



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

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TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Draft Australian Curriculum Released Today

Joint Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP Minister for Education & Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, 1 March, 2010

Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today released the first draft Australian Curriculum for students from Kindergarten to Year 10 in the subjects of English, maths, science and history.

Having an online curriculum means the curriculum will be dynamic, and easily updated, in contrast with the static, hard-copy format. The Australian Curriculum will be among the world's first curriculum delivered online.

From next year, students from all states and territories will be able to move schools, school systems and states and be taught the same knowledge, skills and understanding as part of a curriculum for the 21st Century.

For the first time, the 80,000 students who move interstate each year won't have to get to know a whole new curriculum at the same time as getting to know a new school.

Read more at http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100302_082635.aspx

The draft curriculum and all the resources required to provide feedback are published at:
<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>.

Editorial note: *Since the release of the draft National Curriculum just yesterday there has already been a great deal of public comment, ranging from fully supportive to completely dismissive, with everything in between. In recognition of the importance of this latest policy development by the Federal Government, ACSSO will publish a special edition newsletter covering the draft and the range of reactions on **Thursday 4th March**.*

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PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

How primary and secondary schools help parents and carers to improve their child's learning

Evidence has shown convincingly that a parent's or carer's engagement plays a vital part in determining their child's learning and development. The most effective partnerships develop when schools welcome mothers, fathers and carers as valued participants in their children's learning and progress.

During 2008 and 2009, the DCSF supported a small-scale project to develop and share good practice in the ways schools help parents and carers to improve their child's learning.

This guidance booklet focuses on the range of approaches used successfully by the project schools to engage parents and carers in their child's learning. Case studies capture the true flavour of the work of the schools involved in this study.

The guidance will give schools practical ideas to inform their work with parents and carers helping to ensure they actively support their child's learning.

Download the booklet in PDF form at:

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01115-2009>

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SCIENCE EDUCATION

Project encourages high school students to study science

Hon Julie Gillard MP & Hon Richard Marles MP, Media Release, 1 March 2010

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation, Richard Marles, today welcomed progress on a \$2 million project to encourage students to study the sciences in senior secondary years.

The Science and Technology Education Leveraging Relevance (STELR) project has been developed by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and the first stage was launched today by Parliamentary Secretary Marles at a professional learning seminar for secondary teachers in Melbourne.

"The aim of this project is to get more students interested in learning about science. It will see teachers extend and develop skills in inquiry-based teaching, with particular focus on renewable energy," Mr. Marles said.

STELR is being piloted in 185 schools nationally that have been selected in consultation with state and territory education authorities. Students will participate in a six-to-10 week module using a hands-on learning approach.

"Classroom activities will cover concepts such as global warming, climate change, greenhouse effects, renewable energy resources, energy forms, transformations and conservation," Mr. Marles said.

More information about the Australian Government's education initiatives and a list of the 185 schools participating in STELR can be found at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/ScienceTechnologyMathematics.aspx>.

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100301_140703.aspx

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Ntaria - Outback school that bucked the trend

Natasha Robinson, the Australian, 25 February 2010

MANY of its students have had parents in and out of jail, brothers or sisters who were petrol sniffers, or live in homes where English is rarely spoken.

But Ntaria School is the unlikely success story of remote Aboriginal Australia, bucking the trend of mass educational failure with its above-average rankings on the My School website and enormous improvements in attendance, literacy and numeracy.

Ntaria School, in Hermannsburg, 130km west of Alice Springs, has resources and teachers befitting a primary school, yet as well as primary pupils, it has had to educate up to 60 secondary students.

Despite this, principal Darrell Fowler -- backed by dedicated teachers and a community determined to create a better future -- has managed in the past two years to almost double the school's enrolment.

Today, the school's attempt to get equipment and other resources for its secondary school students is an ongoing battle.

"It's unrealistic to expect to have a fully-fledged high school in a remote community, but we do need to think that if we are going to be serious about kids attending school until they are 17, we need to be able to provide something other than the primary school environment," Mr Fowler said.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/outback-school-that-bucked-the-trend/story-e6frg6n6-1225834079520>

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New centre fosters Indigenous talent

Bridget Brennan, ABC News, 26 February 2010

A new National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, aimed at helping Indigenous children achieve their goals, has opened at Redfern in Sydney. The \$50 million centre has been built by the Indigenous Land Corporation at the 1.6 hectare site of the old Redfern Public School.

