



# 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 43, 24 November 2009

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### COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

#### **We agree with the Minister that league tables is not a useful way to go**

*Angelo Gavrielatos, Canberra Times, 20 November 2009*

Education Minister has on many occasions acknowledged the damaging impact of school league tables.

Opening a public education forum in Canberra in March she said: "I understand that league tables based on raw test scores can create a misleading picture and make the job of principals and teachers that much harder."

That view accords with those of parents, principals and teachers. There is clear evidence in Australia and overseas of the effect on students and school communities of inaccurate and invalid ranking of schools in league tables.

But what Minister Gillard said next was even more important: "We are working with state and territory education ministers to ensure the side-effects of a new transparency framework are not negative ones."

Here in a nutshell is what we have been waiting in vain for ever since.

This week six major organisations, representing parents, teachers and principals from public and non-government schools, wrote to Minister Gillard to urging her to act on growing concerns that what she plans to do with national test data risks damaging schools and school communities.

Our concerns centre on the plan to publish online within weeks the raw test scores from schools across the country.

Read entire article: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Media/President/Oppiece201109.pdf>

Angelo Gavrielatos is Federal President of the Australian Education Union.

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### CHAPLAINS IN SCHOOLS

#### **Christian Lobby welcomes Rudd Government support for school chaplaincy**

*Australian Christian Lobby Media Release, 21 November 2009*

The Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) today welcomed Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's clear support for the school chaplaincy program and the Federal Government's decision to extend funding for the program until the end of the 2011 school year.

ACL Managing Director Jim Wallace said the Prime Minister's announcement to the ACL National Conference in Canberra today was warmly welcomed by the many church and denominational leaders in attendance, as well as grass-roots Christians.

"Mr Rudd spoke of his clear and long-standing commitment to the school chaplaincy program, dating back to its beginnings in Queensland. He has a strong appreciation of the valuable role chaplains are playing in helping both school students and their families in a wide variety of situations," Mr Wallace said.

"We congratulate the Government on its commitment of \$42 million in funding over the 2010 and 2011 school years – representing an extra year's funding over what had previously been allocated.

"The Prime Minister indicated today that during that time the Government plans to consult with the community as to how best to shape chaplaincy and pastoral care programs for the period beyond.

"Given the overwhelming success of the school chaplaincy program – as borne out by recent research – we are strongly hoping this will lead to the school chaplaincy program being not only funded but also extended in the future."

Read entire release: [http://www.acl.org.au/pdfs/load\\_pdf\\_public.pdf?pdf\\_id=1447&from=NATIONAL](http://www.acl.org.au/pdfs/load_pdf_public.pdf?pdf_id=1447&from=NATIONAL)

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## **National School Chaplaincy Program**

*Angelo Gavrielatos, Australian Education Union, 23 November 2009*

The AEU today condemned the decision by the Prime Minister to extend the Howard Government's controversial National School Chaplaincy Program until the end of 2011, at a cost of \$42.8 million.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said the union strongly supported the need for additional resources aimed at addressing the growing level of complex social and emotional issues experienced by young people in our schools.

However, these additional resources should be allocated to employ appropriately qualified school counsellors or psychologists. That would allow schools to expand and improve existing programs developed to meet the needs of young people.

Urgent resources are needed to achieve more manageable caseloads. In NSW, for example, the school counsellor to student ratio stands at about 1 to 1000.

The AEU considers the National School Chaplaincy Program one of the most misguided policies announced by the Howard Government. It undermines Australia's secular traditions.

Source: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Media/President/Natschoolchaplaincy.html>

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## **Exercise caution in employing chaplains in schools**

*Australian Guidance & Counselling Association*

It is important to recognise the limits of what chaplains can provide, according to the Australian Guidance and Counselling Association.

