



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 10, 6 April 2010

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NATIONAL PUBLIC EDUCATION FORUM

Keynote Address

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Parliament House, Canberra, 27 March 2010

Research indicates that one of the driving forces of Australian prosperity over the last few decades has been the huge improvement in the educational attainment of young Australians, particularly young women, and a considerable contribution in this regard has been derived from the public education system.

This model must never be diminished, and I consider that it is the obligation of every Australian, particularly those directly involved in the funding and provision of public education, to defend this fundamental right within Australian society, and strive to ensure that it continues to come with the highest possible quality.

As some of you may know, I was educated by choice in public schools, and it is because of my profoundly rich educational experiences across those years, that I have such faith in and respect for public education.

I began my schooling at a small but beautiful country school in the Riverina — at Narrandera Public School, and later I attended Sydney Girls High School, where my mother before me had been a student. From her experience, I was already aware of the great scholastic reputation of the high school of my choice.

And, like myself, every Australian child should have access to quality education regardless of socio-economic background or distance from urban centres, or ethnocultural mix.

Read more at <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/2010/NPEFkeynote2010.pdf>

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Speech

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, Canberra, 27 March 2009

We are committed to building a dynamic, high performing school system. A system in which excellence and equity are inseparable and every child is entitled to aspire to the highest achievement.

This will be a diverse system, with many different types of school and many approaches to achieving excellence.

The National Partnerships create the opportunity to confront tough choices about reform and to build approaches that really work in practice.

Approaches to rewarding teachers for excellence and managing every school for continuous improvement.

Approaches to lifting literacy and numeracy for every child.

Approaches to school leadership which permanently change community expectations in our most disadvantaged communities.

We have a chance to show how diverse approaches in different settings can meet these challenges.

We have a chance to demonstrate that the same standards of public accountability and the same high expectations should be applied to every school, regardless of its location, ethos or origin.

And, importantly, we have a chance to demonstrate how public schools, working at their best, can set new standards of excellence and improvement for all schools to emulate.

Read more at http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_090327_173128.aspx

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CORPORATE-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Corporations and Schools: Working together in mutually beneficial and productive partnerships

ACSSO Discussion Paper, 10 March 2010

International research over the past twenty-five years has consistently shown that when parents and families work in close, cooperative partnerships with their schools, the learning potential and positive personal development of their children is considerably enhanced.

There is good reason to believe that this will also be the case if corporations and industries become involved in similar partnerships with schools and the push to create these relationships has intensified in recent years.

This was a topic at the 2020 Summit convened in 2008– and in an April 2009 Media Release Education Minister and Deputy Prime Minister confirmed this will be progressed through a projected Corporate-Schools Roundtable process.

For a positive, sustainable and mutually beneficial corporate-school partnership to work, all parties must have a shared understanding of:

- why there are mutual and complementary benefits and synergies which result from working together;
- what those mutual and complementary benefits are in each case, and;
- how the parties can work effectively together to ensure those mutual and complementary benefits and synergies are achieved.

Such partnerships have been explored most thoroughly in the United States of America. The studies conducted in that country provide valuable input for similar partnerships elsewhere.

In the USA, “partnership programs have evolved from one-sided “Adopt-A-School” efforts to mutually beneficial partnerships to improve schools and increase student achievement”

In 2001, the US Council for Corporate and School Partnerships was established with the support of the Coca-Cola Company; and “serves as a forum for the exchange of information, expertise and ideas to ensure that partnerships between businesses and schools achieve their full potential for meeting key educational objectives”. In particular, the Council has developed a nationally-endorsed set of principles and protocols for successful partnerships.

Further research has identified seven strategies for successful partnerships...

Read the whole ACSSO discussion paper at <http://www.acsso.org.au/macgregor100308.pdf>

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The companies that put schools first

Henrietta Cook, Melbourne Weekly Magazine, 25 March 2010

When talk of corporate involvement in schools entered public debate a decade ago, concerned parents and teachers imagined the worst: canteens run by fast-food chains, classroom vending machines that dispensed Coca-Cola and a science curriculum sponsored by IBM.

