



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 4 Number 4, 23 February 2010

- [VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL: \(7 items\)](#)
- [COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: \(3 items\)](#)
- [COMPARING TEACHER PERFORMANCE: Teachers brace for another New York initiative](#)
- [IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY: \(4 items\)](#)
- [BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION: The soaring costs](#)
- [LITERACY & NUMERACY: \(2 items\)](#)
- [ATTENTION DEFICIT & HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER: \(2 items\)](#)
- [RESEARCH: Independent schools get tick of approval](#)
- [AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES: \(13 items\)](#)
- [RESOURCES: The Giant Classroom](#)
- [EVENTS: \(2 items\)](#)
- [CONFERENCES: \(5 items\)](#)
- [REMINDERS](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

Schoolyard murder puts spotlight on knife culture

Charlotte Glennie & Emily Bourke for AM, ABC News, 16 February 2010

A 13-year-old boy is due to appear in the Brisbane Children's Court today, charged with the murder of a 12-year-old schoolmate. Elliott Fletcher died after allegedly being stabbed during a fight at St Patrick's College in Shorncliffe, on Brisbane's bayside, shortly after arriving at school yesterday morning.

Fellow students have set up tribute pages on social networking sites, but police are investigating complaints that violent and pornographic images were posted on one of the sites. Police say steps have been taken to quickly have the images removed, and those responsible will be traced and prosecuted.

Queensland criminologist Professor Paul Mazerolle is the director of Griffith University's Violence Research Program. He has studied the issue of youth violence for the Queensland Government and says there is growing anecdotal evidence to suggest schools are getting more violent.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/16/2820508.htm>

[< top >](#)

Violence on the rise in Australian schools

Australian Teacher, 16 February 2010

Millions of parents pack their kids off to school each morning without a moment's thought of their ultimate nightmare - the kids don't come back. Why should they worry?

Experts suggest a rise in schoolyard violence reflects problems in the wider community, including alcohol abuse and the carrying of weapons such as knives.

"About 20 per cent of the early high school population will report being bullied in the preceding six to 12 months," says Professor Dominic Fitzgerald, a paediatrician at Sydney's Westmead Children's Hospital. "A similar percentage will

acknowledge bullying behaviours by themselves and, interestingly, about five per cent will report both bullying and being victims."

Professor Fitzgerald says bullying appears to have little to do with socioeconomic factors or an urban or regional setting. Writing in the latest Medical Observer, he says boys are inclined more to physical and verbal bullying, while girls employ psychologically manipulative behaviour such as ostracism, alienation and character defamation.

Read entire article: http://www.ozteacher.com.au/html/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=518:fed-violence-on-the-rise-in-australian-schools&catid=15:social-behavioural-issues

[< top >](#)

Authorities 'in denial' over schools' knife culture

Alison Caldwell for AM, ABC News, 17 February 2010

A veteran youth worker is warning authorities that many teenagers say carrying knives is as common as carrying mobile telephones.

Melbourne-based Les Twentyman told a Federal Government inquiry into youth violence this week that knife possession is getting out of control, and that computer games are partly to blame because they desensitise young people to acts of violence.

And he says authorities are partly to blame because they are refusing to admit that there is a problem.

A 13-year-old boy is currently in custody in Brisbane accused of the knife murder of a 12-year-old boy at a school on the city's northern fringe on Monday.

In a separate case, an 11-year-old boy has been charged after he allegedly pulled a knife on a classmate at a western Sydney primary school.

The Victorian Government says there were 19 knife incidents at government schools in Victoria last year, nearly twice as many as the previous year.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/17/2822115.htm>

[< top >](#)

Knife incidents in schools

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Radio Interview, 17 February 2010

JULIA GILLARD: Look, these are really distressing incidents and obviously the police are involved and I can understand parents are looking at all of this and worrying what it might mean for their child. I think we need to get the benefit of the police investigations into the tragic incident in Brisbane particularly.

We've been very focused on safety in schools. It raises a whole lot of issues. We've actually made \$20 million available for schools that are at particular risk so that's been a new safety program from us. We've also invested in what is a very common complaint and experience for children about bullying, particularly cyber bullying, which is very insidious because it follows kids out of the playground and right into their home and we've recently entered a partnership with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation with \$3 million to find some new ways of combating cyber bullying.

SANDY: But still knives are being produced in our schools. As a parent I think that's just horrific.

JULIA GILLARD: It is horrific and I obviously want to work through the issues here. We've seen a few incidents; they're very distressing and very disturbing. We want to get the full information from the police and I will be very happy to work with the states and territories and the Catholic and independent school sectors to see what it is that we may need to do.