Research and experience show that the issues facing school staff are becoming more complex and confronting. One in five students experiences mental health problems, which are appearing at an earlier age. Some students are

behaving in ways that put them and others at risk. Mission Australia's National Youth Survey shows that young people are worried about issues such as body image, family conflict, abuse, alcohol and other drugs.

The notion that a chaplain or values education can address these issues is simplistic at best.

These problems require a range of coordinated responses, informed by professional staff who understand child and adolescent development and current research.

Chaplains are not required to have any qualifications or adhere to any professional standards and are frequently not obliged to follow policies and procedures.

Read entire release: <http://www.agca.com.au/article.php?id=16>

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## LITERACY

### Call to parents – you need to be involved in your child's reading

*Tanya Chilcott, Courier Mail, November 18, 2009*

PARENTS are being blamed for a quarter of Queensland's Year 2 students falling short of Department of Education's reading benchmarks. Parents who are "too busy" or uninterested to read with their children, absenteeism, non-English speaking backgrounds, narrow testing and student maturity are all reasons behind the reading shortfall, experts say.

The Department's 2008 to 2009 annual report reveals 25.5 per cent of Year 2 students mapped in the "Year 2 Diagnostic Net" needed intervention in reading at some developmental levels.

The report has sparked renewed calls for parents to become more involved in their children's reading, with mums and dads cited as crucial to a child's literacy development.

Queensland Association of State School Principals president Norm Hart said there was an "element of simple maturity" behind some students falling into the net. But he said parents who did not value literacy, non-english speaking backgrounds and school attendance also impacted on reading levels, as did teaching.

"There are some who come from circumstances at home where literacy isn't valued and they haven't had any exposure to the types of literacy we teach in schools," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,20797,26369305-952,00.html>

Read the research paper "Effective family engagement in children's literacy skills development" at: [http://www.familiesmatter.org.au/nz\\_litskills.pdf](http://www.familiesmatter.org.au/nz_litskills.pdf)

Access the ACSSO-APC online resource "A Directory of Family Resources: Parent Participation in Literacy and Numeracy Learning" at: <http://www.acsso.org.au/dirfamres.pdf>

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## **STUDENT INCOME SUPPORT**

### **Liberal MP defends Youth Allowance changes**

*ABC News, 19 November 2009*

The Member for Gilmore, Joanna Gash, has hit back at Federal Government criticism about the Opposition's amendments to the Youth Allowance Bill. Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard has accused Ms Gash of denying more than 500 students in her electorate university scholarships because she supports the changes.

But Ms Gash says the Minister's proposed legislation will make it much harder for regional students to go away to study.

"Gillard has carelessly looked at census data and made a lot of assumptions and it's quite clear she doesn't know a thing about our area and if she did she would understand that our amendments which have the support of the Senate are aimed at putting any Youth Allowance changes onto a level playing field," she said.

Ms Gash says the Opposition's amendments will make university more affordable for regional and rural students. "We are very hopeful of getting the Labor Government to actually agree to those amendments because they are so much fairer, particularly as I say for regional and rural areas," she said.

"For Julia Gillard to threaten to have no start-up scholarships at all because their proposal has been rejected is to me like throwing a childish tantrum."

sOURCE: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/19/2747365.htm>

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## **States call on the Coalition to pass the Government's Youth Allowance Bill**

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

All State and Territory Education and Training Ministers have called on the Federal Opposition to pass the Government's Youth Allowance changes.

The Ministers, meeting in Canberra today, have joined with the Australian Government, Vice Chancellors from around the country and the National Union of Students in saying that the changes will see 150 000 students benefit from new scholarships from 2010 and should be passed in the Senate.

Cross-bench senators joined with the Liberal and National Parties on Monday to effectively stop the Government's legislation which also would have seen more than 100 000 students receive either increased Youth Allowance payments, or receive Youth Allowance for the first time.

In addition, 21 000 Commonwealth scholarships will not be paid to new students in 2010 as the Coalition voted to remove them earlier this year.