The centre has an intensive literacy tutorial centre for primary school students, community meeting rooms, a football oval and a swimming pool.

There are accommodation facilities on site and it is estimated more than 5,000 Indigenous students across the country will stay at the centre each year. They will participate in leadership, development and sporting courses.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who opened the centre with NSW Premier Kristina Keneally, says it is one of the most important investments made in Aboriginal culture.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/26/2831720.htm>

Video: Rudd opens Indigenous excellence centre (7pm TV News NSW)
http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/201002/r521827_2899977.asx

Video: Sydney's Indigenous Centre of Excellence opens (ABC News)
http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/201002/r521721_2898328.asx

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HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Soapstream: the complete hand hygiene system for schools

An update – and survey - from the Soapstream Team

Soapstream is developing a complete hand hygiene system for schools. It is designed to address the high running costs, vandalism, OH&S issues and often under-use of current bar, liquid and gel systems. The system consists of two main aspects:

1. The hardware itself (soap dispensing system and soaps - see <http://www.soapstream.com.au>)

And now also:

2. An education and awareness program conducted both

- in the classroom and
- via an exciting online game designed to subtly educate about and encourage positive hygienic habits, such as washing your hands with soap and water, while being entertaining and challenging for young primary school children.

We feel that both aspects of the system are equally important to ensure effective hand hygiene practices are adopted by students.

To assist us further, we need and invite your feedback:

We do not want to develop this in isolation of the schools that will use it, so we seek your input into how we can make this a more effective system for you. We want to ask you two simple questions to guide us – and will appreciate your emailing your responses to info@soapstream.com.au (block copy these questions and paste them into the body of your email, add your answers and send email).

Question 1. Are you happy with your current hand hygiene systems?

- Yes/No (comment if you want as to what works, what doesn't)

Question 2. Would you support the development of an integrated hand hygiene system and education program like Soapstream - subject to cost? (And did I mention that it will be cheaper to run than what you currently use as well?)

- Yes/No

It will be your support and feedback that will drive this development and the eventual rollout of the system across Australia. We need your help to get an effective hand hygiene system into our schools and ensure our children use it.

Register your schools interest in being one of the showcase demonstration schools for your region.

Please email us at info@soapstream.com.au with your responses, feedback and ideas.

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COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Curriculum boss seeks legal advice over \$97 My School package

Samantha Maiden, the Australian, 17 February 2010

A PRIVATE company is selling data available on the government's My School website to parents for \$97 a copy in a move that has prompted the Australian Curriculum Assessment Authority to seek legal advice.

Education Minister Julia Gillard has argued the information on the popular website cannot be used to produce a simple league table ranking schools' results on literacy and numeracy tests.

But this week the Australian School Ranking website began advertising an 854-page report claiming to contain lists of the top primary and secondary schools.

Peter Hill, the CEO of the Australian Curriculum Assessment Authority, has confirmed he is seeking legal advice on potential copyright infringements.

"Simple league tables that rank and compare schools with very different student populations are misleading. ACARA does not support the use of NAPLAN data for this purpose," he said.

"Ministers have agreed that ACARA will promote the meaningful use of data by third parties, provide advice on how to properly interpret it and take steps to counter any misuse of the data.

Source: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/curriculum-boss-seeks-legal-advice-over-97-my-school-package/story-e6frgczf-1225831311303>

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COMPARING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Next lessons in education revolution

Phillip Hudson, Herald Sun, 25 February 2010

SCHOOLS could face random inspections under the next wave of Julia Gillard's education reforms.

The Deputy Prime Minister declared yesterday she wanted to throw open the doors of classrooms, saying all students would be issued with a special ID number to track their academic performance.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott criticised the ID number idea, saying "children should have names, not numbers" and parents should be "suspicious" that the Government was trying to introduce a national identity card.

Ms Gillard said some children had identical names, and the number was a privacy protection so the Government would not see the names.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/next-lesson-in-education-revolution/story-e6frf7jo-122583426529>

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Teachers not consulted over ID plan

Samantha Hawley, ABC News, 24 February 2010

Teacher unions have reacted angrily to the Federal Government's plan to give every school student an identity number.

Education Minister Julia Gillard has revealed school student around the country will soon be assigned an identity number so their academic results can be tracked on the controversial My School website.

The Australian Education Union's president, Angelo Gavrielatos, says neither teachers nor their representatives were consulted about the plan.