I think we've got to remember, I mean, overwhelmingly in this country schools are happy and safe places but these incidents do concern us, concern me, you, everyone and we need to get all of the information and think what's the best way to respond.

Read entire interview transcript:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Transcripts/Pages/Article_100217_113656.aspx

[< top >](#)

Schools not as violent today: John Marsden

Amy Bainbridge, ABC News Breakfast, 18 February 2010

Best-selling teen fiction author John Marsden says he believes Australian schools are more peaceful than ever despite the stabbing death of a Brisbane schoolboy this week.

Marsden, who is also the founder of an independent school outside Melbourne, told ABC News Breakfast that schools are more peaceful than they were 20 to 40 years ago.

And Marsden says video games and violent movies are not having an effect on today's youth.

"It's a more peaceful society, kids now are more peaceful than they were a generation ago," Marsden said. "If all these video games and movies were having such a pernicious effect on them, we should be seeing violence absolutely rampant in schools, and we're not seeing that at all.

"In my day ... the chant of 'fight, fight, fight' echoed through the playground on a daily basis - those fights could be pretty savage and pretty bloody," he added.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/18/2823417.htm>

[< top >](#)

Cartoons, TV and polities 'create school bullies'

Nance Haxton, PM PROGRAM, 19 February 2010

New research suggests that children's media exposure is a big factor in whether or not they become bullies at school. Harvard's Centre on Media and Child Health has found that children learn socially acceptable behaviour from television and movies and then model that in the playground.

Paediatrics instructor at Harvard Medical School David Bickham is attending a forum at Adelaide's Flinders University to share his findings. "If we look at media and you look at the way violence is presented in the media, you see violence as being very glamourised and very exciting, and having very few consequences," he said.

"So if a young person has grown up with that being the primary source of information about violence, then it's easy to understand why we would be concerned that they would learn that behaving aggressively in school is something that would lead to lots of positive social outcomes."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/18/2824093.htm>

[< top >](#)

Clamp on dangerous weapons in our schools

Angus Livingston, The Examiner, 22 Feb 2010

THERE were about 70 weapons- related suspensions in Tasmanian state schools last year.

Tasmanian Education Department statistics showed students were suspended for the possession or use of "weapons and other dangerous objects".

Teachers are now doing risk assessments on violent students, after dealing with 7630 suspensions for the year - an average of 38 a day.

The department did not provide further details on weapons, but only a fraction of the suspensions involved knives.

The Australian Education Union said it had told teachers to treat violent students as "hazards" and to do workplace risk assessments on them.

Read more at <http://www.examiner.com.au/news/local/news/education/clamp-on-dangerous-weapons-in-our-schools/1757062.aspx?src=rss>

[< top >](#)



[< top >](#)

COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

My School website a 'crock', says top educator

Miki Perkins, The Age, 8 February 2010

THE principal of Victoria's top-performing government school has slammed the Federal Government's My School website, describing it as a "crock".

Jeremy Ludowyke, the principal of Melbourne High - which last year was the top government school in the VCE - said selective-entry schools like his that stood to gain the most from published league tables should be the loudest critics against "this nonsense".

In a comment piece published in The Age, Mr Ludowyke said the index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA), used to define similar schools, was a clunky measure: "This amounts to: all children in this district are orange, you live in this district, therefore you are orange," he writes.

The recently-launched My School website allows parents to see the results of national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN) at their child's school and compare them with similar schools.

Last week it was revealed that the Victorian Education Department has instructed teachers to explicitly teach for the national tests, a cornerstone of the My School website.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/my-school-website-a-crock-says-top-educator-20100207-nkt2.html>

[< top >](#)

Better supervision of tests needed to stop cheats, say schools

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, February 17, 2010

THE lobby group for private schools is to press for independent supervision of the national literacy and numeracy tests to prevent cheating and corruption.

The NAPLAN tests are used to compare school performances on the federal government's My School website, launched last month. Schools have traditionally used the basic skills tests to diagnose learning difficulties, and the tests are overseen by teachers, unlike the HSC exams, which are independently supervised.

The Herald has received reports of principals and teachers helping students with answers in the literacy and numeracy tests to improve their schools' rankings.

The executive director of the Association of Independent Schools, Geoff Newcombe, said the high stakes now attached to the NAPLAN tests demanded that they be guarded with greater security, including independent supervision.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/better-supervision-of-tests-needed-to-stop-cheats-say-schools-20100216-o8ze.html>

[< top >](#)

US experience points finger at 'My school' website

John Kaye MP, Media Release, 17 February 2010

Reports of widespread test alterations in the US state of Georgia sound very loud alarm bells on the pressure that the 'my school' website will place on NSW schools.

