



# 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 6, 9 March 2010

- [INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: AEU Calls for Gender Equality Globally](#)
- [TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM: \(4 items\)](#)
- [BULLYING: \(4 items\)](#)
- [OPINION: "My School" – and your school, Chris Bonnor](#)
- [OPINION: The My School Myths, Alan Reid](#)
- [OPINION: Labor's war on public education, Laura Tiernan](#)
- [EVOLUTION & CREATIONISM: \(2 items\)](#)
- [HEALTH & WELL-BEING: Soapstream survey](#)
- [TERTIARY EDUCATION: \(5 items\)](#)
- [INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: Baird review final report](#)
- [ASIA LITERACY: \(3 items\)](#)
- [DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION: CNA completes high-speed schools link](#)
- [EVENTS: \(2 items\)](#)
- [LEARNING RESOURCES: Costa's Garden Odyssey](#)
- [AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES: \(8 items\)](#)
- [REMINDERS](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

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### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2010

#### AEU Calls for Governments to Commit to Gender Equality Globally

*Australian Education Union, 8 March 2010*

The AEU marks International Women's Day by calling for governments world-wide to seriously commit to advancing gender equality globally.

As the United Nations Commission for Women this week reviews progress made fifteen years on from the Beijing Platform for Action (the global policy framework for gender equality), it is clear that new and remaining obstacles still need to be overcome, such as the gender gap in primary education, pay inequities, unemployment and violence against women.

In particular the AEU encourages members to support the One Goal - Education for All campaign which aims to put pressure on world leaders to end poverty by providing education for the 72 million children out of school, the majority are girls.

Investing in women and girls is part of the solution to building a sustainable future. Educated women have a multiplier effect on the levels of education and health of their families and on productivity for sustained economic growth. Educating girls and women enables them to become agents of change.

Read more at <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Trans/IWD2010.html>

[< top >](#)

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### TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

#### Cum laude for the curriculum

*Editorial comment, the Australian, March 05, 2010*

THE Hawke, Keating and Howard governments had a proud record of reform in many areas but, when it comes to the school curriculum, Julia Gillard has achieved more in two years than her predecessors managed in a quarter of a century.

The draft national curriculum released this week for kindergarten-to-Year 10 is a major achievement setting out a path for improved teaching of English, history, mathematics and science.

Parents of children who have left school might wonder why previous governments did not act instead of talking and dithering.

The Rudd government is promoting the curriculum as "back to basics" and for once the spin has a solid basis.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/cum-laude-for-the-curriculum/story-e6fmg71x-1225837140815>

[< top >](#)

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### **A clear policy on education**

*Editorial, Courier Mail, March 02, 2010*

THE draft national curriculum unveiled this week drew some passionate criticism but also praise for its attempt to give structure to the hodge-podge of state-based curriculums Australian teachers and children are labouring under now.

Not before time, Australia will have a school curriculum that acknowledges the increased mobility of its residents, while making it clear that the classroom is no place for fad theories on how to help children realise their potential.

Those who see the value in a return to less casual forms of school education will welcome a curriculum which ensures that history, phonics and grammar are granted more formal places in every student's learning.

Read entire article: <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/public-need-a-clear-policy-on-education-editorial/story-e6frerd6-1225836255580>

[< top >](#)

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### **A rocky path predicted for national curriculum**

*ABC News, 5 March 2010*

The Western Australian Primary Principals Association says a new national curriculum will fail if the government is not involved in its implementation.

The Association's president Stephen Breen says he is desperate to get the curriculum into schools but is concerned that without guidance, each state could interpret the document differently.

"We are calling for the Federal Government to be integrally involved in the implementation of the Australian curriculum."

"Our main concern is that if it was free to actually simply be interpreted by all the different states and all the different schools, we may have some problems."