"What we've seen is yet another announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister without any meaningful consultation with the profession," he said. "What we ask of the Government is to show more regard and respect for the profession and therefore consult with the profession prior to announcements."

The program has also sparked concern from civil liberty groups and the Opposition, who say the program will depersonalise children.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/24/2829432.htm?section=justin>

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ID numbers allow real measure of progress

Justine Ferrari, the Australian, 25 February 2010

GIVING students their own identity numbers will not generate the kind of concerns that league tables, which rank schools, have.

Tracking students through school and comparing their results from year to year, or test to test, measures the improvement students make. Students are compared against themselves rather than against one another. Schools are compared on the progress their students make, rather than the absolute scores their students achieve, which is dependent more on social background than the teaching.

It places all students and schools on a level playing field, because every student is capable of improving, and it provides teachers and schools with a more accurate picture of a student's strengths and weaknesses.

The only way to track individual student progress is to know where the students are in the school system, when they change classes, schools or states so you know you are comparing the same student, and not roughly the same group of students.

Objections to the introduction of unique student identifiers, as they were called by Julia Gillard, are misplaced. To suggest as the opposition has that "children have names and we should use them" is nonsense.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/opinion/id-numbers-allow-real-measure-of-progress/story-e6frqd0x-1225834081430>

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IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

Novice teachers don't do as well

David Zyngier, the Age, January 29, 2010

Your editorial (The Age, 28/1) claims that Teach for Australia has been "tried with apparent success in several countries". The research (or lack of it) supporting such claims of Teach for Australia - a clone of Teach for America (TFA) - is unconvincing.

As both programs aim to place under-qualified graduates in the most challenging educational circumstances, research on the effects of under-qualified teachers on children from disadvantaged schools is crucial.

At least five US studies, three of which have been published in peer-reviewed journals, include data on TFA. The studies find the students of uncertified TFA teachers do significantly less well in reading than those of new, certified teachers, with the negative effects most pronounced in primary grades. In mathematics, three of the studies also report significantly lower scores for beginning TFA teachers' students than for traditionally prepared teachers.

Perhaps the stand-out seminal research has been conducted by Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, internationally recognised as a pre-eminent scholar in the field. She examined the differences between fully qualified teachers and TFA teachers as reflected in student learning outcomes within and across every state of the United States.

She concluded that "the length of teacher preparation and certification have by far the strongest effects on student achievement in reading and mathematics, both before and after controlling for student poverty and language status".

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/letters/novice-teachers-dont-do-as-well-20100128-n10a.html>

Dr David Zyngier is senior lecturer with the faculty of education at Monash University.

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Professionals could be Queensland teachers in six weeks

Tanya Chilcott, Courier Mail, February 21, 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.

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.

The program involves six weeks of intensive training for six days a week at university, with teachers then placed in disadvantaged secondary schools where it is hoped they will inspire children. Their university study continues part-time for two years and includes a mentor and adviser before they graduate with a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26755077-3102,00.html>

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'Outsider' teachers worth a try

Editorial Comment, Courier Mail, February 21, 2010

The "Teach For Australia" program, already under way in Victoria, is designed to bring fresh minds from outside the traditional pedagogical box to our troubled secondary classrooms.

Based on the "Teach For America" program begun by Wendy Kopp in the United States in 1990, the idea is to bring new graduates and established professionals from diverse vocational backgrounds into disadvantaged schools.

Those with qualifications in science and mathematics will be especially welcomed to fill chronic shortages in these subject areas.

But some stakeholders are prematurely crying foul, with teacher unions describing the idea as "disrespectful to teachers" and little better than a "Band-Aid solution".

It's true that new teaching recruits might find themselves in front of a high school class after as little as six weeks' pedagogical training. But to label these teachers "six-week wonders" is misleading; candidates will pursue two more years' part-time study before full teaching accreditation is granted.

That said, parents and teacher unions are entitled to seek assurances that any beginning teacher, no matter how successful in their original field, is competently equipped not just in conceptual content but in managing classroom behaviour, too. Concerns over the issues of comparable pay and open career paths for these teachers must also be addressed.

Read entire editorial: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,26754464-13360,00.html>

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Queensland Teachers' Union rejects 'flawed' teacher training plan

Chris Logan & Kerrin Binnie, ABC News, 22 February 2010

The Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) says it will not support an initiative being considered by the State Government to fast-track teacher training.