"Julia Gillard is putting enormous pressure on the profession to teach to the test and to alter scores.

"This is further evidence that the 'my school' circus will distort learning outcomes and fail to provide accountability and school improvement.

"Test cheating in Georgia and the massive discrepancy between school test results in New York State and [USA] national tests should sound very loud alarm bells for Education Ministers Julia Gillard and Verity Firth.

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

[< top >](#)

COMPARING TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Teachers brace for another New York initiative

Heath Gilmore, Sydney Morning Herald, February 22, 2010

Julia Gillard is fuelling speculation the federal government will consider report cards for teachers, based on class performance.

The Minister for Education has refused to back away from supporting new measures being introduced by the New York schools chancellor, Joel Klein, tying tenure of teachers to the performance of their students in standardised testing.

The minister has embraced the New York model of publicly comparing the test results of schools with the launch of the My School website, which has resonated with Australian parents.

This month Mr Klein announced that probationary teachers would need to prove themselves in the classroom before being granted tenure.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/teachers-brace-for-another-new-york-initiative-20100221-onzk.html>

[< top >](#)

IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

Why L-plate teachers miss the mark

Caroline Milburn, the Age, February 12, 2010

IAN Sloane has sorted hundreds of job applications from graduates eager to start their teaching careers at his school in Melbourne's east.

Over the past five years, Mr. Sloane has hired 15 graduates fresh from teacher-training courses. Though happy with his selections, he has nevertheless been dismayed by how poorly trained many of the 100 unsuccessful applicants seemed to be.

In their job interviews at Mitcham, about half were unable to tell the selection panel how they would ensure the quality of their teaching and assessment was of the same standard as that of the rest of the staff. Half were unable to suggest strategies for using laptops and IT skills in classroom learning. And about two-thirds seemed unaware of major government education policies.

"It's puzzling to those of us at the coalface how student teachers can get through their courses and not be exposed to these concepts," says Mr. Sloane, who represented the Victorian Principals Association on a 2005 state parliamentary inquiry into teacher training. "It's very disappointing for these young people because in most cases they had nice personalities and you could see they would probably make good teachers because they cared about what they had trained to do."

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/why-lplate-teachers-miss-the-mark-20100212-nwz5.html>

[< top >](#)

\$40m for teachers' professional development in ICT

Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, Media Release 18 February 2010

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced a \$40 million initiative to help ensure teachers and school leaders receive comprehensive training in information and communication technology (ICT).

The Digital Strategy for Teachers and School Leaders, part of the Australian Government's \$2.2 billion Digital Education Revolution, will help teachers and school leaders achieve ICT proficiency and embed these skills across the curriculum and teaching practices.

The Government will consult with education sectors to determine how ICT proficiency can best be achieved in schools and the first part of the strategy will develop a national ICT self-assessment tool to be trialled in selected schools from February 2011.

An in-school professional development program will also be developed based on the results of the self-assessment tool to help guide teachers and school leaders towards customised professional development to support their needs.

Further information on the Digital Strategy for Teachers and School Leaders is available at: <http://www.digitaleducationrevolution.gov.au>.

For more information on the Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership, visit <http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/default.aspx>

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100218_130817.aspx

[< top >](#)

Teaching the teachers

Field Rickards, The Age, 22 February 2010

The latest furore to hit education is not a new one. Recent reports in The Age that Victorian principals are dissatisfied with the quality of many teaching graduates sound all too familiar.

When you add these reports to what we already know about new graduates not feeling adequately prepared for the classroom and the shockingly high attrition rate in the profession, we have a very worrying picture indeed.

Perhaps even more worryingly, there seems to be a blame-game going on, with universities and schools pointing variously to one another and to governments to account for the sorry state of pre-service teacher education.

And while all this finger pointing rumbles on, it is the next generation of teachers and their students who are suffering.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/teaching-the-teachers-20100222-opf3.html>

[< top >](#)

Fast-track teachers to get six weeks training

The Courier-Mail, February 22, 2010

Teachers could take charge of the most challenging classrooms after just six weeks training under a controversial strategy being considered by the Queensland Government.

People with professional qualifications will be sent to teach in disadvantaged schools to plug a shortage of specialist teachers under the Teach for Australia program, The Courier-Mail reports.

But unions have slammed the strategy – which aims to attract high-performing professionals and graduates from fields including law, economics, engineering, science, mathematics and English – as disrespectful to teachers and a Band-Aid solution.

Teach for Australia chief executive Melodie Potts said research shows similar models overseas produce more effective teachers.

Education Queensland assistant director-general Craig Allen confirmed the program was being considered and talks were being held with Teach for Australia.

