



Australian Council of State School Organisations

The National Voice of Parents of Children in Australia's Public Schools and Their School Communities

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL LIBRARIES & LIBRARIANS

Funding cuts leave trained school librarians on the shelf

Scott Hannaford, Canberra Times, 28 May 2010

ACT schools are using the increasing popularity of the internet as an excuse to wind back funding and staffing for school libraries, a parliamentary inquiry heard yesterday.

The Australian Education Union has also warned that schools around the country could find themselves with new school library buildings under the Federal Government's \$16billion school halls program, but no qualified teacher librarians to staff them.

Australian School Library Association ACT branch spokeswoman Sue Martin told a House of Representatives inquiry the number of qualified teacher librarians was in decline as a result of funding cuts and a lack of training opportunities, and that within five years few ACT students would have access to a qualified teacher librarian.

"Our first concern is a decreasing number of teacher librarians in primary schools and a growing tendency to replace those teachers with untrained staff," Ms Martin said.

"We see that schools are using students' high usage of the internet to justify cutting of their library resources and their library staff."

Source: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/education/funding-cuts-leave-trained-school-librarians-on-the-shelf/1842748.aspx>

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Librarians Undervalued

Elaine Colson, letter to Canberra Times Editor, 30 May 2010

Across the nation the teacher-librarian is being increasingly marginalised and is in danger of disappearing altogether from our schools. The major reason for this attrition is lack of understanding of the teacher-librarian's teaching role.

Teacher-librarians are trained in education, in librarianship and in management – and it is these areas of expertise which enable teacher-librarians to manage effectively the school library and ensure its relevance to the educational goals of the school.

If students are to become active contributors to society they must have the skills to identify, select, organise, record and evaluate relevant information. Students have to be taught these skills. High usage of the internet does not a good student make. All students know how to press buttons. It is the ability to gain critical understanding of what they find in the electronic environment and in other information formats which matters.

This is information literacy. This is what teacher-librarians teach and it is this important element of the teacher-librarian's role which is being eroded. To argue that students' increasing internet use is a good reason to wind back funding and staffing for school libraries is simplistic nonsense.

An un-staffed or under-staffed school library decreases the value of the educational dollar and does a great disservice to students, to schools and to the wider community.

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

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ACSSO Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry – Submission 326

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) is the national peak body representing the needs, interests and priorities of the parents, families and school communities of the some 2.3 million young people who attend Australia's public schools.

Since the Rudd Labor Government was elected in late 2007 we have seen a welcome turnaround in education– and an accelerating focus on transformative change aimed at moving all the levers of education forward together.

The ultimate purpose of these many and various initiatives is to contribute to achieving Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard recently affirmed commitment to Australia's families: "We want to make sure that every student – in every community – can achieve their potential".

That is an aspiration which every parent, every family and every community will warmly applaud.

The learning and development of every young person must be designed to equip them to operate effectively in the increasing complexity of the knowledge-based economies of the modern world; and to successfully manage and navigate an every expanding array of data and information flows.

Every child's learning and development necessarily begins with a firm foundation in literacy and numeracy skills – and then must develop in ways that encourage their problem solving skills, research, reasoning and analytical skills and their wider creativity: and as an essential element in this we need to equip them as confident, effective self-directing learners.

Just as for the development of their healthy active lifestyles and physical fitness we seek the provision of a well-equipped gymnasium and sporting areas under the mentoring, guidance and facilitation of a skilled professional coach – so in their cognitive development and learning we would necessarily and essentially a well equipped library and the skilled professional mentoring, guidance and facilitation of a trained Teacher-Librarian.

The Gymnasium of the mind!

The provision of a dedicated and well equipped and maintained school library is every bit as essential as each and every other specialised purpose-built facility in the school – like science labs and music rooms and language laboratories.

And the provision of the trained teacher-librarian as vitally important as the trained and skilled professionals from each of those other specialised disciplines of science, languages and music.

