will expand access for young people in the region to the senior secondary qualifications, the Victorian Certificate of Education and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning and a simultaneous trade training program.

This will give the students the opportunity to have a head-start on an Australian school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Read more at http://thegovmonitor.com/education_and_skills/australia-ensures-high-quality-trade-training-for-victorian-secondary-students-15156.html

[< top >](#)

PRODUCTS & RESOURCES

SoapStream Hand Hygiene System

“The innovative answer to one of those perennial problems that have been puzzling the minds of educators forever”

The Soapstream Hand Hygiene System incorporates a water saving push tap with a soap dispenser which easily swings into and out of the stream of running water, enabling hands to be washed with soap and then rinsed without the transfer of bacteria from one user to the next as with traditional solid soap usage.

The proven advantages of the Soapstream system are:

- Incorporates water saving technology.
- Hand washing system is in the toilet, not in the classroom
- Easy to use for both left and right handed children of all ages.
- Encourages hand washing - soap delivery system is attached to the water source
- Reduced risk of cross infection- child's hands have no physical contact with soap pellet.
- Economical solid soap technology - early indications are that one soap pellet should last in excess of 350 hand washes
- No Occupational Health and Safety issues
- Soap is Ph neutral - non allergenic, non perfumed
- Solid brass construction
- Cost effective system - around the cost of existing push taps
- Easy soap refill - replaced by cleaner prior to existing soap pellet dissipation

The Soapstream system will meet the needs of every school for a truly efficient hand hygiene system.

Further information: <http://www.soapstream.com.au>

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

“Bridging the Gap” – Building capacity with Indigenous communities

Two-day Seminar with Richard Trudgen & Yolngu presenters from Arnhem Land

- Melbourne : 19-20 November
- Canberra: 23 – 24 November
- Sydney: 26 – 27 November

Presented by Aboriginal Resources & Development Services Inc (ARDS), this is a unique opportunity to hear directly about the real issues facing Yolngu and other Indigenous people - plus real answers to these problems, shared by people working on the ground day to day.

Hosted by Richard Trudgen, CEO of ARDS, Educator on Yolngu Radio and author of acclaimed book Why Warriors Lie Down and Die in partnership with Witiyana Marika, founding member of internationally renowned Yothu Yindi band, and Dianne Gondarra, Yolngu language consultant and presenter on Yolngu Radio.

“This is not just a seminar, but an experience that all Australian's should have.”

Register now at <http://www.ards.com.au>

[< top >](#)

'The Nature of Play' - Kidsafe Playground Conference

19-20 April 2010 UWA Club, Perth, W.A.

We have some fantastic international and Australian speakers. We have also received some fantastic Abstracts from Australia and across the Tasman, which we are working through now.

Topics that will be covered include child-centred design; learning opportunities in the playground; nature based play; promoting children's emotional wellbeing; risk issues - challenges and benefits; consultation - giving children a voice; inclusive, playable public open spaces; and art in children's playspaces.

We will be opening registrations soon, with generous discounts for not-for-profit groups and early bird bookings. However, we have just found out the Red Bull Air Race has been rescheduled from November this year to 17-18 April 2010. This is a peak tourism event for Perth and we are encouraging everyone who is thinking of coming to Perth from outside the Perth metro area to organise their accommodation soon.

Details at: <http://www.kidsafewa.com.au/>

[< top >](#)

REMINDERS

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>

[< top >](#)

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. 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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