[< top >](#)

BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

The soaring costs of building Rudd's education revolution

Rachel Browne, WA Today, February 21, 2010

Builders' mark-ups, management fees and multi-layered bureaucracy are hugely inflating the cost of work under the Building the Education Revolution program, critics say.

Parents and principals have raised concerns that some projects are costing up to 10 times more than regular construction.

Quantity surveyors say a quality one- or two-level commercial building would cost about \$2100 a square metre.

At Orange Grove Public School, in Lilyfield, a 25-square-metre canteen is being built for \$550,000, or \$22,000 a square metre.

Kangaroo Valley Public School has received a 169-square-metre library for \$850,000, or \$5029 a square metre, and Berridale Public School in the Southern Highlands received a quote for a prefabricated library also amounting to \$850,000, or \$5660 a square metre.

Louise Appel, secretary of Orange Grove Public School Parents and Citizens Association, said the real cost of the canteen - roughly a third of the size of the original - could be as high as \$850,000 once plumbing, drainage and rewiring costs were added. "We would love to know how a building resembling a cubby house came to be so expensive when it is unacceptable as a school canteen," she said.

Read more at <http://www.watoday.com.au/national/education/the-soaring-costs-of-building-rudds-education-revolution-20100221-on5r.html>

[< top >](#)

LITERACY & NUMERACY

National Share-a-Book Campaign

February-March 2010

Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation, Marie Claire & Officeworks

Four out of five Indigenous children living in remote communities can't read at the accepted minimum standard. This month, Marie Claire and Officeworks are supporting the Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation to raise literacy levels in Indigenous and refugee communities

Books can offer a lifetime of pleasure, but some Australian children simply don't have access to them. In support of ALNF's Share-A-Book program, in the March issue of Marie Claire some of Australia's favourite stars are asked to evoke the spirit of books that mean a lot to them.

You can join our campaign and make a difference by dropping off new or pre-loved children's books to your nearest Officeworks store. From February 3 to March 31, there will be a Share-A-Book bookshelf in every branch of Officeworks across Australia.

Find out more about the Share-a-Book program: <http://www.alnf.org/programs/share-a-book.php>

[< top >](#)

How About Programs for Boys to Explore the World of Reading?

Richard Whitmire, Why Boys Fail blog, Education Week, 22 February 2010

This University of Texas program designed to lure more middle school girls into pursuing STEM subjects sounds great (http://www.utdallas.edu/news/2010/2/22-1211_Middle-School-Girls-Explore-World-of-Engineering_article.html).

It's exactly what needs to be done, especially if college gender balances favoring women continue into the future. We need far more women sticking with science/math majors and entering those careers.

So why is it so hard for schools to realize they need to do something comparable for boys in literacy skills?

The world has gotten more verbal; boys haven't.

That's the core of the "boy troubles," and yet other than single sex education schools seem reluctant to craft interventions to turn that around.

Source: <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/whyboysfail/>

[< top >](#)



[< top >](#)

ATTENTION DEFICIT & HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

Study questions widely-used ADHD drugs

Danny Rose, AAP February 17, 2010

An Australian study has revealed a "significant lack of effect" of conventional drugs used to treat ADHD, a finding that surprised at least one of its researchers.

Professor Lou Landau was co-author of the WA-based research which investigated the effectiveness of drugs now widely used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children.

Prof Landau and fellow researchers pulled data from the nation's long-term Raine Study to assess the health, and other, outcomes of 131 children with ADHD among more than 2,800 Australian families.

It showed how those using conventional ADHD drugs, such as Ritalin and dexamphetamine, had significantly poorer educational outcomes than children with ADHD not using the stimulants.

The drugs were also linked to a "trend toward slightly higher depression scores", the study found, along with a potentially long-term risk factor for heart disease.

When it came to educational performance, children on ADHD drugs were shown to be significantly worse off than those with unmedicated or no-longer medicated ADHD.

Read entire article: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/national/6818922/study-questions-widelyused-adhd-drugs/>

[< top >](#)

Call for action on ADHD

Senator Rachel Siewert, Media Release, 18 February 2010

Senator Rachel Siewert has called for a review of the use of ADHD medication following publication of a report from the University of Western Australia that suggests the use of stimulant medication for children not only fails to help them academically but may also harm them physically.

"We know that medication rates for children suffering from Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder have soared since the last decade, with more than 20,000 West Australians using stimulants - a prescription rate that ranks amongst the highest in the world," Senator Siewert said.

"Stimulant medication in the short-term does increase blood pressure, but of more concern is the fact that those who've had stimulant medication in the past, even if they weren't currently having it, still had blood pressure rates which were even higher.