The training group, Teach For Australia, has confirmed it is in early talks with Education Queensland. Under its program, outstanding graduates from any field take the six-week course and are then placed in disadvantaged schools.

The graduates are also mentored by other teachers and a specialist trainer while continuing to study teaching part-time for two years.

QTU president Steve Ryan says the union is against the plan because it does not provide enough training.

"It's a problem in that students deserve far better in terms of teacher training and quality, and that's why the whole proposal from Teach For Australia has some very flawed aspects to it," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/22/2826347.htm>

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New test for Queensland teacher graduates

Kym Agius, Sydney Morning Herald, February 25, 2010 (AAP)

Queensland teachers will be tested on literacy, numeracy and science before they are registered under new laws.

Queensland parliament passed the legislation on Wednesday night, forcing early childhood and primary school teachers to take exams through a registration body, the Queensland College of Teachers, before they can enter the classroom.

Education Minister Geoff Wilson said the scheme wasn't about coming down on teachers, but about getting universities to lift their game.

Read entire article: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/new-test-for-qld-teacher-graduates-20100225-p4h0.html>

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We've been there before

Letter to the Editor

How quickly 'history' is forgotten. Short-course teachers are not a new idea.

In 1968, I was one of several "fast-track" teachers in Queensland - taken on to cope with the transition of Grade Eight from Primary to High School. My graduation certificate is for the "Modified Special Adult Course" in Secondary Subjects (Arts-Science). Some forty of us did the course; most of us had University degrees, or were close to finishing degrees. I had a Bachelor of Arts (Honours/Psychology). I turned 43 years old that year.

This was under Bjelke-Peterson, whose politics I did not support, but a friend and I jumped at the chance to use our degrees 'properly' at last. The QTU called us the "Six Week Wonders" and saw the government move as an attack on the professional status of teachers: the idea that teachers could be trained in six weeks.

My husband drove me into Kelvin Grove Teachers' College, and said, 'You can't go in there.' Banner-carrying protesters were parading round the hall - and inside it. I never thought I would break a Union picket line, but I really wanted to do that course...

In the end, the government had to extend the six-weeks to a full year (the normal time for a Post-Graduate teaching Diploma at that time); teachers in the schools would not work with us otherwise.

Very soon libraries were being built for State Schools, under Gough Whitlam's education policy; I had worked in municipal libraries, was selected for the Education Department course to qualify as a librarian, followed it up with an ALAA, and spent some of the happiest years of my 'career' as a teacher-librarian.

Betty Birsks
Kawana, Q 4575

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ASIA LITERACY

Asia Literacy Teachers' Association of Australia

The Asia Literacy Teachers Association has been established with the purpose of advancing education in Australia through the promotion of Asia literacy across the curriculum and the evolution of Asia-engaged schools and their communities.

As the 21st century proceeds the countries of Asia are becoming increasingly and more visibly important to Australia, including such aspects as: trade, business interactions, employment, tourism, education, sources of immigration – and of social integration and inclusion.

It is therefore important that we prepare the young Australians of today for an Australian society that will interact more closely with Asia in a complex variety of ways throughout this century and beyond.

To help achieve this purpose, the Association will build leadership and community networks that support schools in accessing and providing the essential resources to become Asia-engaged schools.

Further details: http://www.asialiteracy.org.au/Asia_Literacy.php

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

UK Govt publishes Early Years Learning and Development Literature Review

Early Years Learning and Development - Literature Review was published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on 26 November 2009.

The purpose of the report is to provide part of an evidence-base to inform a 2010 review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The report's focus is on research findings published since 2000 as the ultimate goal is to update, rather than to repeat, the evidence base on which the EYFS was originally founded. The review is in two parts:

The first part explores the 'developing child' at the centre of a series of relationships.

The second part of the review relates to the enabling contexts of development; these include relationships, environmental resources and the broader cultural and policy frameworks.

Download the full report at: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RR176.pdf>

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Expanding the potential and possibilities of the early years of primary school: a system's challenge

Franceyn O'Connor, Education Officer, Sydney Catholic Education Office, 26 February 2010

In 2006 educational leaders from the Sydney Catholic Education Office began exploring ways to enhance the educational environments offered to its students in the early primary years.

The Sydney CEO established an Early Years Advisory Committee to identify key areas for development. The committee's first action was to research and document effective processes for assisting children's transition to school; the research was underpinned by the belief that each community of learners is unique and that no one transition program would therefore fit all schools.