Read entire ACSSO submission on the Inquiry Website:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/subs/sub326.pdf>

- Read the Australian Education Union submission at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/subs/sub113.pdf>
- Access all 367 submissions at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/subs.htm>
- See Program of Public Hearings in June and July 2010 in Canberra, Darwin, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth – and access the transcript of previous public hearings: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/hearings.htm>

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TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Intelligent design to be taught in Queensland schools under national curriculum

Carly Hennessy, Sunday Mail, 30 May 2010

CREATIONISM and intelligent design will be taught in Queensland state schools for the first time as part of the new national curriculum. Creationists dismiss the science of evolution, instead believing that living things are best explained by an intelligent being or God, rather than an undirected process such as natural selection.

The issue of creationism being taught in schools has caused huge controversy in the US, where some fundamentalist religious schools teach it as a science subject instead of Darwin's theory of evolution.

In Queensland schools, creationism will be offered for discussion in the subject of ancient history, under the topic of "controversies".

Teachers are still formulating a response to the draft national curriculum, scheduled to be introduced next year. Queensland History Teachers' Association head Kay Bishop said the curriculum asked students to develop their historical skills in an "investigation of a controversial issue" such as "human origins (eg, Darwin's theory of evolution and its critics)". "It's opening up opportunities for debate and discussion, not to push a particular view," Ms Bishop said. Classroom debate about issues encouraged critical thinking – an important tool, she said.

Associated Christian Schools executive officer Lynne Doneley welcomed the draft curriculum, saying it cemented the position of a faith-based approach to teaching. "We talk to students from a faith science basis, but we're not biased in the delivery of curriculum," Mrs Doneley said. "We say, 'This is where we're coming from' but allow students to make up their own minds."

But Griffith University humanities lecturer Paul Williams said it was important to be cautious about such content. "It's important that education authorities are vigilant that this is not a blank cheque to push theological barrows," Mr Williams said. "I would be loath to see it taught as theory. It's up there with the world being occupied by aliens since Roswell."

Read entire article: <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/intelligent-design-to-be-taught-in-queensland-schools-under-national-curriculum/story-e6freoof-1225872896736>

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History channelled: left-wing bias in teaching

Kevin Donnelly, ABC The Drum Unleashed, 31 May 2010

Julia Gillard, the Commonwealth Minister for Education, and Stuart Macintyre, an academic from the University of Melbourne, argue that the new national history curriculum is balanced and that critics are wrong to label it left-wing.

They're wrong. Anyone reading the two syllabus documents, covering kindergarten to year 10 and years 11 and 12, can be left in no doubt that schools across Australia will soon be forced to teach a new-age and politically correct view of history and Australia's place in the world.

History, like every other subject in the national curriculum, has to be taught through the politically correct prism of Aboriginal, Asian and environmental perspectives. Forget the importance of Australia's Western heritage or the impact of science, technology and industry in overcoming poverty and eradicating disease.

In the years K-10 curriculum students are told to study the "contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Australian nation", the "significance of Dreaming and the perspectives and meaning in Dreaming stories" and to "explain the key features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies".

In the 29 pages of the K-10 syllabus, 'Christendom' is mentioned once and 'Christian' also once, but only in the context of studying other religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Judaism and Islam.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/stories/s2913756.htm>

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BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

BER issues slip under the media radar

Anne Connolly, ABC The Drum Unleashed, 31 May 2010

Unless you read The Australian, you may have missed one of the country's biggest stories concerning the handling of the historic \$16.2 billion Building the Education Revolution. Murdoch's national flagship has uncovered some disturbing details about the stimulus spend and raised real questions about both federal and state administration of it.

So why hasn't the rest of the media given the issue the same coverage?

There's little doubt that the Oz started its "School Watch" series as part of an ideologically driven campaign. But the thing is - this investigation has actually borne fruit! In short, it calculates that hundreds of millions of dollars have been wasted on management fees and overpriced buildings for public schools. The details should have had journos in the federal and state press galleries scrambling to catch up. But strangely, they're not. Even now with seven separate federal and state inquiries, audits and investigations into the scheme, the media has not become the pack that it so often falls into when the scent of scandal fills the air.