"Health experts have urged the government to have ADHD treatment evaluated by experts without links to drug firms. And we know that the National Health and Medical Research Council have drafted a rethink of the guidelines on how ADHD should be treated.

"But consumers are going to be concerned by the findings in this new report and the Health Minister Nicola Roxon has yet to clarify the government's recommendations on ADHD."

<http://rachel-siewert.greensmps.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

RESEARCH

Independent schools get tick of approval

Independent Schools Queensland, 17 February 2010

A new survey has found almost 70% of Australians agree independent school students should receive government funding support for their education, up from 51% in a similar survey conducted in 2001.

The survey also showed four out of every ten parents who have their children at government schools would prefer to send them to an independent school, if fees were not an issue.

The survey, conducted by UMR Research and commissioned by Independent Schools Queensland and the Associations of Independent Schools of New South Wales and South Australia, involved a nationwide telephone survey of 1000 respondents and focus groups in several states.

The Executive Director of Independent Schools Queensland, Dr John Roulston, said the survey confirmed most Australians supported government funding of school education across all sectors.

Read entire release: http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/files/files/Communications/media_releases/Media%20Release%20-%20Independent%20schools%20get%20tick%20of%20approval%20February%202010.pdf

Access the full Report online: <http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/Page.aspx?category=1&element=258>

[< top >](#)

AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: Evans sworn in as ANU chancellor

ABC News, 19 February 2010

Gareth Evans has been formally sworn in as Australian National University chancellor in Canberra.

Mr Evans replaces former Labor leader Kim Beazley, who gave up the role to become Australia's ambassador to the United States. He has spent 21 years in politics and 13 years as a Labor cabinet minister.

Mr Evans says his experience in international affairs will help him as chancellor.

"I think it will consolidate ANU's extraordinary advantage at the moment of being the Australian university with by far the most outreach and linkage to the global and academic and wider community," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/19/2824227.htm>

[< top >](#)

NSW: Desperate call for high school teachers

Adam Walters, Daily Telegraph, 18 February 2010

MORE than 1840 high school classes are waiting for permanent teachers.

The Education Department is also yet to fill hundreds of vacant positions.

According to The Daily Telegraph, 421 teaching jobs are vacant in NSW, including 288 regular teachers and 133 head teachers.

Maths was one of the subjects hit hardest by the lack of head teachers, with 11 Sydney high schools and eight regional schools awaiting senior staff.

Based on the formula that every teacher takes an average of five classes of 25 students and head teachers take at least three classes, more than 50,000 students would be waiting for permanent teachers to replace casuals until the vacancies are filled.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/national/desperate-call-for-high-school-teachers/story-e6frfkvr-1225831587583>

[< top >](#)

NT: Welfare suspended after kids skip school

Cathy Harper, ABC News, 15 February 2010

Two people have had their welfare payments suspended because their children have not been attending school, the Northern Territory Department of Education says.

About 12 months ago, the Federal Government introduced a trial program in some Northern Territory schools whereby parents on welfare can have their payments stopped if their children do not attend school.

Today, Alan Greene from the Department of Education appeared before a Senate Committee in Darwin examining welfare reform. Mr Greene told the committee 12 months into the welfare truancy trial, 17 people have been referred to Centrelink because their children were not attending school.

He said two of those had had their payments suspended. Mr Greene also noted that some schools have had significant increases in attendance since the trial began.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/15/2819915.htm?section=australia>

[< top >](#)

QLD: School's in, but water, sewerage and power aren't

Australian Teacher, 16 February 2010

A Queensland council is demanding an explanation from a Christian school that has opened to hundreds of students with no mains water, power or sewerage system.

All but two of the seven buildings at the Staines Memorial College at Ipswich, west of Brisbane, also lack town planning approval.

Representatives will face Ipswich City Council on Wednesday to explain why the school opened to almost 200 male and female students without basic facilities or planning approval. Water is being trucked onto the site, and sewage removed by tanker. Emergency generators are supplying power.

Ipswich town planning spokesman Councillor Paul Tully said the school, in Redbank Plains, had thumbed its nose at the council. Mr Tully said it was possible an injunction could be served against the school for opening without the necessary approvals.

Read entire article: http://www.ozteacher.com.au/html/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=520:qld-schools-in-but-water-sewerage-and-power-arent&catid=18:school-news

[< top >](#)

QLD: One-teacher schools to get extra staff

ABC News, 18 February 2010

The Queensland Government has announced one teacher schools across Queensland are to receive extra staff.

The Government says one-teacher schools with more than 20 students across seven or eight year levels will receive the staffing boost.