Read entire release: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_091120\\_151354.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091120_151354.aspx)

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## **Another attempt to get the Youth Allowances bill through the Senate**

*Radio Interview, Hon Julia Gillard MP, 23 November 2009*

TONY EASTLEY: The Government will also try this week to get changes to the Youth Allowance through the senate. The Government has rejected most of the amendments put forward by the Opposition so far and is putting the Bill back before the Upper House.

JULIA GILLARD: Christopher Pyne on behalf of the Opposition has made it perfectly clear that all he's interested in is playing politics with this matter.

There's really no point in talking about a billion dollars in unfunded amendments. That's what the Coalition has moved. I mean it should strike people as amazingly hypocritical that Mr Turnbull can wander round talking about debt and deficit and at the same time, his Shadow Minister for Education can move amendments that would cost more than a billion dollars without identifying more than a billion dollars of matching savings. And Mr Pyne's amendments basically perpetuate the system that's failed country kids.

LYNDAL CURTIS: But there are other non-government parties in the Senate. You could get the legislation if you got the Greens and Senators Fielding and Xenophon to agree. Have you been talking to them to try and get around the Opposition?

JULIA GILLARD: Look, certainly I'm happy to talk to senators generally to try and get an arrangement here that makes some sense. But in talking to senators, I'm being very clear about the following: this is a Government that takes being prudent in spending government money seriously. So we're not prepared to agree to unfunded amendments. So that's number one. And number two, we are not prepared to agree to amendments that are inequitable and rip country kids off.

I've certainly been talking to senators who want to have a sensible conversation, understanding that those two things are the Government's bottom line. We've already accepted two Greens amendments as a show of good faith. We are obviously prepared to talk seriously with senators who are prepared to talk to us, thinking about the students instead of thinking about the politics.

Read transcript: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article\\_091123\\_114956.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article_091123_114956.aspx)

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## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

### Crawford Report points to need to upgrade sport in Australia's schools

*Lauren Zwaans, the Advertiser, 19 November 2009*

UPGRADING sport facilities in schools and reinstating physical education as a key component in curriculums is "long overdue", Sport SA says.

Sport SA chief executive Jan Sutherland said the state's facilities needed a major overhaul. "In the consultation I attended the statement was made over and over that we lack facilities. We're pushing for more and more participation, but we don't actually have enough facilities."

The report recommends the Federal Government consider the "repair, upgrade and development of sport and recreation facilities" in schools in its "education revolution" to maximise public access to facilities.

Ms. Sutherland also welcomed the report's recommendation that physical education be "a stand alone, key learning area in the national curriculum".

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,26370496-12428,00.html>

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## Fitness in schools is a must

*Mike Hurst, Daily Telegraph, 19 November 2009*

SYDNEY Flames basketball coach Karen Dalton has no doubt the controversial Crawford Report on sport in Australia got one thing right - physical education needs to be improved in schools.

Apart from being an Olympic competitor and an Olympic team coach, Dalton has been a specialist teacher in personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE) at high school for 18 years.

She confirms there has been a big slide in the level of fitness and co-ordination among pupils entering high school over her time in the job.

"We had girls coming into high school who couldn't catch a ball, couldn't swim," Dalton told The Daily Telegraph. "If you get to 13 and sport and fitness is not already part of your lifestyle it's very hard to change someone."

Read entire article: <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/sport/more-sports/fitness-in-schools-is-a-must/story-e6frey6i-1225799480703>

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## **Drinking age rise proposal dismissed**

*Mark Metherall, the Age, November 20, 2009*

FEDERAL Health Minister Nicola Roxon has dismissed calls to increase the drinking age to 19, but acknowledged that 70 young people are admitted to hospital every week and four die because of alcohol abuse.