Corporations were considered the enemy, evil organisations motivated by greed that were not interested in the wellbeing of students. But a recent shift in thinking has caused many educators to reassess the potential of corporate involvement in the classroom.

"There's this fear that all the corporations want is to get their brand and logo in front of a mass population of young people, but these types of views are very outdated," Adam Smith, chief executive of Foundation for Young Australians, says. "It's about companies thinking how they can use their resources in a socially responsible way."

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/the-companies-that-put-schools-first-20100325-qxfk.html>

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BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Failure to pay up angers workers

Milanda Rout, The Australian, April 05, 2010

THE Brumby government has been accused of failing to pay builders in the \$16 billion federal Building the Education Revolution program, leaving some companies out of pocket by more than \$1 million and others having to lay off staff, and causing delays in the school building projects.

Building firms interviewed by The Australian -- on the basis of anonymity, for fear they would lose their government contracts -- have said the Department of Education has not been paying bills on time and this is causing problems.

They said that under their contract with the department, they were supposed to be paid on a 30-day basis during the building of the school facility. But some are not being paid for up to 120 days and this is eating through the cash reserves of the companies contracted to do the construction.

Read more at: http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/state-politics/failure-to-pay-up-angers-workers/story-e6frgczx-1225849640433?from=public_rss

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State washes its hands of building costs breakdown

WESTERN Australia's top education official overseeing the \$16.2 billion schools stimulus program has questioned why it would be in the public interest to provide a breakdown of building costs under the scheme.

It comes as the state distances itself from cost blowouts in the rollout of the Building the Education Revolution in NSW, Queensland and Victoria, arguing it had avoided an extra layer of fees and management by not appointing managing contractors.

Education Department executive director of infrastructure James Thom said there were no plans to replicate the level of transparency achieved in NSW and create a school-by-school website detailing individual costs for each new structure.

"I don't see what the public interest is, in that, at the end of the day, the school is being delivered with the best value for money in the marketplace at the time, through the tendering process," Mr Thom said.

Read more at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/state-washes-its-hands-of-building-costs-breakdown/story-e6frqczf-1225849635363>

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Abbott demands schools, batts inquiry

Sydney Morning Herald, 5 April 2010

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd needs to launch a judicial inquiry into his government's school halls and home insulation programs - or admit they were bungled, the opposition says.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott used an otherwise quiet Easter Monday to renew his attack on the federal government's economic stimulus plan.

The stimulus achieved its main objective of saving the economy from recession, but not without creating major controversy.

Mr Abbott said the government's poorly designed and badly run Home Insulation Program and Building the Education Revolution scheme, part of the second phase of Labor's fiscal stimulus package, had wasted taxpayers' money.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/abbott-demands-schools-batts-inquiry-20100405-rmqh.html>

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Builders who inflate school prices fenced off

Gavin Lower, The Australian, April 06, 2010

BUILDERS in South Australia have quoted up to 20 per cent over budget for Building the Education Revolution projects, an independent cost assessor has found.

Chris Sale, a principal of Davis Langdon, said some builders, suppliers and subcontractors might be "trying it on a bit" with their quotes for a share of the federal \$16.2 billion building program for schools.

Mr Sale, whose firm is overseeing BER work at 130 state, Catholic and private schools in South Australia, said there had been several projects where costs had been quoted at 10 to 20 per cent more than their \$1.5 million to \$2m budget.

"We might have six or eight projects that are going awry and need more attention to redesign, recosting and hard yards to get back on budget," he said.

But projects did not get the green light until they were at or below budget.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/builders-who-inflate-school-prices-fenced-off/story-e6frqczf-1225850079740>

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COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Bullies to feel the heat of MySchool principle

Rachel Browne and Tom Reilly, Sydney Morning Herald, April 4, 2010

PRIMARY and high schools should post on the MySchool website how they cope with classroom, playground and cyberspace bullying.

That's the recommendation of a leading Australian researcher into the subject, and the federal government can see merit in the proposal.