"This will be our one and only time, if we don't do it properly this time, it will be another 20 or 30 years before it actually happens so it is extremely important that we fully plan the implementation of the Australian curriculum."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/05/2837843.htm>

[< top >](#)

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### **ACARA Update**

### • Australian Curriculum for national consultation

On Monday 1 March 2010, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Federal Education Minister, Hon Julia Gillard, released the draft K – 10 Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history for public consultation.

The draft Australian Curriculum for these learning areas is now available online at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>. The opportunity for feedback on the K-10 draft curriculum is open until 23 May 2010.

### • Targeted school consultation

About 150 schools will be undertaking a range of planning, teaching and assessing activities using the draft K-10 Australian curriculum during the period of consultation. The 150 schools include a cross-section of schools based on jurisdiction, geography, size, sector, and socio-economic status.

### • Consultation forums

ACARA, in partnership with state and territory education authorities, is also conducting consultation forums in each state and territory throughout March and early April. Each of these forums will provide approximately 200 invited education stakeholders with the opportunity to provide considered feedback on the draft K-10 curriculum.

During April 2010, ACARA will convene national consultation forums, bringing together teachers and educators from each state and territory in each of the four learning areas to get further feedback on the K-10 draft curriculum.

### • Public Information Sessions for the draft Australian Curriculum

ACARA will hold public Information Sessions for the draft Australian Curriculum around Australia. Details of the venues are available on the ACARA website - [http://www.acara.edu.au/public\\_information\\_sessions.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/public_information_sessions.html)

To register your interest, please email your name, organisation if applicable, and the state/ territory forum you wish to attend, and the area or ACARA's work that you are interested in: <mailto:consultation@acara.edu.au>

Read entire ACARA Update Newsletter online: [http://www.acara.edu.au/acara\\_update\\_05032010.html#consultation](http://www.acara.edu.au/acara_update_05032010.html#consultation)

[< top >](#)

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## BULLYING

### Survey: Bullying out of control in Australian schools

*Rodney Chester, Courier Mail, February 28, 2010*

HALF of Australian school students have bullied another student, while 70 per cent say that bullying is a moderate to extremely serious problem in their school.

The results of a national survey of 1000 students from Years 7 to 10 who had just undergone an anti-bullying seminar suggest the problem could be far greater than previous research has found.

Social analyst Mark McCrindle said an analysis of results from the largest study into schoolyard bullying revealed the impact of the problem on children. "We asked how much has bullying affected you mentally," he said.

"One third of students stated that 'it upsets me an extreme amount', or 'it upsets me a great deal'. It's more of a problem - if you look at those sort of problems - than even schools would acknowledge."

QUT bullying expert Dr Marilyn Campbell said bullying was a problem that started in the playground but extended throughout society. "Domestic violence is a form of bullying – it's repetition of intent to hurt with an imbalance of power," she said. "And there are bullies in the workplace. We know that it costs millions, billions of dollars a year just in Australia for workplace bullying."

"It's not just kids who are bullying each other. This is complex and deeply embedded in our society."

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,1,26787328-952,00.html>

See also: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/indepth/section/0,,5019459,00.html>

[< top >](#)

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## **Zero tolerance for bullying: Rudd**

*ABC News, Mar 4, 2010*

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says there should be a national policy of zero tolerance for bullying in schools, with powers for principals and teachers to intervene.

Mr Rudd also says it would be appropriate for victims' parents to contact the families of bullies.

He told ABC Local Brisbane he has spoken with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, which is a charity to protect children from violence.

"This is a campaign we are working on with [the foundation] right across Australia with a view to getting into every school," Mr Rudd said.

"We have a policy of saying no to any form of bullying and that we have powers given to teachers and principals to step in.

"And if it comes to it and you've got to actually pick up the phone and talk to the parent and other kid, I would say there's nothing wrong with that at all."

Nationals Senator Barnaby Joyce agrees that schools are facing significant issues with bullying.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/04/2836396.htm>

[< top >](#)

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## **Rudd gets the rod over bullying comments**

*ABC News, 5 March 2010*

Federal Opposition Leader Tony Abbott says Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's comments on bullying in schools could encourage vigilante behaviour among parents.