The minister said the Government's preventive health taskforce had not called for an increase in the drinking age. "Of course people in the community will raise these issues and will continue to do that and we will, of course, continue to follow that debate," Ms Roxon said.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has criticised binge drinking by young people but sidestepped the call by mental health advocate Professor Ian Hickie, of the University of Sydney, for the drinking age to be raised given growing evidence of the vulnerability of the brains of young adults to damage from alcohol ingestion.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/drinking-age-rise-dismissed-20091119-ioy9.html>

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## **Bullying at school scars adulthood**

*Heath Gilmore and Jonathan Dart, Sydney Morning Herald, 20 November 2009*

BEING bullied at school has left almost seven out of 10 adults suffering from low self-esteem and a lack of assertiveness, new research says.

The 95-page Wesley report - Give Kids a Chance: No One Deserves to Be Left Out - found that school bullies left behind victims unable to build relationships of trust or control their anger.

As part of the research, schoolyard bullies also were asked to out themselves. Nearly half of them admitted to being adult reoffenders.

Wesley Mission's chief executive, the Reverend Keith Garner, said the report out today would counter the view that bullying was an inescapable part of growing up with no long-term consequences. He said the survey of 1200 adults aged between 18 and 44 from Sydney was ground-breaking.

"School bullying leaves long-term scars, affecting work, relationships and an ability to trust people. Being left out at school can mean exclusion in adult life," Mr Garner said.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/wellbeing/bullying-at-school-scars-adulthood-20091119-ioz0.html>

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## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### Australia 'regressive' on Indigenous education

*ABC Hobart, 23 November 2009*

A national conference has heard how the education system in Australia is failing Indigenous children and forcing many to drop out with little or no skills.

More than 600 delegates are attending the fifth National Indigenous Education Conference in Hobart.

Teachers, students, policy makers and members of Aboriginal communities and organisations have come together to discuss an unacceptable standard of learning and training for Indigenous people.

Geraldine Atkinson from the Aboriginal Education Association believes as a country, Australia has regressed.

"We do need educational programs with good leadership and have teachers that are ensuring children know exactly who they are and what Aboriginal children can achieve," she said.

International expert Lorna Williams says the problem stems from schools ignoring Aboriginal history in the classroom and not helping Indigenous students enough.

"I think it's more than embarrassing," she said.

The three-day conference aims to discuss where changes can be made and how.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/23/2750802.htm?site=hobart>

Read more about the conference at <http://www.cdesign.com.au/niec2009/>

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### Senate report backs moves to lift child care quality

*The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, 23 November, 2009*

Minister for Early Childhood Education and Child Care Kate Ellis has welcomed the report of a Senate Standing Committee into the Provision of Child Care.

The Education, Employment and Workplace Relations References Committee began its inquiry into the provision of childcare on 25 November 2008 and today tabled its report in the Senate.

The report expresses strong support for lifting the quality of child care in Australia – reform that the Australian Government is leading in partnership with the States and Territories.

The Senate Standing Committee's report notes that there is an:

“... urgency to the tasks already being undertaken by COAG to agree to a national approach to childcare provision, to implement commonly agreed standards, to provide for their enforcement and to lift minimum standards of training and the employment status of those who work in the sector.” (page 15)

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_091124\\_090548.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091124_090548.aspx)

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## **Time To Take Early Childhood Learning Seriously**

*Sarah Hanson-Young, 23rd November 2009*

The collapse of ABC Learning has presented an opportunity to reform systems of care for our youngest children, now the Federal Government must show the commitment to make it happen, according to Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young.

Senator Hanson-Young, Greens spokesperson on Youth, Childcare and Education, says the report of the 12-month inquiry into childcare tabled in the Senate has shown that reliance on corporate providers has not resulted in an appropriate quality of care.

"It's time to stop settling for a profit-driven, poor quality approach to childcare in Australia, and instead focus on creating the system that our children deserve," Senator Hanson-Young said.

Read more at <http://greensmps.org.au/content/media-release/time-to-take-early-childhood-learning-seriously>

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## **COMPETITION & FUNDRAISER**

### **Christmas comes alive for Aussie kids**

Children across Australia are encouraged to get creative for the chance to star on Christmas Cards with a recycling twist.