A resource was developed to help schools build their own programs. Schools also began to run dedicated transition programs that ran over several weeks. Unlike the previous 'one off' orientation meetings, these programs allowed time for families, children and school communities to develop positive relationships and set solid foundations for future learning.

In 2007 the Sydney CEO began a further project, in collaboration with the Institute of Early Childhood (IEC) at Macquarie University. The project aimed to encourage school leaders and teachers to reflect on ways to enhance educational practices in the early years, to gain deeper knowledge of the early learner, and to develop pedagogy that is appropriate for early learners, consistent with current curriculum requirements.

It also aimed to involve teachers and school leaders in the process of change, working with the principles and philosophy underpinning early learning within the ethos of Catholic Education.

Read the entire article, including findings:

<http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=30320&issueID=12063>

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RESOURCES

Australasian Education Directory 2010 now available

The 2010 edition of the Australasian Education Directory (AED) is now available. The 2010 edition contains information for over 1000 educational organisations in Australia and New Zealand.

A new category – Non Self-Accrediting institutions in Higher Education – is included in the Australian section. Additional information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Services at TAFE Colleges and Polytechnics throughout Australia has also been included.

The AED provides access to: names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, email addresses, websites and position titles of key personnel in Australian and New Zealand education ministries, departments and education authorities, including state, federal, government and non-government authorities; plus

- universities / higher education institutions
- vocational education and training institutions
- professional, curriculum, research and special interest groups and associations
- indexes to organisations, acronyms, names and subjects

Read more at <http://shop.acer.edu.au/acer-shop/product/A5137BK>

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Today (1 March 2010) Curriculum Corporation merges with Education.au to form Education Services Australia Ltd, a new, national, not-for-profit ministerial company. Education Services Australia has been established by all Australian Ministers of Education with a brief to support national education priorities and initiatives.

The new company will have the capability to meet the needs of all education sectors in the areas of curriculum development, publishing, technology services, collaborative platforms, content creation, resource delivery, career services and professional learning.

Both the Melbourne and Adelaide offices will be retained and external stakeholders will not be affected by this change as the company's focus will remain, as always, on providing the highest standard of service delivery to our customers. Existing services and all pre-existing contracts from both Curriculum Corporation and Education.au will continue unchanged.

A new Education Services Australia website will be established in the coming months at <http://www.esa.edu.au>.

See also the Ministerial Statement: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/education_service_australia_-_new_mceecdya_company,29996.html

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AWARDS & PRIZES

Green Teacher Award 2010 – in association with Schools Clean Up Day 2010

Nominations close 19 March 2010

Lodge your nomination online <http://competitions.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/competitions?step=2&award=76>

Find out more about School Clean Up Australia Day: <http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/>

2010 National Awards for Excellence in School Music Education

Nominations close 16 April 2010

Full details at: <http://musicawards.asme.edu.au/scripts/index.php>

Australian Museum Eureka Science Prizes 2010

Entries close 7 May 2010

More information at: <http://eureka.australianmuseum.net.au/enter>

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: Govt, Libs compromise on student suspensions

ABC News, 23 February 2010

ACT principals look set to be given more power to suspend students. The ACT Government and the Liberals both want to let school principals impose longer suspensions on unruly students without getting permission from the Education Department or the Catholic Education Office.

But the two major parties have been unable to agree on a cap while the Greens do not want any change at all.

A Government bill allowing principals to independently impose a 10 day suspension was blocked last year by the Liberals who wanted it increased to 20 days. But now the two parties have agreed on a compromise of 15 days.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/23/2827344.htm>

Audio: Extended interview: Michael Battenally speaks with 666 presenter Ross Solly (ABC Canberra)
http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/local/canberra/201002/r519299_2865457.mp3

Audio: Extended interview: Andrew Barr speaks with 666 presenter Ross Solly (ABC Canberra)
http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/local/canberra/201002/r519297_2865427.mp3

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NSW: Parents to get say on Dalwood centre

ABC News, 23 February 2010

Parents in the western New South Wales region are set to have a greater say on the future of a Sydney-based centre for rural children with learning difficulties.

Coonabarabran mother Michelle Bolte and the Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, met senior representatives of the Department of Education yesterday to discuss the Dalwood Assessment Centre.