Mount Isa MP Betty Kiernan says it will help those schools meet the challenges of teaching children across multiple year levels.

The Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA) has been pushing for extra resources for one-teacher schools for seven years.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/18/2823807.htm>

[< top >](#)

SA: Schools benefit from Green Schools grants

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP, SA Education Minister, 17 February 2010

127 South Australian schools will share in \$1 million through the Rann Government's Green Schools Grants program this year.

The program supports schools and preschools to introduce water and energy saving initiatives and, since its inception, \$12 million has supported more than 1700 environment projects.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says the program's goal is to reduce the State's ecological footprint and educate students.

"The 127 projects earmarked for 2010 include internal water upgrades, water efficiency and energy demand management systems," she says.

Read entire release: http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=823:schools-benefit-from-green-school-grants&catid=29:hon-jane-lomax-smith-mp-press-releases&Itemid=10

[< top >](#)

SA: Principals' support for student-centred funding model welcomed.

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP, SA Education Minister, 18 February 2010

The Rann Government has welcomed the ongoing support of State school principals for a student-centred funding model. Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith unveiled a plan in mid 2008 to introduce a new student-centred system of funding schools to employ staff in schools.

The State Government backed its commitment with \$16 million in funds, the equivalent of 165 extra teachers, for the first year of implementation. A further \$2.7 million would ensure schools received the same or more funding as they moved to the new student-centred funding model.

The new model is on track to be introduced in 2011.

Read entire release:

http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=10

[< top >](#)

SA: Three schools lead new program to prepare for jobs in defence industry

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP & Hon Greg Combet MP, 17 February 2010

Three South Australian high schools have been chosen to lead a new \$5.7 million program that will prepare young South Australians for jobs in the defence industry.

They are Henley High School (western region), Valley View Secondary School (northern region) and Aberfoyle Park High School (southern region). St Patrick's Technical College Northern Adelaide has been chosen as a focus curriculum school within the program.

Five additional partner schools will be identified in each region in the first half of this year.

One of the program's aims will be to get 1000 more senior secondary students studying maths and science.

Read entire release: <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/gregCombettpl.cfm?CurrentId=9970>

[< top >](#)

TAS: Business backs school reform

Peter van Onselen, the Australian, 15 February 2010

LABOR has received a major boost in the first week of the Tasmanian election campaign, with business backing its education reforms and strongly opposing Liberal plans to wind them back.

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, while taking a non-partisan approach to one of the tightest campaigns of recent history, said Premier David Bartlett's Tasmania Tomorrow shake-up must continue.

Intervention by the peak business group in one of the key issues before the March 20 election is a blow to Liberal leader Will Hodgman, who is promising to roll back Mr Bartlett's changes.

Tasmania Tomorrow replaces senior secondary colleges with a two-stream system of academies, for students focused on university, and polytechnics, for those aiming for a trade or associate profession.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/business-backs-school-reform/story-e6frczfl225830275231>

[< top >](#)

TAS: Teacher meeting slammed

Loretta Johnston, The Examiner, 21 February 2010

PREMIER David Bartlett yesterday said he would seek an order from the Industrial Commission to prevent the Australian Education Union from holding stop-work meetings, planned for later this week.

"We are taking this action, as we do not want to see students' learning disrupted," Mr Bartlett said.

"The order requests that the AEU not proceed with stop work meetings planned by the Secondary Colleges' Committee of Management and TAFE Executive."

Mr Bartlett said the Government would "continue to work constructively" with the union in relation to issues its members had with the implementation of the Tasmania Tomorrow reforms.

Read more at <http://www.examiner.com.au/news/local/news/politics/teacher-meeting-slammed/1756600.aspx?src=rss>

[< top >](#)

VIC: Fears aired over rural high school dropout rate

ABC News, 19 February 2010

The National party is calling on the State Government to do more to halt Victoria's rising high school dropout rate.

National party leader Peter Ryan says Government figures show retention rates in regional schools have fallen to 67 per cent while Melbourne's dropout rate has held steady on 85 per cent.

He says the Government must look into why more country students are giving up school.

"The first thing is the Government has to recognise that we have a problem on our hands," he said.

"The next thing that has to be done is for the Government to do a complete analysis as to why it is so and to make sure then that it puts the proper resources, both funding and personnel, around providing the solutions."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/19/2824219.htm>

[< top >](#)

WA: New autism services for young children in Perth

Hon Kate Ellis MP, Hon Jenny Macklin MP & Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services: media release 16 February 2010

A new Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre in Perth will give young West Australian children with Autism Spectrum Disorders access to specialist early childhood services to help them reach their full potential.