Living Fundraisers today launched a competition for children to design artwork and messages that will feature on 'living' Christmas Cards.

The cards are made from recycled paper embedded with seeds. Post Christmas, the cards can be planted to grow native Australian trees and shrubs.

The cards will be available to schools, pre-schools, childcare centres, sporting and community groups to sell as an alternative to the chocolate drive.

Rachel Taylor, organiser of the competition, said the cards were part of a larger initiative targeting child obesity and promoting healthy, active lifestyles for children.

The competition is open to children from Australian primary schools, kindergartens, preschools and childcare centres.

Two children in each age category will be awarded prizes, along with their school or institution. Winning entries will be printed on the 'living' Christmas Cards.

Read more at <http://www.livingfundraisers.com.au>.

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## **AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES**

### **ACT: New controls for external school presentations**

ABC News, Nov 20, 2009

An ACT Government investigation has cleared the Focus on the Family group which was accused of vilifying homosexuals in seminars held at Canberra High School.

The investigation was sparked by complaints from a parent.

But the Education Department has found that no teachers at the school believed the group implied that sex is bad or that homosexuality could be compared to bestiality.

But it did find the group conveyed some 'ill-advised' messages that could have been misinterpreted.

Education Minister Andrew Barr says Canberra High School did not follow a rigorous selection process when it picked the group.

"Better selection processes and parental consent processes should be present," he said.

Mr Barr says from next year organisations that appear in public schools will have to be approved by the Department and parents will have to give their children permission to attend.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/20/2748427.htm>

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## **NSW: Rees government must end its war on TAFE**

*John Kaye MP, Media release: 19 November 2009*

The Greens called on NSW Education Minister Verity Firth to negotiate with TAFE teachers and abandon plans that would see standards driven down to the lowest common denominator.

Commenting on widespread industrial action by TAFE teachers against draconian changes to their working conditions, Greens NSW MP John Kaye said: "TAFE teachers and staff across NSW are defending the standards of post-school education.

"They are standing up for the future economic health of the state against a short-sighted push from Education Minister Verity Firth and her department to cut costs and undermine the system.

"Professional educators have been forced into industrial action by the Rees government's obsession with placing the bean counters ahead of community education and training.

"Minister Firth's push to increase TAFE teacher workloads by 20 percent will mean less time for students and fewer teachers.

"This comes on top of stripping back requirements for teaching qualifications, destroying non-commercial courses and increasing student fees. The Rees government is hollowing out TAFE to cut costs and balance its budget."

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

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## **NT: Federal funding for Nyangatjatjara College**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP & Hon Warren Snowdon MP, Member for Lingiari, 19 November 2009*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced additional funding of up to \$1.5 million for the Nyangatjatjara College in the Northern Territory.

The Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, welcomed the funding that will ensure that the College, which was due to close this year, can continue operating.

Established in 1997, Nyangatjatjara College is an independent Aboriginal community secondary school operated by the Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (NAC). The College is based at Yulara, Central Australia, with campuses at Mutitjulu, Imanpa and Kaltukatjara.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has worked with the College and the NAC to agree on a funding package that will build on the College's achievements.

Read entire release: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_091119\\_085005.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_091119_085005.aspx)

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## **QLD: Almost 280 suspended from school each day**

*Rosemary Odgers, Courier Mail, November 14, 2009*

ALMOST 280 suspensions a day were handed down to violent, disruptive or misbehaving students in state schools across Queensland last financial year.

Principals dispensed another 864 expulsions to the most serious offenders, permanently excluding an average of 21 students a week after they physically attacked teachers or classmates, damaged property, disrupted classes or were caught swearing or with drugs, cigarettes or alcohol.

Education Queensland's annual report tabled in State Parliament yesterday revealed there were 57,188 cases where students were suspended for between one and 20 days in the 12 months to June this year.