It's well known that it is newspapers which most often set the news agenda for radio and TV so Fairfax's failure to come to the party on this one has had far reaching effects in terms of wider media coverage - and that unfortunately includes the ABC. Although the SMH has published the occasional article, the story has been missing from the front page and its much needed analysis is nowhere. So what happened? Could it be something as simple as prejudice towards The Oz's initial intentions which later transformed into a feeling that it was too far behind to catch up to such an investigation?

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/05/31/2913850.htm>

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RELIGION & ETHICS

God in the classroom

Insight, SBS TV, 25 May 2010

There's an upheaval happening in the teaching of religion in NSW's public primary schools.

For more than 100 years more church leaders and volunteers have given religious instruction to primary school kids in public schools across Australia.

This goes right back to legislation put in place in 1880.

But for the kids whose parents don't want them to receive the religious instruction on offer, they often find themselves watching videos, colouring in or as some have put it 'twiddling their thumbs'.

Parents have asked for a more productive alternative.

Currently in NSW, 10 primary schools are trialling a 10 week "ethics class" as an alternative to religious instruction.

Insight brings together parents, children and faith leaders to discuss how religion should be taught in our public schools and whether there's still room for God in 2010.

Watch the program online: <http://news.sbs.com.au/insight/episode/index/id/232#watchonline>

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Ethics dilemma for Hills Catholic churches

Helen Gregory, Hills News, 25 May 2010

THERE is an "uncertain future" ahead for Catholic classes in state schools if ethics lessons are allowed to run at the same time.

Our Lady of the Angels in Rouse Hill was one of many churches in the Parramatta Diocese to encourage parishioners at weekend Masses to sign a petition opposing the teaching of ethics classes in time set aside for special religious education (SRE), also known as scripture.

Our Lady of the Angels Parish priest Father Warren Edwards spoke on behalf of the Parramatta Diocese when he said parents should not be forced to decide between sending their children to scripture or ethics classes.

"We'd rather both be available to kids, if they so wish," he said. "Ethics classes in themselves might be a good thing and the Christian kids who go to scripture would not be able to go along if they're both on at the same time."

He expects his parish to "get behind" the petition, which was drawn up by the Bishop of Wollongong, Bishop Peter Ingham.

Read entire article: <http://www.hillsnews.com.au/news/local/news/general/ethics-dilemma-for-hills-catholic-churches/1838571.aspx>

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School ethics trial cops it two ways

Inner West Courier, 27 May 2010

A two-pronged attack has been launched on the current ethics trial in public schools with one Christian lobby group enlisting state-wide support to have the classes moved to another time slot and another religious group asking for money to protect scripture.

The Save Our Scripture campaign is run by David Hutt, the NSW director of the Australian Christian Lobby, who confirmed that thousands of signatures had already been collected. The petition states that ethics classes were "in direct competition" with special religious education (SRE) classes and should be "offered at a time separate from SRE".

He said he had received hundreds of emails from parents who wished their children could attend both classes.

Haberfield Baptist Church pastor Matthew Beckenham said he had collected about 50 signatures from his congregation. "It disadvantages kids that are going to scripture. I don't know if it's an intentional discrimination but kids can't be in two places at the same time."

Read entire article: <http://inner-west-courier.wherelive.com.au/news/story/school-ethics-trial-cops-it-two-ways/>

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Religious Education & School Ethics Classes

NSW Parliament Hansard, Page: 22286, 27 May 2010

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I ask the Attorney General, the Hon. John Hatzistergos, a question without notice. Has the Government sought the advice of the Crown Solicitor regarding the legality, under the Education Act 1990, of the current trial of an ethics course in primary schools during times set aside for special religious education? If so, what advice has been received? If not, when will the Government seek this advice and will the Government make public any such legal advice?

The Hon. JOHN HATZISTERGOS: Any advice in relation to matters relating to education would be sought by the Minister for Education and Training or her department and would ordinarily be the subject of privilege. I am not aware of any such advice having been brought to my attention.

Source: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parliament/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LC2010051102>

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CYBER BULLYING

Time to tackle cyber bullies

Jessica Mahar, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 2010

...Cyber bullying has been around for years now, and experts believe outdated laws need to be changed to improve the legal protection of victims of bullying and cyber bullying.