The service, which had been set to close and move to the Westmead Children's Hospital, is being reviewed after the plans sparked widespread concern among parents.

Mr Humphries says the department has agreed to hold a focus group in Dubbo to provide an advisory panel examining the program with feedback from local parents.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/23/2827692.htm>

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NSW: Indigenous student scheme promises police boost

ABC News, 23 February 2010

Police say a new program to employ Aboriginal high school students at stations in the western New South Wales region will help to recruit more officers in remote areas.

Project Murra will give 12 pupils from Dubbo, Walgett, Bourke, Coonabarabran, Gilgandra, Coonamble and Lightning Ridge three months paid work during their last two years of school.

The Acting Superintendent of the Castlereagh local area command, Bob Noble, says the project aims to encourage the students to join their local police force. "We do struggle to recruit police to the remote areas of the west, and particularly Aboriginal police officers that give us a capability to communicate and empathise with the local people, so we see it as very important in that cultural understanding as well."

Superintendent Noble says the project is designed to encourage young people to finish school.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/23/2827699.htm>

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NSW: School zones ignored: auditor-general

Leah McLennan, Sydney Morning Herald, February 25, 2010 (AAP)

Flashing lights, speed cameras and better signage have helped cut the number of children hit by vehicles outside NSW schools, but drivers are still speeding, the NSW auditor-general says.

Peter Achterstraat on Thursday released his audit into improving road safety in school zones.

He said it was alarming that a survey of 12 school zones found drivers were still breaking the 40km/h speed limit at 10 of them. "Motorists either don't know that they're in a school zone or worse they don't care and they think it is OK to speed," Mr. Achterstraat told reporters.

He said his report found motorists were less likely to speed where there were fixed speed cameras, but they had only been installed in a small number of school zones.

Read entire article: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/school-zones-ignored-auditorgeneral-20100225-p5ni.html>

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NSW: School parents keen on scripture alternative

Nonee Walsh, ABC News, February 26, 2010

There has been a large response to a call for students for the first ethics course to be provided to public school children in New South Wales.

Former premier Nathan Rees ended a 100-year-old ban on schools providing an alternative to scripture class last year, just before he was replaced by Kristina Keneally.

Permission notes went out this week to parents of year five and six children in 10 public schools that have volunteered to run the state's first pilot of an ethics course.

The ABC understands about half of the eligible children have been allowed to attend the ethics course in one primary school and almost one third in another.

The schools have begun selecting community volunteers or teacher volunteers to run the ethics course. The Department of Education is treating the exercise in the same way as scripture classes, by not providing any money to replace teachers who choose to go on the training course, or who lose non-classroom time by choosing to run the ethics course.

The St James Ethics Centre and P and C groups are raising funds to cover any costs.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/25/2830152.htm?site=idx-nsw>

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NT: Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce to Drive Results

Charles Darwin University Media Release, 11 February 2010

A new Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce is being established as part of the Territory Government's Smart Territory strategy. A reference group with representatives from Charles Darwin University, local business, industry and education stakeholders will oversee the work of the Taskforce.

Education Minister Chris Burns said, "We already know that 86 per cent of Top End students are achieving national benchmarks, but we're determined to help our students achieve even higher results and importantly give more support to those that have fallen behind."

The Taskforce will implement the Literacy and Numeracy strategy.

Read entire release: <http://ext.cdu.edu.au/newsroom/a/2010/Pages/100211-Literacy-and-Numeracy-Taskforce.aspx>

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NT: Deadline missed for Indigenous boarding houses

Louisa Rebgetz, ABC News, 22 February 2010

The Federal Government has failed to meet a deadline to build one of three boarding facilities in remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

In July 2008, the Federal Government committed almost \$29 million to build three boarding houses for Aboriginal students.

The selected regions are east Arnhem Land, the Warlpiri triangle and Wadeye.

The Government committed to having at least one of the boarding facilities completed last year, but construction has not started in any of the regions.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/22/2826648.htm>

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QLD: New sustainable design school to open

The Australian, February 17, 2010

BOND University will establish a new school of architecture to meet the growing demand for sustainably built environments.

The Soheil Abedian School of Architecture, named after its benefactor, a Bond alumnus and Queensland property developer, will open next January.

"It is my ardent hope that the graduates will receive an education that will be fundamental in shaping the urban built form in Australia as well as contributing to international design innovation and excellence," Mr Abedian, founder of the Sunland Group, said.