Physical misconduct was the most common reason why students were suspended, with 16,982 incidents resulting in suspensions or expulsions. This was followed by 11,525 cases of verbal or non-verbal misconduct. There were 373 incidents involving illicit drugs.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26346946-3102,00.html>

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## **QLD: Hundreds of childcare operators warned of unhygienic conditions**

*Tanya Chilcott, Courier Mail, November 13, 2009*

SHOCKING conditions have been uncovered in many Queensland childcare centres, including animal faeces in play areas, floors in danger of collapse, dangerous play equipment and loose wires.

Other appalling conditions included dead cockroaches on playroom floors, broken balustrades and fences, flaking paint, overflowing toilets, insufficient toys and play equipment, hazardous gates, unhygienic food preparation and unsanitary nappy bins.

Unsupervised children, poorly qualified staff, unacceptable child-to-staff ratios and unresponsive carers were also discovered during recent compliance visits.

The incidents, including some at centres that continually defied calls to fix problems, have sparked an unprecedented crackdown on operators, including naming-and-shaming laws passed by State Parliament last month.

Documents obtained from the Education Department's website show more than 2400 compliance letters notifying centres of regulation breaches were sent last year, with 1864 sent before September 22 this year.

Education Minister Geoff Wilson said the conditions found in some centres were "completely unacceptable".

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26347464-3102,00.html>

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### **QLD: 'Drugs rife among Coast kids'**

*Nikki Joyce, Sunshine Coast Daily, 22nd November 2009*

A SECURITY guard who saved the life of a Sunshine Coast school-leaver after he overdosed on cocaine and morphine last week says the drug scene among Coast teenagers is "chaos".

Former RAAF officer Nathan Moore was being hailed a hero after he revived the 18-year-old Maroochydore High student at a school formal after-party on Wednesday. Yesterday Mr Moore revealed how close the young man came to losing his life, and said he believed a significant number of others at the party had indulged in the potentially lethal drug combination.

Managing director Mark Ellis, a former drug squad police officer, said the Sunshine Coast youth drug culture was one of the worst in the state and second only to the Gold Coast.

Gatecrash Security say drugs are present at 90% of the school parties they are hired to attend.

Read entire article: <http://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/story/2009/11/22/hero-who-saved-grads-life-reveals-drugs-rife-among/>

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### **SA: School students smoke and drink less**

*Hon Jane Lomax-Smith, Education Minister, 19 November 2009*

South Australian has recorded its lowest rate of smoking among school students since 1984, according to the results of a new survey.

Minister Jane Lomax-Smith today released the local findings of the Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drugs Survey. Conducted every three years, the survey of 2984 South Australian students in 2008 showed young South Australians are smoking and drinking less.

The survey shows a significant drop in smoking rates for secondary school students aged 16-17 years, with only 8% reported as current smokers in 2008, compared to 15% in 2005.

Three-quarters of students aged 12-17 reported they had never smoked and 5% of students reported smoking in the past week in 2008, compared to 7% in 2005.

The overall smoking rate for the South Australian population aged 15 years and above was 19.9% in 2008, which is marginally lower than the 20.6% recorded the previous year.

Alcohol use has also declined among school students. In 2008, 23% reported consuming alcohol in the week prior to the survey, compared with 26% in 2005. This continues a decline from 35% having drunk alcohol in the previous week in 1999.

Read entire release, including other findings:

[http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/mediacentre/files/links/Youth\\_smoking\\_drinking.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/mediacentre/files/links/Youth_smoking_drinking.pdf)

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## **TAS: State Government details tech college lifeline**

*ABC News, Nov 18, 2009*

The Tasmanian Government will provide \$900,000 for two Australian Technical Colleges to continue next year under another name.

The colleges in Burnie and Launceston, set up by the former Federal Government, were due to close at the end of the year.