A former chief justice of the Family Court of Australia, Alastair Nicholson, believes bullying itself needs to be considered a criminal offence. "You have to find some other offence and fit it into that. Obviously, if it involves physical incidents it is assault, but it is not so easy if it's psychological bullying. You can sometimes fit it into stalking legislation but it is not always as simple to prove. You just can't use old-fashioned laws that were designed to deal with something else."

Nicholson, the chairman of the National Centre Against Bullying, said legislation had not kept up with fast-paced technological change. "At least if you are being bullied at school you can go home and get away from it, but with cyber bullying you are getting things on your phone, your computer, often offensive photos - it's never-ending. These kids are just being subjected to a campaign of ridicule and hatred."

Laws designed for adult offences do not fit some actions of young people, he says. "And if a young person sends something that contains sexually explicit material then the person taking it, sending it or downloading it can be charged with child pornography offences and it doesn't quite fit because these offences were really created to deal with child paedophiles."

Recently the state government made public its response to an upper house inquiry into bullying, responding to 25 recommendations dealing with issues such as collecting data on the number of cases, requiring schools to submit annual reports on bullying and developing guidelines for schools on cyber bullying in and out of school hours.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/digital-life/digital-life-news/time-to-tackle-cyber-bullies-20100530-wnj3.html>

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HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Schools key to winning the battle of the bulge

Kate Benson, Sydney Morning Herald, 30 May 2010

A PROGRAM in which school students spend almost four hours per week learning about nutrition and food preparation could be the key to shattering Australia's obesity epidemic, dietitians have been told.

One in four Australian children are overweight and one in 20 are obese but visiting obesity expert Craig Johnston, who has been running courses for teens in Texas for six years, says few children are taught to read food labels or prepare meals. "They see meals go into a microwave and then put on the table but they have no idea what has gone into them," Dr Johnston said.

About 600 children in four schools in Houston spent 45 minutes a day for six months studying nutrition and meal preparation. A study of 60 participants showed that after one year about 80 per cent weighed less than they did when the program started. After two years, 62 per cent still weighed less.

"Obesity is increasing at an alarming rate, both in the United States and Australia," said Dr Johnston, an instructor at the Children's Nutrition Research Centre, based at Baylor College of Medicine. "We really are heading toward a pandemic and there are not a lot of programs which have been proven to work. You can get kids intensive intervention and watch over them while they lose weight but, once they leave [the program], the world takes over and there are a lot of things in society that promote us to be overweight or obese."

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/wellbeing/schools-key-to-winning-the-battle-of-the-bulge-20100529-wmfu.html>

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DISABILITY & EDUCATION

Disabled boy's education funding slashed

Andy Drummond, the Age, 13 May 2010 (AAP)

A disabled Sydney boy's education funding has been slashed despite his family's goodwill in trying to save the NSW government \$1 million in renovation works at a local school.

When it came time for wheelchair-bound Daniel Clarke to attend secondary school, Davidson High, in Sydney's northern suburbs, would have needed extensive renovations to cater for his special needs.

The works were estimated to cost some \$1 million.

The Clarke family decided instead that Daniel, now aged 13, would attend Northern Beaches Christian School, which was already equipped to cater for the cerebral palsy-sufferer's needs in getting about.

However, the move to a non-government school resulted in Daniel losing 80 per cent of the funding support for his teacher's aide, forcing his family to find \$25,000 a year to cover the cost of the position.

Read entire article: <http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/disabled-boys-education-funding-slashed-20100513-v1aw.html>

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POLITICS OF EDUCATION

Coalition defends education spending cuts

Jewel Topsfield & Dan Harrison, the Age, 21 May 2010

THE Coalition has defended its plan to slash the education budget, vowing to "cut out the middleman" and fund programs directly rather than funnelling money through the states.

Opposition education spokesman Christopher Pyne was yesterday forced to clarify that programs to tackle disadvantage and teacher shortage were expected to survive the Coalition axe.