Head of the Mirvac School of Sustainable Development, George Earl, who will oversee the establishment of the school, said, "The demand to design living environments that are sustainable and to address climate change issues are increasing exponentially."

Source: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/sustainable-design-school/story-e6frgcjx-1225831101812>

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QLD: Grammar guide an 'education disaster'

Justine Ferrari, the Australian, 20 February 2010

ONE of the world's most respected authorities on grammar has written to every school principal in Queensland, warning them of an error-strewn grammar guide distributed by the state's English Teachers Association.

University of Queensland emeritus professor Rodney Huddleston says he was forced to write to schools directly because the English Teachers Association of Queensland refused to acknowledge or correct the 65 errors he had identified in its teaching guide on grammar, printed as a series of eight articles in its magazine.

In the letter, Professor Huddleston says the guide, called Grammar at the Coalface, "contains an exceptionally large number of errors -- over 60 in 15 1/2 pages of relevant text -- many of them very serious and basic, and including major misrepresentations of functional grammar".

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/grammar-guide-is-an-education-disaster-claims-critic/story-e6frg6nf-1225832369733>

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SA: New school buses with seat belts & air conditioning

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith, SA Education Minister, 22 February 2010

Three brand new 53-seat school buses – each fitted with seat belts and air conditioning – will be deployed to regional South Australia shortly. The Rann Government is about to take possession of the locally built buses as part of its ongoing school bus upgrade program.

The State Government has invested more than \$11 million to purchase 95 new school buses since 2002.

The first of the three new buses will be allocated to Booleroo Centre District School on the Wilmington route. The remaining buses will be allocated as soon as possible to schools in rural areas.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says the new buses will provide greater comfort to students on their journey to and from school.

Read entire release: http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=855:brand-new-school-buses-on-their-way&catid=29:hon-jane-lomax-smith-mp-press-releases&Itemid=10

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SA: Almost \$50, 000 for Adelaide to celebrate young Muslim Australians

Hon Kate Ellis MP, Member for Adelaide, Media Release 22 February 2010

Member for Adelaide Kate Ellis today announced Federal Government funding for a project to build the skills and education of local young Muslim Australians.

"The Dulwich Centre Foundation will receive \$49,500 under the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security," she said.

"The project will train local youth workers, teachers and community workers to run workshops that focus on young Muslim Australians' own skills and knowledge in responding to challenges."

A series of workshops and interviews will record stories from young Muslim Australians that will be documented and distributed through a written publication, website and DVD.

Full details of the successful National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security funded projects can be found at <http://www.harmony.gov.au>

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100222_103412.aspx

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SA: Labor promises more maths and science teachers

ABC News, 23 February 2010

Labor says it has a plan to recruit up to 155 specialist mathematics and science teachers for South Australian high schools.

A \$9.4 million program has been unveiled by Premier Mike Rann and Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith.

The Government says the best teachers would be fast-tracked into top-level salaries of at least \$80,000 per year.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/23/2827630.htm>

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TAS: Tasmania's primary school principals 'least satisfied'

ABC News, Feb 25, 2010

A study into Tasmania's primary schools has found the system is over complicated, and its principals are the least satisfied in the country.

A former Dean of Education at the University of Tasmania, Professor Bill Mumford, and former school principal, Bill Edmunds, have launched a publication which attacks the state government's education goals as too narrow.

Professor Mulford says Tasmania's primary school system has become too politicised and driven by bureaucrats. He says principals and teachers need to have more power in determining the future of schooling.

"We think it's a travesty for example in this state that teachers and school principals are unable to comment publicly about what's happening in schools," he said. "That's really diminishing the power of the education profession.

"There are so many changes, one shouldn't be surprised that teachers and schools are completely baffled by the number of changes they're expected to carry out in a short space of time."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/25/2830518.htm>

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VIC: Help us battle violence, plead Victorian school principals

John Masanauskas, Herald Sun, 22 February 2010

THOUSANDS of assaults, thefts and burglaries have been reported at state schools as principals call for more help from the Brumby Government to deal with violence. Crimes included assaults on teachers by students, and even by parents.

More than 7000 crimes were reported by government schools over the past three years, according to figures obtained by the Herald Sun under Freedom of Information laws. About half involved thefts and burglaries; and 1500 assaults were reported.

Arson, property damage, fraud and breach of trespass orders were among others.