The Premier David Bartlett has told parliament the colleges would be maintained next year with their current curriculum and will continue to be a registered training organisation.

Mr Bartlett says procedures are underway to ensure staff from the technical colleges can be re-employed next year.

"The Government has been able to deliver a lifeline to the students and parents of the Australian Technical College by establishing a new school which will give students continuity in their studies from 2010 and beyond," he said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/18/2746150.htm>

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## **VIC: Schools take a byte of world acclaim**

*Bronwyn Pike, Minister for Education, 16 November 2009*

Two Victorian government primary schools have been selected by Microsoft to show the world how technology can be used in the classroom to benefit students' learning.

Silverton Primary School in Noble Park North and Dallas Primary School and Kindergarten in Broadmeadows showcased modern learning at the Worldwide Innovative Education Forum held in Brazil earlier this month.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike said two Victorian schools being among 42 from across the globe to showcase innovative teaching provided further evidence that Victorian education is world-class.

"We are providing students with 21st century education for 21st Century jobs and we are proud to be sharing our ideas and programs with other schools around the world," Ms Pike said. "The Brumby Labor Government has invested more than \$140 million a year in Information Communications Technology (ICT) and programs in schools.

"The two schools will work with Microsoft to model best practice and connect teachers and school leaders around the world to new learning and ideas."

Silverton Primary School is one of 12 schools selected to be a 'mentor school' while Dallas Primary is one of 30 'pathfinder schools' under the Microsoft program.

Read entire release: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/component/content/article/8727.html>

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## **VIC: Specialist maths coaching support for primary teachers**

*Miki Perkins, the Age, November 23, 2009*

IN AN effort to raise the profile of maths and lift falling participation in the subject, 81 new specialist maths coaches will be sent into Victorian primary schools in low socio-economic areas to train their colleagues how to teach maths.

The need is dire: many studies have shown a decline in young people's interest in science and mathematics, particularly in secondary school.

In Victoria, there was a 31 per cent drop in year-11 students studying maths methods and a 21 per cent drop in specialist maths between 2003 and 2008.

Corio South Primary School teachers Shane Ezard and Andrew Hanson will take part in the \$5 million government program, undergoing three weeks of specialist training before starting their new role next year.

Mr. Hanson said primary students liked concrete examples - such as map reading - that showed how maths could be useful in everyday life.

"Some kids have had a rough time with maths over years and they've got really low self-esteem," he said. The scheme is in addition to a recent announcement that 200 maths and science coaches would be hired as part of the Government's maths and science strategy.

Source: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/maths-coaching-for-teachers-20091122-isur.html>

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## **VIC: Keeping up with school-work at the Royal Children's Hospital**

*Hon Bronwyn Pike, Minister for Education, 17 November 2009*

School-aged patients at the Royal Children's Hospital will have less interruption to their schooling thanks to \$7.4 million from the Brumby Labor Government to expand the hospital's education programs.

Education Minister Bronwyn Pike today said the new funding agreement with the Royal Children's Hospital's Education Institute would provide more support for families with sick children.

"This extra money will help the RCH provide more programs that connect the flow of school work between their school and the hospital so every child has every opportunity to stay engaged with their studies."

The RCH Education Institute oversees student learning at the hospital, with a team of teachers and research staff dedicated to helping students keep up with their studies and, importantly, stay connected to their classmates and their schools.

The \$7.4 million boost over three years is a significant increase from \$5.1 million provided to the RCH Education Institute over the past three years.

Read entire release: <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/component/content/article/8740.html>

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## **WA: School support workers given back docked pay**

*Kim MacDonald, West Australian, 24 November 2009*

The State Government has agreed to repay more than 100 school workers who had their wages docked for participating in recent minor work bans as part of their pay campaign.

A letter from the Education Department to 105 teaching assistants, cleaners and gardeners says their next pay packet would reimburse the money that was docked during a fortnight of minor work bans, such as refusing to rake sandpits.