The future of programs such as Teach for Australia - where non-teaching graduates are placed in some of the nation's toughest classrooms - appeared to be in jeopardy after the Coalition announced \$425 million of cuts to programs to improve teacher quality.

But Mr Pyne said some of the savings would be offset by lower-cost Coalition programs. "Teach for Australia would be precisely the kind of organisation which would benefit from a Coalition policy of direct funding," Mr Pyne said. "We believe in cutting out the middleman and not double-handling taxpayers' money through Commonwealth and state bureaucracies."

He said the Coalition had its own policy about teacher quality, which it would announce closer to the election. "I think Teach for Australia and many other organisations will be immensely satisfied with the Coalition's policy when announced," he said. The \$22 million Teach for Australia program, modelled on a similar program in the US, is funded mostly by the federal government.

School principals and teacher unions yesterday hit out at the Coalition's plans to cut more than \$3 billion from education in the search for savings.

Other proposed cuts that were detailed by opposition finance spokesman Andrew Robb earlier this week included \$700 million earmarked for computers in schools, \$425 million from a program to lift teacher quality, \$968 million allocated to building trades training centres in secondary schools and more than \$1 billion for the Productivity Places skills training program.

Australian Secondary Principals Association president Sheree Vertigan said the Coalition's cuts were "strange" given its stated desire to lift productivity.

Read entire article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/coalition-defends-education-spending-cuts-20100520-vow4.html>

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Education equals more jobs: Gillard

The Age, May 26, 2010 (AAP)

Australia stands to be \$100 billion richer and have 500,000 more people in work each year if the Rudd government meets all its long-term educational goals.

Education Minister Julia Gillard has released external modelling assessing the economic impact of education reform on the country by the year 2040.

The government has set out a list of stated aims it wants to meet by the year 2040. It includes a system of paid parental leave, an increase to the childcare rebate to 50 per cent and outcomes from early childhood programs.

By the year 2015, it wants 90 per cent of the population to have completed year 12, and 40 per cent to have completed a university degree by 2025.

Ms Gillard also hopes to halve the proportion of 20- to 64-year-olds without Certificate III qualifications.

The KPMG EconTech modelling, commissioned by the government, showed there were huge potential gains if the government succeeds, Ms Gillard said.

"Lack of education is hurting the life chances of Australians today," Ms Gillard said. "In the future, lack of skills and qualifications will harm individuals even more, with around 60 per cent of new jobs projected to need higher levels of skills."

So it was more important than ever to succeed on educational reform.

Read entire article: <http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/education-equals-more-jobs-gillard-20100526-wcr8.html>

Read full transcript of Hon Julia Gillard Address to National Press Club on 26 May 2010 "The value of reform: A stronger and fairer Australia":

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_100526_163502.aspx

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AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

ACT: Innovation, commitment mark top teachers

Frances Stewart, Canberra Times, 30 May 2010

THEY created a special class for gifted students, provided early-morning fitness and breakfast programs, worked tirelessly with disabled children, helped indigenous students reach their potential and committed their careers to public schools.

They are the territory's top teachers and they were recognised for their contribution to ACT schools at the 2010 Public Education Awards at the Hyatt Hotel on Friday.

Creating special classes for gifted and talented students was just one of the innovative ideas over the past 18 years that helped Kaleen Primary's Grace Dunlop win the award for Outstanding Principal.

Amaroo School's Zac Hain was named the Outstanding Teacher for 2010. Teaching classes from kindergarten to Year 10 at the school over the years, Mr Hain also helps out with a before-school exercise program, a breakfast club, takes part in lunchtime maths tutoring and volunteers in community groups for disadvantaged children and young carers.

The recipient of the Outstanding Education Support Award was Laurie Fiddian, who has worked tirelessly for 16 years as a learning support assistant and front-office assistant at Cranleigh School, which provides educational programs for young children with developmental delays, autism and intellectual disabilities.

Also supporting students with special education needs, indigenous education assistant Sharon Roberts, of Jervis Bay School, was named the 2010 School Hero.