Adjunct professor Ken Rigby, of the University of South Australia's school of education, said publishing information about bullying policies on the federal website would be just as relevant as the academic results already displayed.

"What I would like to see on the MySchool site is information about how the school manages bullying," said Dr Rigby, a presenter at this week's National Centre Against Bullying conference in Melbourne.

"Information about the school's bullying policy and how it is implemented would be helpful to parents trying to decide where to send their child to school."

Read more at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/bullies-to-feel-the-heat-of-myschool-principle-20100403-rkqo.html>

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This is the future of sport in schools - Wii instead of PE

Lisa Mayoh, The Sunday Telegraph, April 04, 2010

VIDEO games are replacing sport in NSW schools allowing children to play virtual tennis, baseball and boxing on Wii consoles during physical education.

Alongside cricket, soccer and touch football, parents can now opt for their children to play Wii Fit in PE class.

The move has been criticised by Australian world champion boxer Danny Green, who told The Sunday Telegraph he would pull his children out of school if computer games were offered as a sport.

"I could think of nothing worse than having my kids stuck indoors in front of a computer and square box," the father-of-two said. "They are inside a school long enough and to put them indoors for sport is disgraceful."

Mosman High School is trialling the technology, offering it as an optional sport parents can select from a list of outdoor activities such as kayaking and touch football.

Read more at: <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/this-is-the-future-of-sport-in-schools-wii-instead-of-pe/story-e6freuy9-1225849277763>

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CHURCH & STATE

Court challenge to Schools Chaplaincy Program

Andrew Potts, Sydney Star Observer, 31 March 2010

The National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) is to face a High Court challenge.

Parent Ron Williams believes the NSCP breaches Section 116 of the Constitution which states, “the Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth”.

“This case isn’t about getting religion out of schools — it’s about whether the government should be providing funds for it,” Williams told Sydney Star Observer.

Further information on the challenge: <http://www.highcourtchallenge.com>

Read entire article: <http://www.starobserver.com.au/news/2010/03/31/court-to-rule-on-religious-schooling/23447>

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INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Some magic bullets for education

Noel Pearson, 27 March 2010

Soemtimes I just cannot understand how governments think when it comes to setting indigenous policies.

Two of the five goals that all Australian governments are now striving to close the gap on indigenous disadvantage concern education.

It is probably useful to distil a complex policy agenda down to a handful of key goals, because some of these dashboard indicators can capture whether or not progress is being made across a broad policy range and gaps are closing.

But I have problems with the policy reasoning underpinning the two educational goals.

First the goal of doubling the year 12 completion rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is strange. Of course secondary school completion rates are important, but in a strategic sense there other more fundamental prerequisite policy goals which, if solved, will automatically result in higher year 12 completion rates.

The strategically important goal is closing the gap on literacy and numeracy achievement by indigenous students. You solve this problem, you solve the year 12 completion rate problem.

There is a strategically important prerequisite to closing the gap on literacy and numeracy, and that is school readiness and attendance. You can't close the gap on literacy and numeracy unless you first close the gap on school readiness and attendance.

So if I were the policy-maker, I would establish school readiness and attendance as the target goal. And I would set a very brief timeframe for achieving it. School attendance is not rocket science: surely governments and indigenous communities can close this gap in short order.

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/some-magic-bullets-for-education/story-e6frg6zo-1225846160455>

Noel Pearson is the director of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership.

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ASIA LITERACY

Strategic Collaboration & Partnership Fund: Round Two applications open

DEEWR is pleased to advise you that on 22 March 2010 the Australian Government called for expressions of interest for high quality, strategic and collaborative projects to be supported under Round Two of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program's (NALSSP) Strategic Collaboration and Partnership Fund (Partnership Fund).

A total of \$9.36 million is available under the Partnership Fund, to be administered through three annual competitive funding rounds. You are encouraged to consider submitting an expression of interest under Round Two of the Partnership Fund before 5.00 pm AEST on Wednesday, 21 April 2010.