The Rudd Government has provided nearly \$2.5 million to the Autism Association of Western Australia and Jellybeans Child Care to establish the centre in partnership with Curtin University of Technology.

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, today officially opened the centre which is operating out of an existing Jelly Beans Child Care Centre in Warwick.

The centre provides a minimum of 20 child care places for children aged 0 to 6 years with Autism Spectrum Disorders and is one of six autism specific centres, which are part of the Rudd Government's \$190 million Helping Children with Autism package.

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100216_162346.aspx

[< top >](#)

WA: Call for more public schools to take on independent status

Education Minister Liz Constable, 22 February 2010

The State Government today called for more schools to become Independent Public Schools to build on the success of the initiative.

Education Minister Liz Constable said feedback from the 34 Independent Public Schools that began at the start of the year had been overwhelmingly positive and the schools had already experienced a surge in community involvement.

The Minister said schools that took on independent status - such as Roseworth Primary School in Girrawheen where today's announcement was made - had the ability to attract high calibre community members to their boards.

Independent Public Schools, while remaining part of the public school system, have the ability to make decisions about their own curriculum, staffing selection, school assets and budgets.

Read more at <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=133154>

[< top >](#)



[< top >](#)

RESOURCES

The Giant Classroom: Activity based online resources in History, Geography & Science

We have developed a series of interesting online programs that many schools are keen to use with their students this year that cover key areas in History, Geography and Science; as follows:

The Asia Wise Competition: (For year 7 to 10 students) - August 9th to 20th. Asia Wise is a program developed to encourage History and Geography teachers to incorporate some basic history and geography of Asia in their courses. It is a self paced program that only requires one lesson to introduce and can be completed as homework for two hours.

The Great Race: (different levels for primary and secondary students) - Runs each term. This program will run for 4 weeks each term and will encourage students to follow world current events and also develop their basic knowledge of world history and geography. It will be a great extension or home work program where parents can really be involved and help their children.

The Science Challenge: (For upper primary students) - Anytime between April 1st and September 30th. This provides five hands on experiments along with online assessment of students' progress. The experiments are simple and fun to do, and the assessment ensures that students also understand the scientific principles they are studying, rather than just doing the experiment.

The Primary Research Project: (For upper primary students) - May 24th to June 4th. Throughout our whole curriculum some of the key skills that we are trying to teach students are how to find information, how to interpret information and how to analyse data. The Primary Research Project is one of the few resources available that challenges and assesses these key skills.

Full information about all these programs can be found at www.GiantClassroom.com.au or by phoning Darren on 03 6231 2885

[< top >](#)

EVENTS

21st Century Learning Spaces Networking Event

22 April 2010, Victoria University, Melbourne, VIC

To find out what 21st century learning spaces will mean for educators, make sure you don't miss Education.au's next networking event.

A new environment of schooling has been emerging over the last decade of the 20th century and it has been accelerating in the 21st century, stimulated by a new economy, new technologies and new understanding about learning. In today's interconnected, technology driven world, learning typically takes place in physical, virtual and remote places.

It has the potential to be an integrated and highly engaging environment in which learners learn. The new learning spaces incorporate new technologies, creating new learning possibilities by engaging the learner, enhancing achievements and extending interactions with local and global communities.

Now with the Government's Digital Education Revolution (DER), and Building the Education Revolution (BER) initiatives it is more important than ever that educators plan for 21st century learning.

Read more at <http://www.educationau.edu.au/21st-century-learning-event>

[< top >](#)

National Walk Safely to School Day

7 May 2010

Active kids are healthy kids! And it's nearly that time of year again when primary school aged children from right around Australia are being asked to make those important steps towards a healthier childhood by participating in National Walk Safely to School Day.

The event encourages parents, carers and their children to build regular walking to and from school into their daily routine, because children need a minimum of 60 minutes exercise per day. It also encourages parents to drive less and walk more, aiming to decrease dangerous vehicle congestion around schools and reduce carbon emissions from idling cars.

All primary schools in the country will receive their Walk Safely to School Day Kit (which includes posters and stickers) before the Easter School Holiday period.

Local Councils and P&C Groups can arrange some fantastic healthy breakfast celebrations in the playgrounds on the morning of Walk Safely to School Day. Using local suppliers, the breakfast is a great way to mark the day and help educate children not only about the benefits of walking but also the advantages of healthy eating habits.

A brand new teaching resource is currently being developed to provide primary school teachers with educational ideas regarding Walk Safely to School Day. This material will be available at www.walk.com.au in early March 2010.

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

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES

Canada International Conference on Education (CICE) 2010

26-28 April 2010, Toronto, Canada

The CICE is an international refereed conference dedicated to the advancement of the theory and practices in education.