Australian Education Union executive officer Sue Billington was named the winner of the AEU's Public Education Award for her 30-year contribution to public education, developing extensive and invaluable corporate knowledge that underpins the work of the union

Read entire article: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/innovation-commitment-mark-top-teachers/1844052.aspx>

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ACT launches 10-year vision for infrastructure

ABC News, 1 June 2010

The ACT Government has unveiled its first 10-year infrastructure plan with big investment in education, transport and health.

The plan foreshadows dedicated bus lanes, new schools in Molonglo and Eastlake, more CIT campuses, a new Supreme Court and a transformed public health system.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope says the plan will be updated annually in consultation with the community and industry. He says it includes both short and medium-term priorities as well as long-term projects such as a very fast train (VFT).

"The ACT Government knows the importance of high quality infrastructure to the economic prosperity of our community and the effective delivery of services," he said. "Investment in infrastructure is an investment in our future."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/01/2914712.htm>

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NSW: Armidale schools take out swag of regional awards

Armidale Express, 31 May, 2010

PUBLIC Education Day was celebrated in New England last Thursday with the presentation of awards of excellence to schools, teachers and staff during a ceremony at Narrabri High School.

Regional director Jim White commended the spirit of endeavour active in the region's public schools and referred to the winners as 'the pinnacle of educational achievement'.

Kate McKay from Uralla Central School was honoured for excellence in teaching practice. In her relieving assistant principal role, Kate actively fosters the professional development of her colleagues and beginning teachers. She has been a driving force behind the implementation of Count Me In Too, Counting On, Accelerated Literacy and You Can Do It programs, as well as organising an enrichment program for Years 3-6 students in visual arts, science, mathematics and dance.

At Newling Public School, Cherie Patch received an award for Excellence in Educational Support. As School administration manager, Cherie has demonstrated her commitment to public education, 'selling' the system on a daily basis and dealing with enrolment enquiries with professionalism, efficiency and friendliness. .

Ben Venue received an Excellence in Sports Education award for its broad-based sporting and physical education program.

An Excellence in Promoting Public Education Award went to the Armidale Community of Schools. Consisting of 10 local schools, it was formed four years ago to take a strategic approach to how public schools promote their achievements.

Read entire article: <http://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/news/local/news/general/armidale-schools-take-out-swag-of-regional-awards/1844529.aspx>

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NSW: Dangers of heaters in schools concealed

Ben Cubby, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 2010

The secret government-funded study into the effects of unflued gas heaters on children in public schools seriously underestimates the level of pollution in classrooms, according to a scientist involved with the tests.

Air quality was measured in six-hour blocks, which masked dangerous peaks in nitrogen dioxide concentrations and is contrary to hour-long segments used by the World Health Organisation, said air quality consultant Len Ferrari, who is a member of the government's technical advisory panel.

The tests were also undertaken during an unseasonably warm spell of weather last year, when the heaters were being used infrequently and not at full power, Mr Ferrari said.

"There are major problems with the air quality aspects of the tests, which mean the nitrogen dioxide levels were seriously underestimated. And the conditions they were actually tested in are not the conditions you would expect to encounter in winter, so the value in measuring the air quality in winter temperatures is limited."

The government is standing by its tests, which it says it cannot release to the public until they are published in a peer-reviewed journal. The Department of Education and Training has declined to discuss the results in detail, but has previously said they show the heaters have "health effects but pose no major health dangers" to students.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/dangers-of-heaters-in-schools-concealed-20100530-wnio.html>

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NSW: TAFE loses \$50m to private schools

Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 2010

NSW TAFE has lost \$50 million in public funding to private providers who have won contracts to deliver adult language, literacy and numeracy programs to job-seekers.

The federal Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, has awarded contracts previously held by TAFE to private providers including the publicly listed Navitas global education group and Mission Australia, which enjoys tax exemptions as a charity.

The state government confirmed the federal government's competitive tendering policy had stripped \$50 million from NSW TAFE over three years.

The deputy president of the NSW Teachers Federation, Gary Zadkovich, said up to 170 TAFE teaching positions would be cut after institutes in Sydney, south-west Sydney, the Illawarra and Riverina missed out on tenders last week.