Several teachers at Benalla College were assaulted by students, according to a report commissioned by the Education Department last year. Police also investigated an incident at another school in which a parent head-butted a principal after discussing a student's behaviour.

Australian Principals Federation president Fred Wubbeling said yesterday that violence was a factor stopping many teachers becoming principals. "I think there is probably some intimidation felt that the Education Department doesn't support principals enough when it comes to dealing with troublesome students," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/help-us-battle-violence-plead-victorian-school-principals/story-e6frf7jo-1225832744356>

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WA: Students threaten teachers on Facebook

Nicolas Perpitch, the Australian, 18 February 2010

FACEBOOK, the world's largest social network site, is under more pressure to tighten security after West Australian high school students used it to threaten teachers, calling for them to be "massacred by chainsaws".

Users of two Facebook groups set up for past and present students of North Albany Senior High School, in WA's south, posted threatening and defamatory comments about current and former teachers.

It is understood the Department of Education and Training has identified the student who allegedly posted the comment, although no action has yet been taken in the case.

State Education Minister Liz Constable said she was appalled at the students' postings and they should be punished.

The school's principal, Sharon Doohan, indicated staff were being instructed in the appropriate use of social networking sites. She urged parents to be vigilant over the potential misuse of the internet by their children.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/students-threaten-teachers-on-net/story-e6frg6nf-1225831550708>

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WA: Seatbelts in school buses a good idea

Editorial, Mandurah Mail, 18 Feb, 2010

IT'S an unfortunate fact that sometimes it takes a tragedy – or a very close call – to make people realise things could be done a better way.

This week's announcement that every public school-owned bus in the state has been fitted with seatbelts has come not a minute too soon. There are few things more important than our children's safety and any measure that increases their security is to be applauded.

It's just a shame that so many Mandurah Baptist College students had to be injured in an horrific bus crash five years ago for this to finally happen.

Everybody knows that seatbelts save lives. And no one is allowed to travel by car without wearing one.

So why did it take so long for seatbelts to be introduced to school buses in the first place?

Read entire article: <http://www.mandurahmail.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/seatbelts-in-school-buses-a-good-idea/1754015.aspx>

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WA: Independent public schools – round two opens

720 ABC Perth, 22 February 2010

More WA public schools will have the opportunity to become independent with a new round of applications opening today. Schools wanting to receive Independent status in 2011 have two months to submit their applications.

34 schools started operating as independent public schools this year, giving principals greater control over staffing and budgets.

Roseworth Primary Principal School Geoff Metcalf says becoming an independent school made a big difference to this year's recruitment process. "We had 91 applications for one full-time position, really high quality applications, we filled that ourselves through a process of merit."

Education Minister Dr Constable says the feedback from the schools which became independent this year has been positive.

"What I've been told by principals of independent public schools, that to be able to choose teachers that are applying for positions in the schools, to tailor across the staffing the staff that they think they need in their schools has been a great plus for them."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/22/2826643.htm?site=perth§ion=news>

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WA: Heritage recognition for Quairading school

ABC News, Feb 22, 2010

The former Quairading state school has been added to the register of heritage places.

The single-room, timber-framed building was built in the early 1900s and has since been replaced by a new brick school opposite.

In 1915 during a period commonly associated with the segregation of Aboriginal people, local farmer John Kickett fought to have his children attend the Quairading school.

Mr. Kickett's campaign included years of lobbying Education Department officials, parliamentarians and gaining the support of the parents of non-Indigenous children.

The Minister for Heritage, John Castrilli, says the school symbolises a wider movement by Aboriginal families to end segregated education in the first half of the 20th century.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/22/2826714.htm?site=indigenous&topic=latest>

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REMINDERS

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>

26-28 April - Canada International Conference on Education - Toronto, Canada - <http://www.ciceducation.org/>

27-29 May - Council of Educational Facility Planners International Conference - Perth, WA - <http://australia.cefpi.org/>

22 April - 21st Century Learning Spaces Networking Event - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.educationau.edu.au/21st-century-learning-event>

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

7 May - National Walk Safely to School Day - <http://www.walk.com.au>

14 May - Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria Annual Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.mltav.asn.au>

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

4-5 June - Early Childhood Education Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/2010registration.html>

17-18 June - National Conference of Australian Special Education Principals' Association & Australian Association of Special Education - Darwin, NT - <http://www.gemsevents.com.au/aase2010/>

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>

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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)

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