Mr Rudd says it is appropriate for the parents of bullying victims to contact the families of bullies after they have tried other measures with the school. But child psychologists warn that could lead to the problem escalating and Mr Abbott has told Channel Nine it is bad advice.

"I think Kevin Rudd has completely missed the point," he said. "The point is there should not be bullying in schools and the point is, the teachers and the principal should make sure there is no culture of bullying in schools.

"This idea that parents should resort to vigilantism - that it's up to parents to sort out problems in the playground - is just crackers."

But the Australian Government Primary Principals Association agrees that parents should take some responsibility for their children's behaviour at school.

"The PM has a perfect right to make these sorts of statements. I agree with him," the organisation's president Norm Hart said. "Parents should take responsibility for parenting. Schools are a part of their community and the families that make them up are the greatest influence on the schools.

But Mr Hart says it is better for parents to contact the school, rather than each other, as a way to settle playground disputes. "I think the best possible strategy is to work with the school and through the school."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/05/2837860.htm>

[< top >](#)

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## **Schools call police to deal with cyber bullies**

*Bruce McDougall, Daily Telegraph, March 09, 2010*

SCHOOLS are asking police to investigate serious student cyber bullying amid increasing complaints from parents about their children receiving hate messages online.

One of Australia's top girls' schools has reported "several episodes of ongoing harassment" to police and pleaded with parents to monitor their daughters' online activity.

Riverside Girls High School in Sydney's north has told families to report every case of cyber bullying and harassment.

"Each week we receive a notification from a distressed parent about some appalling message their daughter has received from a fellow student or group of students," principal Judy King said in a letter to parents.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/technology/schools-call-police-on-cyber-bullies/story-e6ffro0-1225838469323>

[< top >](#)

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[< top >](#)

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## **OPINION**

### **“My School” – and your school**

*Chris Bonnor, 24 February 2010*

THE LAUNCH of the My School website at the end of January was accompanied by fanfare and media hype over what it said about schools, and an equal amount of hype about what it didn't say.

Now that the dust has settled it's time to have a clear look at what My School actually does and doesn't say about any school.

In one sense the website doesn't say anything new. Just about everything it contains, including results of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, or NAPLAN, could already be found in school annual reports.

But the information is now available at the click of a mouse, rather than at the end of a sometimes vain search of school websites for copies of annual reports. It is now easy to find statistics about such things as the enrolment, attendance and staffing of each school.

It is this easy access to each school's NAPLAN results and the claims that My School lets you fairly compare schools that have raised the greatest interest and controversy.

NAPLAN tests are conducted in May each year and much has been written about whether these tests say anything meaningful about a school. Secondary school principals are still trying to work out how the Year 7 NAPLAN tests, conducted just three months after students start high school in most states, can be used to attribute success or failure to their new school.

The chair of the board of ACARA, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Professor Barry McGaw, clearly states the challenge My School faces. He has repeatedly said that 70 per cent of the differences between schools is explained by whom they enrol rather than what the school does.

This means that anyone wanting to compare what schools actually achieve has to be very careful to discount this enrolment factor. If ACARA hasn't been able to get this right then the school comparisons derived from My School have little validity.

Read entire article: <http://inside.org.au/my-school-and-your-school/>

[< top >](#)

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## **The My School Myths**

*Alan Reid, 2 March 2010*

It is only a month since the My School website was launched with great fanfare at the end of January. In the short time since, the warnings issued prior to the launch by many educators about the possible negative effects of the website are being realised.

The dominant information that appears on the current version of My School about each school is its annual NAPLAN (national assessment program - literacy and numeracy) results. NAPLAN is used currently by schools as a diagnostic tool to assess standards and to target areas for improvement in literacy and numeracy.

This is a useful function. However, now that My School has been introduced, NAPLAN has moved from being an aid for assisting teaching and learning, to being a high stakes test which purports to measure the quality of a whole school and then compare it with other schools.