The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union called for Treasurer Troy Buswell to stand aside from negotiations, claiming the move was a sign that his own Government did not support his new industrial policy to dock pay for minor work bans, even when workers performed the bulk of their duties.

Secretary Dave Kelly said the move had destroyed the relationship between Mr Buswell and the workforce and he wanted Premier Colin Barnett to step in.

He urged the State Government to drop the controversial industrial policy and rejected Education Department claims that the backflip was a bid to promote good-faith bargaining.

Read entire article: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/6507727/workers-given-back-docked-pay/>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **“Learning for Life: Sustainability, Global Citizenship & Social Justice”**

*19-21 February 2010, Education Development Centre, Hindmarsh, SA*

2010 Conference of Social Educators Association of Australia

The SEAA Biennial conference for 2010 will be held in conjunction with the SA Studies of Society and Environment Conference. Each year the SASOSE conference is designed to follow the themes of the UN International Year which in 2010 will be the 'International Year of Biodiversity' and 'International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures'. It is also midway through the 'UN Decade of Sustainability'

Further information & registration: <http://www.seaa.org.au/2010conference/>

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### **Green Universities**

*22-23 February 2010, Rendezvous Hotel, Melbourne, VIC*

Carbon emissions, climate change and going green represents a significant component of the broader strategic shift taking place in the Australian corporate landscape.

The university sector in particular faces some unique and diverse set of challenges across a number of issues ranging from:

Hear case studies from across Australia and benefit from the opportunity to explore the different strategies and initiatives universities are implementing to reduce their carbon footprint and maximize sustainability.

Read more at <http://www.informa.com.au/conferences/education/green-universities>

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### **Career Development Association of Australia Annual Conference**

*7-9 April 2010, Hilton Hotel, Adelaide SA*

The 19th annual conference for the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA) focuses on how career practitioners could be making a difference to the world they live in as well as the world future generations will experience.

Keynotes and guest speakers will provide insights into current career development theory and practices and workshop presentations will explore processes and strategies but they will relate these to the environment in which they will be applied.

This conference will enable delegates to develop new skills and consider new insights as well as refine existing knowledge and hone existing skills.

For details and registration: <http://www.onqconferences.com.au/pages/CDAA2010.php>

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### **Global language Convention**

8-11 April 2010, Wesley College, Melbourne, VIC

The 2010 Global Language Convention 'Many Cultures, One Community: Language, Knowing and Power' brings together language experts, educators, practitioners and policy makers from around the world in dialogue and critical engagement with the ever growing body of knowledge in the area of language and learning.

Topics include:

- From text to message - literature, media & communication cultures for C21 learning; Language loss and reclamation;
- Taking responsibility for the 2nd language learner in the mainstream language environment;
- The brain, learning and language; Multilingual matters - beyond making the case for learning more than one language;
- Defining, developing, refining, maintaining the mother tongue;
- 'Every teacher is a language teacher' - critical issues in managing language and learning in schools.

Full details and registration: <http://www.wesleycollege.net/convention.cfm>

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## 8th Annual Higher Education Summit

29-30 April 2010: National Wine Centre, Adelaide SA

In 2010, Australia's original and most established higher education policy and planning conference will be about "Questioning Australian higher education policy & planning in the 21st century."

We believe it is essential to question how well the Bradley Review has gone and how policy and planning is addressing other important issues, such as the big ticket issue of the century - climate change.

Read more at <http://www.highereducationsummit.com.au/>

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## REMINDERS

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/>

26-27 November - Bridging the Gap - Sydney, NSW - <http://www.ards.com.au>

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/>

19-20 April - Kidsafe Playground Conference - Perth, WA - <http://www.kidsafewa.com.au/>

4-7 July - National Conference for Teachers of English & Literacy - Perth, WA -

<http://www.englishliteracyconference.com.au/index.php?id=46&year=10>

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## 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 ACSO, its members or employees.

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