He predicted the privatisation of vocational education would lead to lower teacher salaries, lower standards and bigger class sizes. "This approach will take TAFE students down the path to the low standards and poor practice that characterise the on-the-cheap colleges for overseas students."

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/tafe-loses-50m-to-private-schools-20100530-wniy.html>

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NSW: Call to support teacher aides

Paul Bibby, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 2010

Support for NSW school students with special needs and disabilities is being compromised because the government is refusing to give permanent employment to the state's 5000 teacher aides, the Public Service Association says.

The aides, also known as school learning support officers, help special needs students with everything from basic skills and behaviour management to health care procedures.

Research has shown the assistance is crucial both in terms of the development of the student and in allowing the classroom teacher to attend to the needs of the rest of the class.

But the aides are only temporary employees, so they are not entitled to regular training and can have their hours reduced or cut completely at the end of a term.

In its submission to the recent Legislative Council inquiry into the provision of education to students with special needs, the union said this disrupted the stable learning environment for those students.

"The support officer and the student they work with don't know from one year to the next, or even one term to the next, how many hours they'll have or even whether they will continue to be employed at all," the submission says. "They

should be employed permanently so that even when the students they've been working with leave school their experience ... is not lost to the school."

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/call-to-support-teacher-aides-20100530-wniz.html>

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NT: Big Apple schools boss sees bright side in NT education

Alyssa Betts, NT News, 6 May 2010

NEW York City's education department boss says new NAPLAN analysis showing no Territory school made it into Australia's top 100 list does not mean some schools aren't doing a brilliant job.

Joel Klein, writing in The Australian after it published the lists on the weekend, said comparing schools by NAPLAN results was not enough to identify great schools and that an "absolute ranking" often hid success stories.

"Looking at The Weekend Australian's list, for example, you may conclude there are no good schools in the Northern Territory because their test results don't break the top 100," he wrote. "In fact, some schools in the Territory may be making considerable progress with more challenging student populations who enter these schools with lower starting test scores."

Mr Klein said New York City schools were issued annual "progress" report cards - getting A to F grades based on how well they're helping students learn from one grade to the next.

But the Federal Government yesterday was not keen on the idea.

Read entire article: http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2010/05/06/145141_ntnews.html

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NT: Batchelor Institute changes 'would be tragic'

ABC News, 1 June 2010

The removal of higher education courses from the Batchelor Institute would spell the end of the campus, the Australian Education Union says.

The facility received a multi-million dollar bail-out package from the Federal Government last year after a series of budget blow-outs.

The union says the institute plans to transfer second- and third- year courses to Charles Darwin University.

Adam Lampe from the AEU says that would be disastrous for Indigenous tertiary education.

"What it could mean is the end of the institute ultimately and that it is basically taken over by Charles Darwin University," he said. "So what we could see ultimately is an end to the institute certainly in its current form by stealth, and I think that would be tragic for Indigenous tertiary education."

The acting director of the Batchelor Institute has confirmed he is in talks with Charles Darwin University over a collaborative approach to higher education courses.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/01/2915352.htm>

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QLD: Government releases year 12 results breakdown

Chris O'Brien & Jessica Mawer, ABC News, 1 June 2010

Queensland Education Minister Geoff Wilson has warned against unfairly comparing schools' results despite publishing a comprehensive breakdown today.

Mr. Wilson says unprecedented information is available today on Year 12 school results. For the first time, the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) website shows the number of students school-by-school in each OP band last year.

However, Mr Wilson says it is important not to use the figures to compare schools without more information.

"It's important to provide more and more information to parents so that they understand what is happening in schools and the good things that are happening in schools," he said. "[But] no one piece of information should be taken in isolation - they should be taken together with all the pieces of information being made available."

"The results out today are a first - we're increasing the amount of information available to parents about what's happening in school," he said.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/01/2914615.htm>

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TAS: Aird silent on school admin debts

Zoe Edwards, the Examiner, 31 May 2010

THE state government is still refusing to outline whether it will cover the millions in back pay owed to school administration workers and how it might do so. The Examiner revealed last week that the Education Department has failed to pay up to 30 years-worth of after-hours call-out penalty rates to school administration staff.