We are told that more information about schools may be added in the future. But since we don't know what that might look like, we can only assess the version of My School that currently exists.

This task is made more difficult by a number of myths which need to be dispelled if we are to move to a situation where My School can become a useful tool in Australian education.

*Myth 1: That My School captures the quality of a school*

Proponents of My School in its current form say that it is only one piece of information about a school. Parents can gather other data to complete the picture.

This is a bit of a stretch. Many people don't have the time or the knowledge to piece together the full range of information about a school, so they will tend to rely on a single source such as My School. After all, it is officially sanctioned information.

Unfortunately, the NAPLAN test results, as they appear on the My School site, project a scientific objectivity which masks the fact that like any such tests, they contain measurement errors.

Read entire article: <http://www.acsso.org.au/MySchoolMyths.pdf>

Alan Reid is Emeritus Professor of Education at University of South Australia

[< top >](#)

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## **Labor's war on public education**

*Laura Tiernan, World Socialist Web Site, 8 March 2010*

Less than one month after the Rudd government's My School web site was launched, ushering in school league tables and a punitive regime of high-stakes testing, Education Minister Julia Gillard unveiled a further raft of pro-market education reforms. Gillard's address to the National Press Club on February 24 pledged a new wave of attacks by Labor on public education.

The measures outlined in Gillard's speech, including a uniform national curriculum, teacher performance guidelines, student ID numbers, the return of school inspectors, and the "reform" of teacher training, constitute a declaration of war on the teaching profession.

Gillard, who is also Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and Deputy Prime Minister, used her speech to proclaim the introduction of Labor's My School a success. She boasted that the web site, which ranks schools on the basis of standardised NAPLAN literacy and numeracy tests—publicly naming and shaming schools that "underperform"—was "a landmark in Australian education reform".

Read more at: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2010/mar2010/teac-m08.shtml>

[< top >](#)

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## **EVOLUTION & CREATIONISM**

### **Christian schools angry over ban on teaching creationism**

*Malcolm Brown, Sydney Morning Herald, 3 March 2010*

Australian Christian schools will campaign against what they see as the thin end of the wedge - a decision by the South Australian Non-Government Schools Registration Board to effectively ban the teaching of creationism.

Under policies published in December, the board said it required "teaching of science as an empirical discipline, focusing on inquiry, hypothesis, investigation, experimentation, observation and evidential analysis".

The board said it "does not accept as satisfactory a science curriculum in a non-government school which is based on, espouses or reflects the literal interpretation of a religious text in its treatment of either creationism or intelligent design".

The chief executive of Christian Schools Australia, Stephen O'Doherty, said the board statement was too strident, removing the right to teach "biblical perspectives" as part of science.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/christian-schools-angry-over-ban-on-teaching-creationism-20100302-pgjb.html>

[< top >](#)

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## **Proving Evolution**

*Interview with Professor Richard Dawkins, ABC Breakfast, 4 March 2010*

Over the years, evolutionary biologist, author and enthusiastic atheist Richard Dawkins has written many best-sellers such as *The God Delusion*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, and his landmark work *The Selfish Gene*. But through them all, Richard Dawkins felt that something was lacking, that his earlier books assumed the truth of evolution but had never explicitly provided the evidence.

Now, his latest book aims to provide that 'missing link'. It's called *The Greatest Show on Earth: the Evidence for Evolution*, and it picks up on a continuing theme in Richard Dawkins' career -- that evolution is an unarguable fact.

Listen online or download audio at: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/breakfast/stories/2010/2834811.htm>

[< top >](#)

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## **HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

## Soapstream: the complete hand hygiene system for schools

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](mailto: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

Please email us at [info@soapstream.com.au](mailto:info@soapstream.com.au) with your responses, feedback and ideas.

[< top >](#)

---



[< top >](#)

---

## TERTIARY EDUCATION

### Our commitment to higher education & research:

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, Address to the Universities Australia Annual Higher Education Conference, 3 March 2010*

In last year's Budget I, and my colleague Kim Carr, announced a substantial series of reforms backed by \$5.4 billion in new funding for higher education and research.