Read more at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NALSSP/Pages/StrategicCollaborationPartnershipFund.aspx>

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OPINION

Where is the innovation? Where is the passion?

Brian J. Caldwell, 22 March 2010

Innovation and passion are alive and well in schools throughout Australia. However capacities in these areas are increasingly constrained in a command-and-control approach that is leading to an unprecedented level of centralisation, standardisation and bureaucratisation.

My confidence that innovation and passion thrive is derived from engagement in schools throughout the country over the last five years, in many instances through direct observation in scores of schools, but also in seminars and workshops for hundreds of school leaders in every state and territory.

My concern about the impact of current constraints arises from the experience of these same schools and my ongoing assessment of progress in the 'education revolution', the centre piece of the Rudd Governments policy for schools. I released the first assessment on 2 November 2009 and reported a score of 43 out of 100 on the basis of progress on each of 10 criteria set out in the 10-point 10-year strategy in *Why Not the Best Schools* (Caldwell & Harris, 2008). I provided a quarterly update at a public forum on education in Hamilton, Victoria on 4 March 2010, reporting a marginal increase to 45 out of 100 in a paper entitled 'Why the education revolution is not transforming our schools'.

Marked down was 'modernising infrastructure', reflecting concerns about 'value for money' and 'value for learning' in the implementation of the Building the Education Revolution component of the economic stimulus package. Small increases were registered for 'national testing', reflecting the fact that publishing school performance on the My School website has not led to 'league tables'; and 'intellectual capital', reflecting the establishment of the well-resourced Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and its broad agenda to build the capacity of the profession.

Of deep concern is that important strategies that international evidence suggests are critically important if performance is to be improved are still 'missing in action', especially in relation to school autonomy and innovative governance. Two recent international developments may increase the urgency of getting a better balance in Australia....

Read entire paper at:

<http://www.educationaltransformations.com.au/files/Where%20is%20the%20Innovation%20Where%20is%20the%20Pession.pdf>

Professor Brian J Caldwell is former Dean of Education and current Professorial Fellow of the University of Melbourne, education researcher and commentator and principal of Educational Transformations – find out more:

<http://www.educationaltransformations.com.au/>

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Nauseating spectacle of private schools playing the disadvantage card

Lisa Pryor, Sydney Morning Herald, 27 March 2010

Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel, Samuel Johnson said. But in the usual course of events only poor scoundrels need to seek out this refuge. Wealthier scoundrels have more elaborate refuges for shelter.

Instead of professing love of country, a better class of scoundrel can profess love of school. Why sticky-tape the national flag in the front window of your home when you can stick the pennant of your private school on the back window of your car? Of course this is not entirely fair. Enthusiastic loyalty to your alma mater may be a sign of some good attributes. A sense of community, a sense of reciprocal duty. Beyond this it just gets ugly, especially when private schools try to feign disadvantage to obtain an edge for their students.

The University of Sydney released a green paper last week which tossed around the idea of giving students from the most disadvantaged schools a five-point bonus when applying for courses. The university has good reason for wanting to make its intake more diverse, noting in 2008 “some 65 per cent of new undergraduate students were drawn from the relatively affluent eastern and northern suburbs of Sydney”.

It also has good reason for making the bonus a five-point one. Far from being a random figure, the proposal is based on research showing such students are likely to do just as well as students with higher marks if given the chance: “Australian research has found that high-achieving students from educationally and socially disadvantaged backgrounds with an ATAR [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank] score of up to five points below that of their more advantaged peers will achieve identical outcomes from their university education.”

Still the independent schools sector came out fighting. Michael Carr, the acting executive director of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW, told the Herald “many students attending independent schools also come from disadvantaged backgrounds”. He said: “It is a concern that any student misses out on a university place based purely on where he or she attended school”...

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/nauseating-spectacle-of-private-schools-playing-the-disadvantage-card-20100326-r2z2.html>

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Rudd's new challenge: fix schools

Ross Gittins, March 31, 2010

Kevin Rudd spent last year saving the world from climate change (that he didn't finish the job is something he prefers not to think about) and is spending this year devoting his talents to fixing hospitals and healthcare. And next year? Then it will be education's turn to be sorted. Federal intervention in primary and secondary schooling is a real mess. Rudd inherited a dog's breakfast from the Howard government but, as part of his me-too strategy, promised not to change it before he conducted a thorough review in 2011.

There's no logic in the way the federal and state governments divide the responsibility for funding government and non-government schools. The feds are primarily responsible for assisting non-government schools, but they also make grants to public schools; the states are primarily responsible for their own schools, but they also make small grants to non-government schools. This means non-government schools get most of their public funding from the level of government with the most capacity to raise revenue, whereas government schools get most of their funding from the level with the least capacity.

The feds' funding is based on a formula supposedly geared to the socio-economic status of parents, but it hasn't been applied to about half the non-government schools because they were already getting more than they were supposed to under the new formula, and no one was game to cut them back.

What's more, the formula delivers big increases in funding each year - about 3 per cent above the inflation rate - but it delivers them indiscriminately to the haves and have-nots.

All this means that, over time, an ever-bigger share of government money is going to non-government schools and an ever-smaller share to government schools....

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/rudds-new-challenge-fix-schools-20100330-rb8o.html>

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RESEARCH

Gender games at play in classroom

Ainslie McGibbon, Sydney Morning Herald, March 29, 2010

Boys will be boys. Girls are easier to teach. Boys can't pay attention. Girls listen. We might like to think that access to education has nothing to do with gender any more but these perceptions linger. Like it or not, there are some accepted differences about educating boys and girls and these become apparent as early as kindergarten.

Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology Centre for Learning Innovation have found significant gender differences in the quality of the teacher-child relationship present in the first year of school. They found that teachers - even in the earliest years of school - generally found girls to be more compliant and to display more positive behaviour and approaches to learning than boys.

So, from year 1 or kindergarten, where the foundation for 12 subsequent years of education is established, there is already a significant gender difference in the quality of children's relationships with their teachers, the research says. They argue that even at this age most children are taught by people who perceive their relationships with their male students have more conflict.

Read the entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/gender-games-at-play-in-classroom-20100328-r59q.html>

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promises, promises: college purge a disaster waiting to happen

Heath Gilmore & Nick O'Malley, Sydney Morning Herald, 29 March 2010

A light has been turned on in training kitchens and hairdressing salons across Australia, and the cockroaches are scurrying for cover. The educational equivalent of people smugglers - dodgy migration agents, privately owned training schools, and shops and restaurants that used and abused foreign students - are fleeing the scene.

The impressively named hairdressing academies, international hospitality schools and five-star business institutions are falling over with numbing regularity; many owners tumbling into the arms of liquidators. Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard coyly describes this farce as an industry "refocusing". In reality, it's a bloody purge.

The federal government's cleanout of spivs and shysters in bucketshop schools will have far reaching consequences for our \$17 billion education export industry. Many are worried about collateral damage to legitimate institutions emboldened by successive governments to chase the overseas student dollar. How did we get into this mess?

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/promises-promises-college-purge-a-disaster-waiting-to-happen-20100328-r59r.html>

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AWARDS & PRIZES

Australian Rural Education Awards 2010

These unique awards promote excellence in rural education and since 1994 have been awarded annually to recognise outstanding achievement.

SPERA is looking for applications that will clearly demonstrate:

- a practical project occurring in a rural community
- the ways this has achieved results and provided educational benefits in a rural context
- the value of the project and its achievements in terms of its potential for expanding opportunities in rural Australia.

Eligibility to apply includes:

- individuals
- local government
- community service organisations
- ethnic groups or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups who can demonstrate a commitment towards the positive aspects of rural education.

The closing date for 2010 applications is end May 2010, with the winner to be announced in September at the annual conference at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

Further information and application forms: http://www.spera.asn.au/articles.php?req=read&article_id=55

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

NSW: North Coast schoolboy takes out National Literary Award

Yvette Steinhauer, ABC North Coast, 29 March 2010

A ten year old Alstonville primary school student has taken out the national Norman Lindsay short story award for children's literature.

More than six hundred students from across Australia competed for the prestigious award. Students were asked to write a one thousand word short story on the theme 'My Best Friend'.

Sam Limpenny-Fawcett, a year five student at Alstonville Public School took out first prize for his winning story entitled "the Long Suffering Pair of Shoes". Asked why he chose a pair of shoes as his best friend Sam said: "Because they are always with us and they get put through a lot of bad things but they still stick with us and they are always loyal".

As a prize for winning the award Sam received a \$300 book voucher for himself and another for the school.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/03/29/2858787.htm?site=northcoast>

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NT: Families' welfare suspended over school truancy

ABC News, 29 March 2010

The Federal Government says a small number of Northern Territory parents had their welfare payments suspended last year because their child was not attending school.

It is the first time Centrelink has taken such action under a trial taking place in some Northern Territory and Queensland communities.

The Government says Centrelink is working with about 30 families to encourage them to send their children to school.

Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin said privacy concerns prevented her from saying how many Territory parents had payments suspended.

"In the Northern Territory, we have had a small number of parents have their welfare payments suspended at the end of last year - a small number of parents have been referred to Centrelink again this year," she said.

"We have around 20 parents in Brisbane who have also been referred to Centrelink, but there have been no suspensions of payments in Queensland."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/29/2859245.htm>

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NT: One Laptop Per Child delivers computers to remote students

Hon Mark Arbib MP, Hon Warren Snowdon MP & Damian Hale MP, Release 31 March 2010

Minister for Employment Participation Mark Arbib today welcomed the delivery of 200 computers to a remote Northern Territory School at the launch of the One Laptop Per Child Australia initiative in Yirrkala.

Senator Arbib said One Laptop Per Child Australia had a target of providing 15,000 laptops to remote students this year, with the help of a new corporate partnership.

"One Laptop Per Child Australia wants to help the 400,000 children who live in remote communities by providing them with purpose-built, high quality XO laptops, loaded with educational software," Senator Arbib said.

"The Commonwealth Bank, Telstra and News Limited have joined up as corporate partners in this goal and I congratulate them for their commitment to delivering laptops to children in remote areas.

"The support of Australia's corporate community is vital in closing the gap in education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians, who are represented strongly in remote communities."

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Arbib/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100331_091213.aspx

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QLD: Outback festival celebrates poetry passion

Chrissy Arthur, ABC News, 30 March 2010

Hundreds of school children are meeting in western Queensland this week to perform bush poetry.

The Winton Junior Bush Poetry Festival begins this morning, with a record number of schools participating.

Event coordinator Louise Dean says Waltzing Matilda was written near Winton more than a century ago and the town's passion for poetry seems to be growing.

"We certainly have a heritage link back to Banjo Paterson," she said.

"In 1895 it all started out here with Waltzing Matilda ... in 1972 we started the Bronze Swagman's Award - there was an opportunity for kids to perform and improve themselves, so they started up this festival in 1996 and it's just continued from there."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/30/2859711.htm>

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TAS: Youth magazine launch highlights need to heed young people

Senator Christine Milne, Media Release, 29 March 2010

Adults in positions of power should listen to the voice of young Tasmanians when developing policy, said Greens Deputy Leader Christine Milne during the launch of FUSE 2010 Magazine in Launceston today.

The magazine, handed out with The Examiner newspaper tomorrow, is written entirely by high school, college and university students from Northern Tasmania and addresses a range of key issues relevant to young people.

"This magazine written by young people is for the whole community. It is a must read for all because the issues within these pages ranging from body image, sexting, to shopping in op shops; from homelessness and youth detention; to the climate impacts that will be faced by young people by mid century, are critical to building stronger and more resilient communities.

"One of the really disappointing aspects we are frequently noticing is the failure of big business and politicians to recognise a growing feeling of anxiety among young people who realise the urgency of addressing the climate crisis."

Read entire release: <http://christine-milne.greensmps.org.au/>

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VIC: School bullying and injuries cost state millions

Farrah Tomazin, the Age, 29 March 2010

MILLIONS of dollars have been paid out to students and teachers who have been bullied or injured in public schools, throwing doubt on state government claims about school safety.

New figures obtained by The Age reveal the state government has paid a total of almost \$800,000 to 16 victims of school bullying over the past seven years in damages or out-of-court settlements. A further \$14 million was spent over the past decade compensating students and teachers for injuries resulting from playground punch-ups, sporting events, or falls and slips on school grounds.

The biggest sum for a bullying case was awarded last month, when the Education Department paid a \$290,000 out-of-court settlement to a teenage girl who had endured months of violence and abuse at a country high school, culminating in one of her classmates threatening to bring a gun to school to shoot her.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/school-bullying-and-injuries-cost-state-millions-20100328-r55a.html>

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WA: Changes dumb-down courses: principals

Bethany Hiatt, the West Australian, 30 March 2010

Year 11 and 12 students are being disadvantaged significantly by changes to courses and exams which are leading to a "dumbing down" of the curriculum, WA public high school principals say.

In a letter to Education Minister Liz Constable, WA Secondary School Executives Association president Rob Nairn said many schools had lost confidence in the Curriculum Council because of changes to the system.

"Executives in secondary schools across the State are firm and united in their belief that students are being significantly disadvantaged by current Curriculum Council course structures and exam practices," the letter said.

Last year was the first time that students sat compulsory exams for stages two and three under the new system which offers Year 11 and 12 courses at three separate stages of difficulty. Stage one students do not sit exams.

Students who did courses at the more-challenging stage three level received a 15 point bonus in the calculation of their tertiary entrance rank. Schools and parents have raised concerns that stage two students' raw exam marks were cut back savagely in the scaling process.

Read entire article: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/6999109/changes-dumbdown-courses-principals/>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Global Action Week

19-25 April

Education International is pleased to announce that the next Global Action Week on Education for All will take place from April 19-25, 2010.

The GCE or Global Campaign for Education organises Global Action Week each year.

The members of the GCE include a broad spectrum of NGOs and trade union organisations active on education issues. EI is a founding organisation of the campaign and currently chairs its board.

Download schools pack and materials for coalitions and organisations at: <http://www.ei-ie.org/globalactionweek2010/en/index.php>

Read more about GCE at: <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/>

Read more about EI at: <http://www.ei-ie.org/en/index.php>

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Sustaining the rural education community

Conference of Society for Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA)

15-17 September 2010, University of Sunshine Coast, Queensland

This uniquely important annual event explores the needs and priorities of student, families and communities in rural and regional Australia – and how these young people can access the high quality learning and development opportunities they deserve.

Details of programs etc and online registration arrangements:
http://www.spera.asn.au/articles.php?req=list&root_id=13&sub_id=65

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REMINDERS

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/>

16 April - Submissions close, Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools - <http://www.apf.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/index.htm>

17 April - Early Career Teachers' Conference - Melbourne, VIC - [http://www.vate.org.au/vate.nsf/file/2010%20Early%20Career%20Teachers%20Day/\\$file/ECTC-2010.pdf](http://www.vate.org.au/vate.nsf/file/2010%20Early%20Career%20Teachers%20Day/$file/ECTC-2010.pdf)

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://australasia.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>

7 May - Public consultation closes - draft National Professional Standards for Teachers - http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/npst2010-consultation-call_for_submissions,30532.html

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

17 May - Tackling Underachievement: Engaging Boys and Girls - Sydney, NSW - <http://conferences2010.schoolevent.org>

17 May - The Tender Bridge, ACER - Adelaide, SA - <http://www.acer.edu.au/1/index.php/seminar/the-tender-bridge/>

18 May - Tackling Underachievement: Engaging Boys and Girls - Melbourne, VIC - <http://conferences2010.schoolevent.org>

23 May - Public consultation closes - draft K-10 Australian Curriculum English, mathematics, science and history - <http://www.acara.edu.au/consultation.html>

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)

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

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