The majority of Tasmania's 220 public schools could be forced to find more than \$100,000 from their budget to pay the oversight, with principals saying they would be forced to cut back on teacher aides, library books and physical education equipment.

The Community and Public Sector Union first lodged a dispute with the Tasmanian Industrial Commission in December 2008 in relation to the non-payment of availability allowances to school executive officers.

Education Department deputy secretary Greg Glass said yesterday that the department would continue to discuss the claim for payment of an availability allowance for school administrative staff with principals in term two.

Read entire article: <http://www.examiner.com.au/news/local/news/politics/aird-silent-on-school-admin-debts/1844296.aspx>

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WA: Schoolteachers back truancy tracking

ABC News, 1 June 2010

The State School Teachers Union has welcomed a State Government strategy aimed at bringing down truancy rates. The strategy will focus on increasing attendance rates in Aboriginal communities, with students tracked as they move from one school to another.

The Education Minister, Liz Constable, says the Government will also prosecute parents who fail to ensure their children are attending.

Union president Anne Gisborne says truancy causes major problems within the school system. "We know that persistent truancy interferes with a child's capacity to engage with the teaching and learning program and certainly makes it more disruptive for themselves but also for the class and the teachers in general.

"So, it is good to see that there is going to be a focus in respect to truancy."

The Opposition leader, Eric Ripper, has criticised the strategy saying the only way to bring down truancy is to change the way schools operate so they work around traditional events and celebrations.

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/01/2914697.htm>

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WA: Regional principal cautiously welcomes truancy scheme

ABC News, 1 June 2010

The principal of a north-west Western Australian school, targeted under a new strategy to reduce truancy, has warned the program will need to be adapted to take into account the needs of remote and Indigenous students.

The Education Department is adopting an interstate model, which tracks the movement of students between communities and towns to ensure their education continues.

The chosen schools include those in Newman, Carnarvon, Karratha, Tom Price, Kununurra and Wickham.

Kununurra District High School principal Matt Wren has welcomed the school's selection for the program as long as the template can be adapted to suit different communities.

"I would hope that there'd be flexibility exercised by schools to continue to show respect for the necessary cultural activities that some of our Indigenous families have to take part in," he said.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/01/2915062.htm>

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WA: Regional teacher's resignation puts students in limbo

ABC News, 1 June 2010

A former School of the Air assistant in the remote Aboriginal community of Patjarr says it could be months before children can resume classes.

Students are without a teacher after the resignation of Teresa Ayres, who left last week saying she quit because of a lack of facilities.

The children have been educated by the School of the Air since the community's local school closed last year.

Ms Ayres says the Education Department will struggle to find somebody to fill the position.

"It's very hard to get people to come out to a remote area," she said. "So it could be months before they even get any more education, we just can't answer that. It's up to us to find someone ourselves, so to find someone is not easy out here."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/01/2915079.htm>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

HTAA National History Conference

5-7 July, SHORE School, North Sydney

History Teachers Association of Australia National Conference.

The conference theme is 'History, Teaching History, Teaching History Teachers'. In part, the intention will be to support the implementation of national curriculum courses.

Read more at: <http://www.historyteacher.org.au/conference.htm>

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EDGE 2010: e-Learning: The horizon and beyond

12-15 October, Toronto, Canada

The conference program is intended to be broad, encompassing K-12 and post-secondary education and aims to provide a constructive forum for the presentation and discussion of new ideas, research and best practices relating to use of new and emerging technologies in education.

Sessions will focus on the application of technologies in teaching, learning, research, and educational leadership.

Themes will include such topics as Web 2.0 and 3.0, assistive technologies, fine arts and culture, skills training and trades education, second language, professional development, leadership, and aboriginal education.

Read more at: <http://www.mun.ca/edge2010/>

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REMINDERS

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

4 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Sydney, NSW -

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/>

12-14 August - National Interactive Teaching and Learning Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.iwb.net.au/conferences/australian10/>

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/

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

25-27 August - European Conference on Educational Research - Helsinki, Finland - <http://www.helsinki.fi/ecer2010/index.html>

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

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

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. 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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