We did this because we knew that in an era when investment in knowledge and skills is the ultimate determinant of national and individual prosperity, Australia could not afford to continue losing ground against other nations.

The magnitude of the Rudd Government's commitment is clear given that our budgetary response came in the middle of the global financial crisis.

Last year, and at last budget, I crystallized the approach this Government has taken to reform by delivering 'funding that meets the demands made by students, coupled with exacting targets, rigorous quality assurance, full transparency and an emphasis on equity'

Today I want to outline our continued efforts to deliver the system architecture necessary to achieve improvements in equity, quality and transparency.

Read entire speech: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article\\_100303\\_102842.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_100303_102842.aspx)

[< top >](#)

---

## **Government to introduce 'My University' website**

*Hon Julia Gillard MP, Media Release, 3 March 2010*

Speaking at the Universities Australia Higher Education Conference this morning, Ms Gillard said that following on from the success of the My School website, which publishes rich achievement information about each of Australia's schools, it is now time for the Government to implement a similar tool at the university level.

The My University website will inform students about institutions, courses and pathways and showcase the quality of Australia's higher education providers.

The Government wants students to use this data to make their choice about their university on the basis of information about quality rather than students having to rely on hearsay, inference from entry requirements or the perceived prestige of universities.

Read entire release: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100303\\_153420.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100303_153420.aspx)

[< top >](#)

---

## **Universities lobby for a My Higher Ed site**

*Andrew Trounson, the Australian, 4 March 2010*

UNIVERSITY vice-chancellors want the government's planned My University website to be extended to private and non-university providers offering degree courses to ensure equal scrutiny and allow students to make informed choices.

"Why wouldn't it be a My Higher Education website, given that there are a lot of degree-awarding institutions out there that aren't universities and students really need to know about those," said University of Adelaide vice-chancellor James McWha.

As well as private universities such as Bond and Notre Dame, many colleges and TAFEs offer degrees. International providers such as Kaplan, from the US, are keen to expand into Australia.

"All tertiary providers should be on the website - it shouldn't just be the publicly funded universities," University of Western Australia vice-chancellor Alan Robson said.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/universities-lobby-for-a-my-higher-ed-site/story-e6frg6nf-1225836719698>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Uni ranking website concerns**

*ABC News, 5 March 2010*

The University of Tasmania says the Federal Government's proposed rankings website needs to consider the location and focus of each university.

The head of the university, Professor Daryl Le Grew, says the plan to rank all Australian universities according to performance will benefit higher education.

But he says the University of Tasmania's ranking should account for its status as the state's only university. "You might argue that because we're the only university in Tasmania, it's rather like being all the universities rolled into one in say Melbourne or Sydney because we take students from a very wide perspective and a wide cross section of society," he said.

Clare Rutherford from the Tasmanian student union agrees. "Given its location and the fact that there are no [other] universities here, we do need to focus on accessibility and inclusion."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/05/2837264.htm>

[< top >](#)

---

## University students' demand for stress therapy explodes

*AdelaideNow, March 04, 2010*

PRESSURE on students has risen so significantly that many seek psychological help to cope with "perfectionism syndrome". Student demand for stress therapy at universities has exploded and many psychologists now have waiting lists.

University of South Australia education Professor Bruce Johnson said students were often told if they worked hard enough and put in as many hours as possible, they would "rise to the top".

"It's dangerous to constantly push kids to the point where they think they can control everything and their success depends fully on what they do," Professor Johnson said.

Clinical psychologists say demand for stress therapy at the University of Technology Sydney has doubled - possibly due to the global economic crisis and new pressures on young people such as cyber-bullying. The university's health psychology unit is now putting on more stress management courses to avoid further waiting lists.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/university-students-demand-for-stress-therapy-explodes/story-e6frg6p6-1225836768082>

[< top >](#)

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## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

*Baird review into International Students final report*

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 9 March, 2010

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today welcomed the release of the Baird review final report into the legislation that governs international education in Australia.