The CICE promotes collaborative excellence between academicians and professionals from Education and aims to provide an opportunity for academicians and professionals from various educational fields with cross-disciplinary interests to bridge the knowledge gap, promote research esteem and the evolution of pedagogy.

For further information, registration etc: <http://www.ciceducation.org/>

[< top >](#)

Victoria - the State of Languages?

Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria – Annual Conference

14 May, Karsten's at CQ, 123 Queen Street, Melbourne

Further details will be published on the MLTAV website as they become available.

Read more at <http://www.mltav.asn.au>

[< top >](#)

Designing for Difference

Council of Educational Facility Planners International Conference 2010

27-29 May, Perth Convention Exhibition Centre, WA

The Council for Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) is an organisation originally established in 1921 to advocate and promote excellence in student learning environments.

The Council is a professional association whose sole mission is to improve the places where children learn. CEFPI members are individuals, institutions and corporations who are actively involved in planning, designing, building, equipping and maintaining schools and colleges. Currently there are around 400 members in the Australasian region.

Download Conference brochure at <http://www.bccm.com.au/CEFPIBrochure.pdf>

Register online at <https://www.secureregistrations.com/CEFPI2010/>

Read more at <http://australia.cefpi.org/>

[< top >](#)

Together We Grow

2010 Early Childhood Education Conference

4-5 June 2010, Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne, Victoria

It is with much pleasure that Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV) and Gowrie Victoria invite you to take part in this major early childhood education conference for 2010.

The conference will follow a number of streams individually targeted to practitioners, parents and employers with special emphasis on Building partnerships.

The Early Childhood Education Conference has been held for the past four years and has been an overwhelming success as participants from Victoria and interstate collected to listen to inspiring speakers and network with other people in the early childhood sector.

For further details: <http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/>

[< top >](#)

At the Heart of the Matter: School and Classroom Leadership

2010 National Conference of Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA) & Australian Association of Special Education (AASE)

17-18 June 2010: Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin NT

This joint 2010 national conference of the Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA) and the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) is strategically focussed on the education of students with special needs in the 21st century context.

We have already arranged for two excellent key note speakers:

- Dr Jean Crockett, Associate Professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Florida

- Professor Barry McGaw, half-time Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne where he is Executive Director of the Cisco-Intel-Microsoft Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills project. He is Chair of the National Curriculum Board.

Further information at <http://www.gemsevents.com.au/aase2010/>

[< top >](#)

REMINDERS

19-21 February - SEAA / SASOSE Conference - Hindmarsh, SA - <http://www.seaa.org.au/2010conference/>

21 February - International Mother Language Day - http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=38724&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

22-23 February - Green Universities - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.informa.com.au/conferences/education/green-universities>

4-6 March - Reggio Children, Eton House - Singapore - http://childcarewa.com/files/admin-images/Reggio_Conference_Date_Claimer.pdf

5 March - Schools Clean Up Day - <http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/>

7 March - Clean Up Australia Day - <http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/>

8-15 March - Students as agents of change online conference - http://www.cybertext.net.au/inet2009_student.php

21 March - Harmony Day - <http://www.harmony.gov.au/harmony-day/>

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

6-9 April - Digital Diversity Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://acec2010.info/>

7-9 April - Career Development Association of Australia Annual Conference - Adelaide, SA - <http://www.onqconferences.com.au/pages/CDAA2010.php>

8-11 April - Global Language Convention - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.wesleycollege.net/convention.cfm>

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/>

19-21 April - Language Education: An Essential for a Global Economy - Singapore - <http://www.relc.org.sg/seminar.html>

29-30 April - 8th Annual Higher Education Summit - Adelaide, SA - <http://www.highereducationsummit.com.au/>

25-28 May - Inclusive Learning Technologies Conference 2010 - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/conference/>

4-5 June - Early childhood education conference 2010 Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/2010registration.html>

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

6-9 July - 17th International Conference on Learning - Hong Kong - <http://thelearner.com/Conference-2010/>

7-9 July - Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.aifs.gov.au/conference>

21-24 July - Second Paris International Conference on Education, Economy & Society - Paris, France - <http://education-conferences.org/default.aspx>

26-27 August - Annual School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.griffith.edu.au/pdn-leadership-conference-2010>

6-8 September - London International Conference on Education - London, UK - <http://www.liceducation.org/>

27-30 September - National Australian Association for Environmental Education Conference - Canberra, ACT - <https://www.conferenceco.com.au/aaee>

[< top >](#)

ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian-education-digest/> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup/> (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/public-education-voice> (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.

To unsubscribe from Australian Education Digest click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeAED>

To unsubscribe from all ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeALL>