



# 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 16, 18 May 2010

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### TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

#### Draft senior secondary Australian Curriculum released today

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 14 May, 2010*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today joined with NSW Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, and Member for Bennelong, Maxine McKew, to launch the draft content for the senior secondary Australian Curriculum.

The draft content for the senior secondary subjects of English, mathematics, science and history will be available for public consultation until 30 July 2010. This follows the release of the draft curriculum for years Kindergarten to year 10 in the same four subjects earlier this year.

Ms Gillard said that all Australians interested in our children's education are encouraged to review and provide feedback on the curriculum taught in our schools.

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100514\\_115505.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100514_115505.aspx)

View the draft Australian Curriculum at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>

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### COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

#### What My School really says about our schools

*Chris Bonnor, Inside Story, 23 April 2010*

There are two stories coming out of My School. The first includes the initial hype followed by the spurious comparisons, encouraged by ACARA and taken up with great enthusiasm by the media and others.

This continues a grand tradition in this country of government and public infatuation with unproven and populist school reform, leaving deep-seated problems languishing in the too-hard basket.

The second story, or set of stories, will take longer to attract attention. They'll require more focus and probably raise as many questions as answers. These are the stories about the more enduring differences among our schools and how these differences contribute to what is arguably a dysfunctional school framework, created by decades of ad hoc policies.

The stories will increasingly tell how we'll never sustain high educational standards in this country, and reap the social and economic benefits, unless we make serious efforts to reduce the very distinct and depressing social and academic gaps among schools, a product of geography and quasi-market ideology interspersed with official neglect.

Read more at <http://inside.org.au/what-my-school-really-says-about-our-schools/>

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## COMPARING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

### Students 'told to stay home' from NAPLAN tests

*Rosanne Barrett and Jodie Minus, The Australian, May 12, 2010*

MORE than one million children began national literacy and numeracy testing yesterday, as state education authorities fended off claims that schools were manipulating the controversial sessions to boost results.

Allegations that underperforming students had been told to stay home emerged in Queensland and Victoria, while in NSW the news agency AAP reported it had been leaked a question from yesterday's spelling, punctuation and grammar test.

Students around Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will be sitting further literacy and numeracy exams today and tomorrow, despite attacks by teachers' groups opposed to the results being used on the federal government's My School website.

But 12 schools in NSW failed to offer the tests yesterday, with state Education Minister Verity Firth citing staff shortages as among the reasons.

Julia Gillard disputed whether this was valid.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/students-told-to-stay-home/story-e6frgczf-1225865204468>

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## NAPLAN goes ahead

*EdPod, ABC Radio national, 13 may 2010*

Public school teachers have ended their boycott of the national literacy and numeracy tests. They decided to proceed with the tests after the federal education minister agreed to include them in a working party on the future of the My School website.

But will this resolve the issues which provoked the bans or repair the strained relationship between teachers, parents and the federal education minister?

Presenter Richard Aedy talks to Julia Gillard, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Education, and Geoffrey Riordan, Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, University of Technology, Sydney.

Listen to or download the audio at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/edpod/stories/2010/2901242.htm>

*EdPod presents a mix of education stories, from early childhood to the end of secondary school. It's a jargon-free look at the experience of educators, researchers, parents and students. EdPod examines new education ideas, and asks*

whether things could or should be done differently. From the classroom to the staff room and on to the home - EdPod brings you the latest ideas about learning. Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/edpod/>

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## **Senate Inquiry into the Use of NAPLAN Results**

*Australian Education Union, 13 May, 2010*

The Australian Education Union has welcomed the establishment of a Senate inquiry into the use of student performance data.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said: "This is an important inquiry which will look at the public reporting of NAPLAN data and what safeguards can be put in place to stop the information being misused in ways that are damaging to schools and school communities.

"We have seen student data repeatedly used to create damaging league tables inappropriately ranking schools.

"We will be encouraging parents, teachers and the wider community to participate in this inquiry."

Read more at <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Media/MediaReleases/2010/1305.pdf>

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## **Unsupervised students 'changed NAPLAN answers'**

*ABC News, May 14, 2010*

A father has raised concerns about cheating in National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests at a Brisbane high school.

The man, who does not want to be named, told the ABC that grade nine students were not supervised during a lunch break in the middle of yesterday's testing.

He says they were able to compare answers and change them after the break.

"The kids that didn't know the answers to the difficult questions went and saw all the smart kids, got the answers, then they were allowed back into the hall and they were able to do part two," he said.

"A lot of the kids were updating the first part of the exam with the answers that they got from the smart kids at lunchtime."

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/14/2899092.htm>

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**BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

## **Task force will investigate canteen claims: Gillard**

*ABC News, May 17 2010*

Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard says all complaints about problems with schools stimulus projects can be referred to the task force she has set up.

There are reports today about schools having canteens or tuckshops built that are too small to be effective.

Ms Gillard says the task force, which is examining whether school building projects represent value for money, can look at any issues that arise.

"I've seen those reports today and I'm obviously concerned about them," she said.

"I'm concerned to make sure every dollar we spend on schools gets maximum value.

"I want to make sure every kid gets a great education and every school is a great school."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/17/2901728.htm>

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## **School Hall rip-off becomes School Hall-gate**

*Christopher Pyne, Shadow Minister for Education, 17 May 2010*

The Rudd Government has defied a Senate order and refused to hand over information containing school hall program quarterly reports claiming it was not in the public interest to do so, Christopher Pyne, Shadow Minister for Education said today.

"The Assistant Treasurer, Senator Nick Sherry, goes on to say in his response to the Senate that the publication of the material could damage the relations with the states. Clearly there is highly controversial information within this data that the Government cannot afford to release," Mr Pyne said.

"The School Hall rip-off has moved on now from a monumental stuff-up, to a deliberate Government cover-up to save face. The refusal of hand over reports is unquestionably an indication that there is something to hide," he said.

Read more at <http://www.liberal.org.au/Latest-News/2010/05/17/School-Hall-rip-off-becomes-School-Hall-gate.aspx>

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## **NEW DIRECTIONS IN EDUCATION**

### **Innovators see the big picture**

*Denise Ryan, The Age, May 17, 2010*

Viv White, the educator who brought this approach to Australia, says Big Picture is not an alternative education model. Rather, it is the prototype for a new kind of school that works for any student.

Ms White, who heads the not-for-profit company Big Picture Education Australia, believes a greater range of school options should be offered. As the former head of the Victorian School Innovation Commission, she became aware of the results the approach was achieving in the US in increased attendance and student connectedness to school.

At a time when many Australian schools are merging to become larger, Big Picture advocates small, personalised secondary schools that concentrate on the interests of students rather than relying on teachers to mastermind coursework. These smaller schools, ideally with about 150 students, have a student-to-teacher ratio of about 17 to one, with an advisory teacher staying with the same 17 students for two to five years. Often there are several small schools on the same site.

Each student formulates an individual learning plan with the help of this teacher, their parents and an internship mentor, a person who oversees them pursuing their interests for two days a week through an internship in the community.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/innovators-see-the-big-picture-20100514-v3www.html>

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## **Teach for Australia**

*Andrew Leigh, On Line Opinion, 17 May 2010*

There is no question that TFA teachers are a bunch of smarty-pants. Inundated with 750 applicants last year, the program was able to apply extraordinarily selective standards. As a result, the average university entrance score of TFA teachers is 97.

But can they teach? Anecdotally, the program has some strong backers. Tony Simpson, principal of Copperfield College in Melbourne's outer west, describes his TFA teachers as "mindblowingly successful".

Yet the program's critics say that the program takes short-cuts to train teachers. If teacher education students wanted to work in a community legal centre with six weeks of legal training, they'd be laughed off by the profession. So why should law students be allowed to enter the classroom without an education degree?

When I put this challenge to founder Melodie Potts-Rosevear, she argued that TFA offered an "employment-based pathway". "TFA allows select individuals to complete roughly one-third of their degree, and then to combine theory and practice by doing the rest of the degree over the course of the next two years as they are teaching."

Read more at <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=10420>

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## **HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

### **Enhanced focus on human rights education and community engagement programs**

*Australian Human Rights Commission, 13 May 2010*

The Australian Human Rights Commission will be focusing on building understanding and respect for rights through a range of community engagement and human rights education programs following recent announcements by the federal Government.

Commission President Cathy Branson QC, said the focus on human rights education followed the government's Human Rights Framework announcement in April, which committed \$6.6 million over four years to the Commission to enable it to expand its community education role and programs.

"This funding, which is effective from 1 July 2010, allows the Commission to enhance its capacity to respond to the most pressing human rights issues of the day," Ms Branson said.

"The Commission has recently restructured its policy areas to enable a more comprehensive approach to human rights issues. The funding will support a new community engagement team, which will work closely with the Strategic Policy and Projects Team to develop community engagement strategies.

"We envisage we will be focussing on delivering programs in key areas of concern to the community such as violence, harassment and bullying."

Read more at [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media\\_releases/2010/46\\_10.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2010/46_10.html)

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## **DIGITAL LITERACY**

## **e-book readers and reading competence**

*Kerrie Smith, education.au, May 12, 2010*

A colleague remarked yesterday that in thinking about utilising e-books and e-book readers we shouldn't forget about their effect on reading enjoyment.

I've been thinking for a long time about whether I actually read faster when I read on my Kindle. Anecdotal evidence from friends seems to indicate that it is not an illusion - we all think we are reading faster.

So what is the clue? For me it is without doubt the ability to make the text a more comfortable size. I read my e-books in a relatively large font and with wider margins than usual. "My" setting gives me a line of about 5 words: in other words my eyes are able to grab the line in one sweep. So I read a page pretty quickly.

I've come across a couple of articles recently that should make us think about whether e-books could have a beneficial effect on reading competence, and therefore whether these are supporting reasons for widespread implementation.

Read more at <http://blogs.educationau.edu.au/ksmith/2010/05/12/e-book-readers-and-reading-competence/>

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## **The digital classroom**

*Future Tense, ABC Radio National, 13 May 2010*

What impact is digital interactive technology having on education?

And what will the classroom of the future look like?

These are just some of the questions that were raised at the 2010 Australian Council for Computer Education conference.

Listen online, download audio or read transcript at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/futuretense/stories/2010/2885066.htm>

*Future Tense is essential listening for those interested in exploring the social, cultural, political and economic fault lines arising from rapid change. The weekly half-hour program/podcast takes a critical look at new technologies, new approaches and new ways of thinking. Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/futuretense/>.*

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## **Parents reject filter when told more: survey**

*Renai LeMay, Delimiter.com.au (via ZDnet), May 13th, 2010*

A survey commissioned by groups opposed to the Federal Government's internet filter project has found that the more information parents receive about the proposal, the less likely they are to support it — although they strongly supported the filter idea overall.

The survey was conducted in January 2010 by GA Research on behalf of the Safer Internet Group, which is made up of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Google, the Internet Industry Association, the Systems Administrators Guild of Australia, Yahoo!7 and the Australian Council of State School Organisations.

The full report has not been released by GA Research. However, in a statement issued this week, the company said it surveyed 1018 parents in "key marginal seats" in Sydney and Brisbane.

According to GA's statement, there were "fairly high" levels of awareness of the filter project being pushed by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy, but most only had a "low level of knowledge" about the details.

Read more at <http://www.zdnet.com.au/parents-reject-filter-when-told-more-survey-339303117.htm>

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## **No place for iPad in education revolution**

*Stuart Kennedy, Fran Foo, The Australian, May 18, 2010*

STATE education departments are unlikely to roll out iPads as part of the federal government's digital education revolution program because of the device's technical shortcomings.

While the government's \$2 billion plan for secondary schools has boosted the number of PCs, laptops and thin clients at schools, the iPad looks like remaining on the outer.

"The education revolution laptop scheme is not going to look at iPads," NSW Department of Education and Training chief information officer Stephen Wilson said.

"An iPad is a wonderful consumption and entertainment device with a little bit of creative ability. It is one-way mostly. What we are trying to get students to do is to create and collaborate and to use the tools they will ultimately use in the workforce."

He said the iPad was incapable of carrying the school-issue software package used in laptops and there were questions about how robust it was.

Read more at [http://www.theaustralian.com.au/australian-it/no-place-for-ipad-in-education-revolution/story-e6frgax-1225867929817?from=public\\_rss](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/australian-it/no-place-for-ipad-in-education-revolution/story-e6frgax-1225867929817?from=public_rss)

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## **MATHS EDUCATION**

### **A disaster? You do the maths**

*Elisabeth Tarca, The Age, May 15, 2010*

With fewer students taking mathematics at secondary and university level, a chronic shortage of qualified maths teachers and limited graduates entering the profession, there's simply not enough new blood coming through to replace older teachers as they retire.

The decline in the number of year 12 advanced maths students going on to degrees has led to serious skills shortages in areas such as mining, finance, engineering and statistics, with the CSIRO and the Australian Bureau of Statistics expressing "grave" concern about their ability to recruit graduates.

Experts say a series of limited measures, such as halving HECS fees for maths and science graduates, has done little to stem the decline.

They now warn that if Australia continues to slide backwards in maths education and the disciplines it supports, the shortage of workers with high-level mathematics and statistics capabilities could jeopardise the nation's economic and research capability.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/a-disaster-you-do-the-maths-20100514-v48x.html?rand=1273825241279>

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## RURAL & REGIONAL EDUCATION

### Rural teaching: over the hill is not so far away

*Suzanne Hudson, Jan Millwater, Curriculum Leadership, 14 May 2010*

In the last decade, rural Australia has suffered from droughts both climatic and educational: both have affected rural schools, which struggle to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of teachers.

The problem has been addressed in a range of policy and research papers, notably in two recent reports: Quality Matters: Revitalising Teaching: Critical Times, Critical Choices (Ramsey, 2000) and the National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education (HREOC, 2000). These reports call for a range of measures, including financial support, for pre-service teachers who undertake practicums in rural or remote areas.

The need to recruit and retain more teachers in non-metropolitan areas has also been pursued by the Rural Education Forum of Australia (REFA), and by the AEU. The AEU, in particular, has stressed the need to give early-career teachers incentives to continue to teach in rural areas rather than undertake short-term rural placements as stepping stones to more desired urban locations (AEU, 2000).

For some years, researchers at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) have been investigating the factors needed to attract and retain early-career teachers in rural areas. These efforts have been spurred on the one hand by principals concerned about staff shortages, and on the other by pre-service teachers' reluctance to undertake rural practicum placements.

Some of these factors relate directly to teaching and the school environment. There is a need for pre-service and early-career teachers to receive training and professional development in the pedagogies appropriate for multi-age classes, strategies for rural classroom organisation and small-school administrative responsibilities, and knowledge of how to access appropriate and sufficient resources (Hudson & Hudson, 2009).

Another set of factors, however, relates to the social dimensions of living and teaching in rural areas. New teachers need strategies for successful community interaction and for understanding community dynamics in rural areas. Similarly they need strategies for overcoming isolation and for developing communication and interaction networks with colleagues (Yarrow, Herschell & Millwater, 1999).

Read more at <http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=31183&issueID=12123>

*Jan Millwater is a lecturer at the Kelvin Grove campus of Queensland University of Technology. Sue Hudson is the Academic Coordinator for the Bachelor of Education (primary) program at Queensland University of Technology's Caboolture campus. This article is adapted from a paper presented to the 2009 conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA).*

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## SCIENCE EDUCATION

### Support for School Science Laboratory Technicians Forum

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, 17 May, 2010*

The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, today announced that a national forum for school science laboratory technicians will be held this year, supporting the delivery of quality science education in schools.

School science laboratory technicians play an important role in facilitating hands-on science activities for students and in ensuring safe school laboratory practices.

The Australian Science Teaching Association (ASTA) will invite up to 30 participants to the forum, to be held at the University of Technology Sydney in July 2010. Participants will include representatives from Science Education Technicians Australia (SETA) and the Catholic and Independent education sectors.

The forum will discuss issues and challenges in training and supporting school science and technology technicians, including developing a training framework and guidelines and will be funded through a \$20,000 grant from the Federal Government.

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100518\\_092553.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100518_092553.aspx)

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## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### Delays for NT Indigenous students

*ABC Radio AM, May 17, 2010*

SARA EVERINGHAM: Before the 2007 election Labor supported more boarding school facilities as a way to give Indigenous students in remote areas better access to secondary schools.

Two years ago the Federal Government committed \$29 million to build three new boarding hostels alongside existing schools in the Northern Territory. It said it expected one residential college would be finished last year and two would be completed this year.

A member of the Northern Territory Labor Government Marion Scrymgour is disappointed last year's deadline was missed.

MARION SCRYMGOUR: We continually talk about closing the gap. The gap in education is the key and that's what I think both governments, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth, need to seriously move on.

SARA EVERINGHAM: The former Howard government agreed to fund the Tiwi College back in 2006. The then minister for indigenous affairs Mal Brough was back on the Tiwi Islands for the opening of the college on the weekend. He says the Rudd Government is failing Indigenous students.

MAL BROUGH: They've just failed in so many areas and I'm sick and tired of the rhetoric. Boarding schools just seem to be way beyond them.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2010/s2900990.htm>

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## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

### Round 3 SAKG National Program grant applications open

The Australian Government has allocated \$12.8 million of infrastructure funding, over 4 years, to enable up to 190 eligible schools to establish the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program (SAKGNP). Eligible schools can now apply for the 3rd round of funding, for grants of up to \$66,000 (GST inclusive) to join the Kitchen Garden Program.

Schools eligible for funding are:

- All government schools with a primary enrolment

- All special schools with a primary curriculum
- All non-government schools with a primary enrolment that are classed as a SMARTER school with low socio economic status under the School Communities National Partnership.

Funding for the third round of National Program grants has been made available by the Australian Government. The program is aimed to run over years 3-6 or 4-7 depending on state structures.

Applications open: 17 May 2010

Applications MUST be submitted for approval by your relevant Education Department: 11 June 2010

Applications close: 25 June 2010

A wealth of information on the Program's history, philosophy and requirements is available via this website. We encourage you to learn more before commencing your application: <http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/grants-national.shtml>

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## AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

### ACT: ACT Government to step-up campaigns against homophobia in schools and sport

*Andrew Barr MLA, Minister for Education and Sport, 17/05/2010*

The ACT Government will step-up campaigns against homophobia in local schools and on the sporting field Minister for Education and Sport, Andrew Barr announced today.

Speaking on International Day Against Homophobia he said homophobia impacts negatively on an individual's self-esteem and can result in a sense of shame, guilt and self-loathing.

"Around 10 per cent of young people experience feelings of same-sex attraction while they are at school," Mr Barr said. "Recent research shows that 60 per cent of same-sex attracted young people experience verbal or physical abuse and that three quarters of this abuse occurs at schools.

"Sadly the word 'gay' is all too often used as a term of harassment in our schools. This makes life even more difficult for young people and compromises their education.

Read more at <http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.php?v=9540>

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### NSW: Review of NSW School Certificate

*The Hon Verity Firth MP, Minister for Education and Training, 13 May 2010*

The Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, said today the NSW Board of Studies would review the Year 10 School Certificate as part of changes to the NSW school leaving age.

"For decades, the NSW School Certificate has marked the end of mandatory education in this state, but now that the leaving age has been raised to 17 it means many more students will proceed to Year 11 and complete their senior years," Ms Firth said.

"Contemporary schooling is also vastly different to what it was like when the School Certificate was introduced in 1965.

"Students are now engaged in community service, language studies, part-time employment and on-site work experience as part of their TAFE courses and I have asked the Board to consider the best way to represent that range of achievements with a view to modernising the School Certificate."

Ms Firth said the development of a national curriculum and the introduction of NAPLAN tests at the start of Year 9 have also changed the way the School Certificate is viewed.

Read more at [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/aboutus/ministerial/yr2010/mr130510\\_sc.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/aboutus/ministerial/yr2010/mr130510_sc.pdf)

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### **QLD: Worst attended schools revealed in Queensland**

*Tanya Chilcott, The Courier-Mail, May 17, 2010*

Queensland state schools with the highest absentee rates have been ranked publicly for the first time after the release of an Education Queensland list.

The EQ figures show about one-quarter of state schools have failed to keep their student attendance rate above 90 per cent.

Schools with large numbers of indigenous pupils and some state high schools on Brisbane's outskirts are among the worst, with student attendance rates dropping as low as 56.2 per cent early last year. See the full list of Queensland state schools and absentee rates

It comes despite a campaign to stamp out truancy and a range of initiatives, including hiring staff, solely to deal with the scourge.

The state's worst attendance rate of 56.2 per cent was at Urandangi State School, which has less than 50 students.

Read more at [http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/worst-truancy-schools-revealed-in-queensland/story-e6freon6-1225867799735?from=public\\_rss](http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/worst-truancy-schools-revealed-in-queensland/story-e6freon6-1225867799735?from=public_rss)

Read the list at [http://media01.couriermail.com.au/multimedia/2010/05/170510\\_truancy/truancy.pdf](http://media01.couriermail.com.au/multimedia/2010/05/170510_truancy/truancy.pdf)

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### **QLD: Principals get their say at forum in Rockhampton**

*The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, Kirsten Livermore MP, Federal Member for Capricornia, 18 May, 2010*

Minister for Education, Julia Gillard and the Federal Member for Capricornia, Kirsten Livermore, today attended a local Principals' Forum at Rockhampton Grammar School to talk about the future of school education in the local area.

Ms Gillard listened to around 30 local principals and representatives of school communities talk about their priorities for schools in the electorate of Capricornia.

Local schools are already benefiting from the Rudd Government's investment in education, including Rockhampton Grammar School which has recently received funding for a new multi purpose hall and 174 computers.

The Minister outlined the importance of national testing as a measure through which teachers and parents can monitor student progress.

Read more at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100518\\_132145.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100518_132145.aspx)

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## **TAS: Waverley And St Leonards Primary Schools**

*Lin Thorp, MLC, Minister for Education and Skills, 14 May 2010*

A proposed merger between Waverley and St Leonards Primary Schools has been suspended indefinitely, Minister for Education and Skills, Lin Thorp, said today.

Ms Thorp said the Waverley School Association had made a decision to withdraw from the current in-principle agreement to explore a possible merger.

"Documentation between the two school associations stated that either school could withdraw from the agreement at any time.

"Due to ongoing questions and concerns from the Waverley School community, the decision was made to suspend any further discussions on the merger at this stage.

"While school amalgamations can have many benefits for schools, I recognise that they can be an emotional issue and must be driven and supported by the school communities involved.

"I am happy to accept the decision of the Waverley School Association on this matter.

"I'd like to congratulate the school communities for working cooperatively on this issue," Ms Thorp said.

Source: <http://www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=29561>

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## **VIC: Bronwyn Pike refuses to release Victoria BER costs**

*Milanda Rout, The Australian, May 14, 2010*

VICTORIAN Education Minister Bronwyn Pike yesterday again refused to release any costings on the state's Building the Education Revolution projects, saying it would be foolish, economically unwise and irresponsible.

Ms Pike faced an hour-long grilling on the way her department has implemented the \$16 billion national schools program at a Victorian parliamentary committee hearing.

Principals have complained they have been left out of the BER process, with the government hiring management consultants to run the building program and refusing to release costing and project details to schools or the public.

Many schools have also been hit by delays and are frustrated because they do not know what is happening to their projects.

Ms Pike was asked by the opposition at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing yesterday whether she would release costings following the lead of NSW.

Read more at [http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/bronwyn-pike-refuses-to-release-victoria-ber-costs/story-e6frg6nf-1225866324445?from=public\\_rss](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/bronwyn-pike-refuses-to-release-victoria-ber-costs/story-e6frg6nf-1225866324445?from=public_rss)

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## **WA: Teachers' compensation tops \$24m**

*Bethany Hiatt, The West Australian, May 14, 2010*

Taxpayers shelled out almost \$25 million last year to teachers and other Education Department staff for work-related injuries, illnesses and stress.

And in the first two months of this year, workers' compensation payments to department staff had already topped \$5.2 million.

Official figures have revealed that 2801 staff received an average of more than \$8000 each in workers' compensation payments last year, including weekly payments, medical expenses and rehabilitation costs.

Body stress was the most expensive of 10 injury categories, costing the department more than \$7.6 million last year for harm caused by lifting, pushing and repetitive movement.

Mental stress, including bullying by other staff or conflict with disobedient students, was a close second, costing more than \$7.3 million.

The department also paid out \$5.2 million to employees who fell or tripped and \$3.1 million to staff hit by moving objects.

Read more at <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/wa/7233333/teachers-compensation-tops-24m/>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **Seventh National Interactive Teaching and Learning Conference**

*12-14 August, Saint Stephen's College, Coomera (Gold Coast) QLD*

The digital technology landscape for teaching and learning has changed over the last few years. So too will the thrust of this national conference change in 2010.

In 2010 this popular national conference will diversify to meet the needs of all schools where ever they stand in the interactive teaching and learning continuum.

The use of interactive whiteboards in the classroom will feature very strongly and this major theme will be supplemented by the plethora of other exciting interactive teaching and learning applications and technologies currently available and in the pipeline.

Read more at <http://www.iwb.net.au/conferences/australian10/>

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### **ECER 2010: Education and Cultural Change**

*25-27 August, University of Helsinki, Finland*

The European Conference on Educational Research 2010 will take place in Helsinki, Finland end of August 2010.

Cultural change has emerged as an important issue in most European countries due to increased migration. With regard to education in Europe, culture is often perceived as referring mostly to ethnicity, religion and language, though cultural diversity also refers to race, gender, class, age, ability and sexual orientation.

Changes in the cultural contexts where education takes place have raised new questions both in educational practice and research. Thinking of students in terms of traditional categories of race, class and gender declines in usefulness; instead the intersection of categories as well as consideration of local and global contexts needs to be taken into account.

In addition, alongside formal schooling, other domains of activity such as youth and popular cultures, extra-curricular activities, as well as social, environmental and religious movement are vital in understanding cultural changes and their significance to education.

The theme brings to the forefront the view that educational institutions need to take cultural contexts into consideration in their policies and activities. It emphasizes how cultural changes impact the way children, adolescents and adults are educated in both formal and informal education.

Read more at <http://www.helsinki.fi/ecer2010/index.html>

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## **Hands on Literacy Conference**

*13 November, Tanglin Trust School, Singapore*

Workshop strands:

- Digital Literacy (e.g., Web 2.0 Tools, Social Software, Using iPod Touches & iPads for Literacy)
- Traditional Literacy (e.g., Knockout Fiction for Middle Schoolers, Best Practice Literacy Circles)
- Visual Literacy & The Arts (e.g., Using Drama to Teach History, Graphic Novels Pros & Cons)
- Research & Inquiry (e.g., Information Literacy & the Inquiry Cycle, Online Note-taking)
- Early Years (e.g., Early Reading Support on the Internet, Using Picture Books to Teach Math)
- Librarianship (e.g., Collaborative Planning to Promote Literacy, Bringing the Reluctant Reader into the Library, Audio Books & eBooks in the Collection)
- Other (e.g., Video Games & Literacy Learning, Defining Multiple Literacies)

Call for Papers: 7 May-30 June: <http://www.handsonlit.com/call-for-papers>

Read more at <http://www.handsonlit.com/>

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## **REMINDERS**

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

16-22 May - Parents Victoria Annual Online Conference - <http://www.cybertext.net.au/pv/>

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>

21 May - National Mathematics Day - <http://www.aamt.edu.au/AAMT-in-action/Annual-activities/National-Maths-Day>

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/>

26 May - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Melbourne, VIC - [http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product\\_details.asp?prodID=13500](http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13500)

26-28 May - Council of Educational Facility Planners International Conference - Perth, WA - <http://australia.cefpi.org/>

27 May - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Brisbane, QLD - [http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product\\_details.asp?prodID=13507](http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13507)

31 May - Costa's Garden Odyssey Competition closes - <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/costa/about/page/i/2/h/Competition/>

3 June - Dare to Lead National Indigenous Education Conference - Brisbane, QLD - <http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&action=downloadResource&resourceID=71060324>

3 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Perth, WA - [http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product\\_details.asp?prodID=13530](http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13530)

4 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Sydney, NSW - [http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product\\_details.asp?prodID=13521](http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13521)

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

9-11 June - International Conference on Learning and Teaching - Singapore - <http://www.tp.edu.sg/events/intlconference/>

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

23-25 June - International Conference on New Horizons in Education - Famagusta, Cyprus - <http://www.int-e.net/index.php>

2 July - Victorian Mathematics and Statistics Students' Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.2010vmssc.ms.unimelb.edu.au/>

2-3 July - State Conference of Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland - Brisbane, QLD - <http://mltaq.asn.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=27>

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

4-7 July - Australian Science Teachers Association Annual Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://guest.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?e=1a4004e5-1cf4-4df0-931f-94d23111a400>

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>

7-10 July - Redefining TESOL for the 21st Century - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.astmanagement.com.au/ACTA10/Default.htm>

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

29-31 July - International Conference on Teacher Education - Quezon City, Philippines - <http://www.ictedphilippines.org/>

14-22 August - National Science Week - <http://www.scienceweek.gov.au/Pages/index.aspx>

15-17 August - ACER Research Conference - Melbourne, VIC - [http://www.acer.edu.au/research\\_conferences/](http://www.acer.edu.au/research_conferences/)

19-27 August - International Conference of Mathematicians - Hyderabad, India - <http://www.icm2010.org.in/>

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

3-4 September - Future Directions in Literacy Conference - Sydney, NSW - [http://sydney.edu.au/education\\_social\\_work/professional\\_learning/teachers/2010/future\\_directions\\_literacy.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/professional_learning/teachers/2010/future_directions_literacy.shtml)

6 September - International Middle Years of Schooling Conference - Adelaide, SA - <http://sapmea.asn.au/conventions/middleschool2010/>

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

15-17 September - SPERA Conference, University of Sunshine Coast, Queensland - [http://www.spera.asn.au/articles.php?req=list&root\\_id=13&sub\\_id=65](http://www.spera.asn.au/articles.php?req=list&root_id=13&sub_id=65)

22 September - Language and Culture and Social Connectedness in Our Diverse Landscape Symposium - Toowoomba, QLD - <http://www.usq.edu.au/lcdl>

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

27-30 September - Australian Mathematical Society 54th Meeting - Brisbane, QLD - <http://www.smp.uq.edu.au/austms2010/>

27 September-1 October - International Association of School Librarianship Conference - Brisbane QLD - <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/conf/2010/>

October - International School Library Month - <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/islm/>

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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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