Ms Gillard thanked Mr Baird for his hard work and commitment and for producing the report as a matter of urgency and agreed to begin work on implementing a number of recommendations immediately.

Following his review of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000, former Member for Cook Bruce Baird has recommended immediate changes to improve the experience of international students choosing to study and live in Australia.

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100309\\_131013.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100309_131013.aspx)

Download the report at:

[http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ESOS\\_REview\\_Final\\_Report\\_Feb\\_2010\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ESOS_REview_Final_Report_Feb_2010_pdf.pdf)

[< top >](#)

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## ASIA LITERACY

### **Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools – Round 2 opens on 4 May 2010.**

The objectives of the Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools (BALGS) are to provide direct grants to primary and secondary schools in each state and territory to promote the teaching and learning of Asian languages and/or the studies of Asia in their schools, for the target countries of China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

Applications open online at 9am EST Tuesday 4 May 2010. Applications close online at 5pm EST Friday 28 May 2010. Open to all Australian primary and secondary schools.

If you are considering applying for a grant in Round 2 and/or feedback on your Round 1 application contact the BALGS Help Desk on: Telephone +61 3 8344 3699 Or Email: <mailto:asialiterate@asialink.unimelb.edu.au>

[< top >](#)

---

### **Victorian Principals' Study Tour of Vietnam & Hong Kong June-July 2010**

Registrations are now open for a study tour for Victorian secondary school principals to South Korea and Hong Kong in June/July 2010. This program tailored specifically for members of VASSP focuses on education excellence and approaches to digital technology usage, school improvement and school leadership.

This tour and all other AEF Study tour 2010 itineraries at:

[http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for\\_school\\_leaders/travel\\_leaders/travel\\_leaders\\_landing.html](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for_school_leaders/travel_leaders/travel_leaders_landing.html) or <mailto:studytours@asialink.unimelb.edu.au>

[< top >](#)

---

### **Leading 21st Century Schools – Round Two**

Round 2 of the Leading 21st Century Schools program is underway around Australia. Learn from schools that have been involved in the Leading 21st Century Schools project.

View a school case study or a video of an interview with a school principal on the AEF website

[http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for\\_school\\_leaders/school\\_change/school\\_change\\_leaders\\_landing.html](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/for_school_leaders/school_change/school_change_leaders_landing.html) Email: Jennifer Ure <mailto:j.ure@asialink.unimelb.edu.au>

[< top >](#)

---

## **DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

### **Catholic Network Australia completes high-speed schools link**

*CathNews, March 08, 2010*

Catholic Network Australia (CNA) has announced the completion of its core telecommunications network, initially linking 1,622 schools and education offices across the country.

While Catholic schools will be the first to benefit the network, it is envisaged that all Australian Catholic agencies and parishes will be able to participate over time, the organisation said.

"We are immensely proud that for the first time, schools from geographically diverse locations such as Rockhampton, Bunbury, Port Pirie, Sale and Wagga Wagga are all connected together on a single national network," said Francis Moore, the CNA Board of Directors Chairperson.

The project, in partnership with Telstra Corporation, will also increase high-speed broadband connectivity to schools in order to enhance virtual learning, collaboration and administration.

Read more at: <http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aeid=19799>

[< top >](#)



[< top >](#)

---

## EVENTS

### Library and Information Week

24-30 May 2010

Edgy, grungy and a little rock and roll, Library and Information Week 2010 - Access All Areas, will definitely get people talking.

Access All Areas enables libraries to promote their access to information through databases, consultation and reference services.

Libraries can emphasise the 'grungy' branding to attract a new demographic to their LIW events.

The theme also suggests ways in which library clientele might use their libraries as a point of access in various ways, such as assignment help for students, community hubs for senior citizens and story-times for young children and their parents.

Access All Areas offers many possibilities for tie-in activities.

Further information: <http://www.alia.org.au/liw/>

[< top >](#)

---

### National Simultaneous Story-time: Little White Dogs Can't Jump, by Bruce Whatley & Rosie Smith

26 May, 2010

National Simultaneous Story-time is a campaign organised by the Australian Library and Information Association, in which a picture book, written and illustrated by an Australian author and illustrator, is read simultaneously to children in a variety of venues around Australia.

This campaign promotes the value of books and encourages young people to read, share books and become involved in other fun and engaging literary based activities. The campaign is an integral part of promoting the value of reading and literacy within Australian society.

In 2009, over 120,000 children and adults across Australia took part in National Simultaneous Storytime, reading the book Pete the Sheep, written by Jackie French illustrated by Bruce Whatley.

<http://www.alia.org.au/storytime/>

[< top >](#)

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## LEARNING RESOURCES

### Costa's Garden Odyssey:

Brand new series starting at 8pm on Thursday, 18 March on SBS ONE

Costa's Garden Odyssey has always been about gardening the soil and the soul and the second series will take this to a new generation of gardeners.

Costa is driven by his passion for organic, sustainable and water-wise gardens and people and he knows how to find the best in both. Our Greek Gardening Guru will show us how they can tread lightly – embracing cycles and seasons, investigating and championing local produce from it's source and illustrating that in gardens, plants aren't the only things that grow...people do too.

Each episode of Costa's Garden Odyssey is anchored in the community and as Costa travels around Australia he not only learns from the richness and variety of gardens and farms in our country but also discovers the passionate people and communities behind them.

More details – plus online resources: <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/costa/about/page/i/2/show/costa>

[< top >](#)

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## **AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES**

### **NSW: Minister launches virtual selective high school for rural students**

*Media Release, 23 February 2010*

The Minister for Education and Training Verity Firth joined 30 students from remote parts of NSW who will use the latest technology including laptops, interactive whiteboards, web streaming and videoconferencing as part of a new virtual selective school.

The Government's new xsel program allows academically gifted students in remote areas to remain at home, close to their family and friends, instead of travelling to regional centres to attend selective schools.

Ms Firth said the xsel model was part of the NSW Government's plan to provide additional selective school places across the State.

"Partially selective schools have proven to be very successful," Ms Firth said. "The Government made the decision to expand the number of places because we don't believe access to selective classes should be determined by geography."

Read entire release: [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/aboutus/ministerial/yr2010/mr230210\\_vshs.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/aboutus/ministerial/yr2010/mr230210_vshs.pdf)

[< top >](#)

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### **NSW: Call for specialist school to go regional**

*ABC News, 8 March 2010*

A Riverina woman is calling for a specialist education service for children with special needs to be relocated outside Sydney.

Last year, the New South Wales Government announced that services at the Dalwood Centre in Sydney would be amalgamated at Westmead Hospital.

Julie Andreazza's 10-year-old son, who has dyslexia, attended the specialist school last year and she says it has made an enormous difference for him.

She has urged the Government to expand the service and make it more accessible for rural children.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/08/2839448.htm>

[< top >](#)

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## **NT: Relationships the priority for new Batchelor head**

*Bernard Lane, the Australian, 4 March 2010*

REGIONAL NSW TAFE director Adrian Mitchell has been appointed director of one of the country's leading educators of Indigenous Australians.

Mr Mitchell – presently director of Western Institute of TAFE in Orange, NSW and former managing director of Kimberley TAFE in Western Australia – will step in to head the troubled Batchelor Institute of TAFE.

Batchelor's acting Director, Brian McMaster, described Mr. Mitchell's appointment "as a major step forward" for the Institute. It comes in the wake of an extensive review of the organisation's operations and financial arrangements.

Mr Mitchell said he was looking forward to taking up his new role on March 1, and saw it as building on his previous experiences in rural and remote Australia.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/relationships-the-priority-for-new-bachelor-head/story-e6frgcjx-1225836992852>

[< top >](#)

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## **QLD: Premier Bligh & Sunday Mail join to offer affordable children's books**

*Ministerial Statement, 28 February 2010*

The Queensland Government, the Sunday Mail and Queensland bookstores have joined forces to offer a 10% discount off all children's books state-wide in March.

The program is part of the Bligh Government's 'Flying Start for Queensland Children' push to reform Queensland education and increase early childhood literacy and numeracy.

Premier Anna Bligh said recent national Australian Early Development Index survey on child preparedness for school revealed that Queensland children at 61 per cent are well below the national average at 77 per cent.

"Education is about a partnership between Government, teachers, parents and the community. Every child deserves an education and the Queensland Government will do whatever is necessary to ensure they get it.

Read entire statement: <http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=68745>

[< top >](#)

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## **QLD: US content upsetting schools**

*Siobhan Barry, ABC News, 5 March 2010*

The Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) says parents at two Cape York schools in the state's far north are angry their children are being taught American content under a new teaching method introduced this year.

The US system, called direct instruction, was introduced at Western Cape College's Coen and Aurukun campuses as part of an education trial pushed by Indigenous activist Noel Pearson.

QTU organiser Maureen Duffy says the method is causing problems for students and for teachers, who are being expected to amend the materials before they are taught.

She says five teachers have left Aurukun as a result and parents at Coen are threatening to withdraw their children.

Read more at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/05/2837536.htm>

[< top >](#)

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## **SA: More disability support proposed for SA schools**

*ABC News, Mar 4, 2010*

Labor has pledged to set up six special units at state schools for students with disabilities. It says there are 20 units already across South Australia and two of the proposed new ones would focus on autism.

Minister for Disability Jane Lomax-Smith says putting disabled students in the mainstream education system has significant benefits.

"Parents will have a choice as to whether they should be in the mainstream," she said. "They will be co-located on school grounds where they can have social interactions and join some of the classes and activities."

Dignity for Disability candidate for the seat of Adelaide Sam Paior says the need is much greater than the ALP acknowledges. "Those six classes will provide a placement for maybe 40 students with autism. We have about 3,500 children with autism in this state so I think a placement for 40 of those that doesn't reach out and support teachers in mainstream education.

"It's a start, it's a good start but that's all it is."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/04/2836273.htm>

[< top >](#)

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## **TAS: \$8 million pledge to fix bullying in schools**

*Bruce Mounster, the Mercury, February 28, 2010*

THE State Government has pledged \$8 million to tackle bullying in Tasmanian schools.

Premier David Bartlett said \$4 million over four years would go directly to schools so they could combat face-to-face, cyber and mobile-phone bullying. Another \$4 million would boost the number of school psychologists by 20 per cent, from 60 to 72, in the wake of staff losses.

Mr Bartlett said bullying had serious consequences both for the children traumatised and the ones who did the bullying. "Solutions [are needed] that work in their schools, that engage parents, that work with bullies and support kids that are being bullied," he said.

It comes after a report that one in four Tasmanian children is bullied at school.

Read entire article: [http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2010/02/28/130581\\_election.html](http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2010/02/28/130581_election.html)

[< top >](#)

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## **WA: Armed high school students clash**

*Georgia Loney, West Australian 4 March 2010*

Police are investigating reports that up to 30 high school students armed with wooden stakes clashed outside a local [Albany] shopping centre last week.

Sen. Sgt Trevor Evans said police had been called to an altercation between a group of students, near Albany Highway and Lockyer Avenue last Thursday.

"Some of the kids were wearing uniforms of Albany Senior High School and North Albany Senior High School on opposing sides, and some people were wearing plain clothes," he said. "We are conducting investigations and we expect that we will be charging some people in relation to it, in regards to some weapon offences.

It is the second time in three weeks police have been involved in an incident involving Albany high school students, after violent messages towards teachers at North Albany Senior High School were posted on Facebook.

Read entire article: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/6889027/armed-high-school-students-clash/>

[< top >](#)

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## REMINDERS

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://australiasia.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>

[< top >](#)

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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)

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

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