



# 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 23, 6 July 2010

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### INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

#### NAIDOC Week 2010

4-11 July

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself.

Each year, a different city hosts the National NAIDOC Awards Ceremony and Ball. The host city, National NAIDOC Poster Competition and the NAIDOC Awards winners are selected by the National NAIDOC Committee.

Local community celebrations during NAIDOC Week are encouraged and often organised by communities, government agencies, local councils, schools and workplaces.

Read more: <http://www.naidoc.org.au/>

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### The AEU and schools across Australia celebrate NAIDOC week

*Australian Education Union, 5 July 2010*

The AEU joins with public schools, TAFE institutes and Early Childhood Education centres across Australia to celebrate the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week from the 4th - 11th July.

The theme of this year's NAIDOC week, 'Unsung Heroes - Closing the Gap by Leading their Way' is in many ways a testament to the thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members who promote the benefits of education to their own children. It also recognises those who give freely of their time in schools, TAFE institutes and ECE centres to educate all of our students of the rich and diverse Indigenous cultures of our country.

"The NAIDOC week poster, showing a mother leading her children through life's pathways of 'school, TAFE/university, work and success' is a salient reminder that education is the key to building and sustaining positive and productive futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students," said Angelo Gavrielatos, Federal President of the AEU.

The AEU notes that some schools have changed the timing of the celebrations, in some cases moving them forward or back, in order to cater for the school holiday period.

Source: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Trans/NAIDOC10.html>

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## **SELECTIVE SCHOOLING**

### **Asian pupils top the entry tests for selective schools in Australia**

*ANI, 24WorldNews, 4 July 2010*

Children of recent Asian migrants are outperforming students from English-speaking households to dominate the ranks of the top selective high schools in the country.

According to the Sydney Morning Herald, 42 per cent of children from non-English speaking backgrounds who sat the annual selective high school entrance test in 2009 won a place in the elite system.

Less than 23 per cent of students whose families speak English at home were successful.

The paper also stated that the percentage of students from migrant families entering the selective system has risen dramatically from 29 per cent in 1995 to as high as 62 per cent in 2008. The component is sharply skewed towards children from Asian-origin families.

Students whose families speak other languages comprise a little more than one-quarter of the total public school population.

Many of the successful students are graduates of the burgeoning network of private coaching colleges which gauge their success by their ability to secure places in the selective system and who tailor courses towards the "opportunity class" and selective exams. Coaching colleges are dominated by children of recent migrants.

Read more: <http://www.24worldnews.com/asian-pupils-top-the-entry-tests-for-selective-schools-in-australia/22733/>

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### **Selective schools likened to apartheid**

*ABC News, 5 July 2010*

A former president of the Secondary Principals Council says the selective school system is a form of apartheid.

Chris Bonnor is concerned that students who do not have access to selective schools are being disadvantaged.

He says there will be a huge social costs if students from inclusive schools are allowed to fall behind those attending selective schools.

"What we are doing in our secondary education in particular is we are separating out kids not only on the basis of academic ability, but on social background", he said.

"This issue not only relates to selective schools, it relates to schools generally that are able to select, substantially or even in a minor way, the students that they teach."

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/05/2944700.htm>

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## **Selectives are 'causing academic apartheid'**

*Anna Patty and Andrew Stevenson, Sydney Morning Herald, July 5, 2010*

Richard Teese, a specialist in school systems at the University of Melbourne, said the expansion of selective schooling in NSW - there are now 17 fully and 28 partly selective high schools - was creating "engines of high academic success", but at a significant cost.

"It's a very inequitable policy because it takes away cultural and academic resources from many sites and concentrates them into a few," Professor Teese said. "By operating schools like these you drain talent from many other comprehensive schools, which need what the French call pilot students - that is, model students who provide a really good example.

"The aim should be high standards everywhere. It doesn't make sense to have half a system that works and half a system that doesn't," he said.

Mr Bonnor, co-author of the book *The Stupid Country: How Australia is Dismantling Public Education*, said when two selective schools were established in the Hornsby area 15 years ago, surrounding schools were told this would provide more choice.

The schools made selective, Normanhurst Boys and Hornsby Girls, dramatically increased their share of high achievers, but the nine surrounding comprehensive schools and the low-fee private schools "lost out".

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/selectives-are-causing-academic-apartheid-20100704-zvxn.html>

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## **RELIGION & ETHICS**

### **SA academic to assess school ethics trial**

*Heath Gilmore, Sydney Morning Herald, July 5, 2010*

THE future of the ethics classes in NSW public schools rests with a little-known South Australian academic.

Dr Sue Knight, a philosophy lecturer at the University of South Australia, has been appointed to evaluate the ethics trial, which finished last week.

Dr Knight's speciality is the teaching of philosophy and ethical inquiry in primary and secondary schools.

The Education Minister, Verity Firth, said the evaluation would canvass the views of major stakeholders, including the religious faiths, which have fiercely opposed the classes.

Neither the public nor the parents of participating children will be invited to make a submission.

Dr Knight will determine whether the management of the trial by the St James Ethics Centre is a viable model for wider implementation in NSW state schools. She also will examine the efficacy of the course for improving students' understanding and skills in ethical decision-making, as well as make any recommendations for improvements.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/sa-academic-to-assess-school-ethics-trial-20100704-zvxo.html>

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## EDUCATION TAX REFUND

### Families missing out

*Jessica Wright, Canberra Times, 4 Jul 2010*

ONE IN five Australian schoolchildren is missing out on entitlements designed to assist with education because parents have not claimed the government benefit.

The Education Tax Refund offers eligible families financial assistance with educational expenses including home computers, laptops, internet connections, education software, printers, paper and textbooks. Treasury data has revealed almost \$400 million has not been claimed out of the earmarked \$1 billion fund from 2008-09, with only 59 per cent of the funds being accounted for in the scheme's first year of operation.

The figures mean almost 20 per cent of eligible children about 400,000 have not received the benefit of up to \$350 per primary school student and \$750 per secondary student in 2008-09.

Treasurer Wayne Swan urged Australian families who were eligible to claim the tax break to do so and to make sure the full amount was applied for.

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/families-missing-out/1875878.aspx>

Visit the ATO website for guidelines: <http://www.ato.gov.au/corporate/content.asp?doc=/content/00246920.htm>

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## OPINION

### Gillard ranks as a failure on education

*Kenneth Davidson, The Age, July 5, 2010*

It is appalling that the Howard-era school funding model remains.

For those who have studied Prime Minister Julia Gillard's history as education minister, her backdown over the resource rent tax will come as no surprise. One of Gillard's first decisions as education minister in 2007 was to announce that the government would extend to 2012 the reprehensible funding system for non-government schools. Introduced under John Howard and based on socio-economic status, it was due to expire in 2008.

The latest figures show the total resources per secondary school student available to Geelong Grammar is \$30,000 per student, including nearly \$4000 from the Commonwealth. By comparison, total recurrent expenditure on secondary students was \$12,288 for Catholic systemic schools and \$11,407 for government school students, after excluding the imputed cost of capital because it is not included in the official estimate for non-government schools.

Both the independent and systemic Catholic schools can "cherry pick" the education market. They don't have to provide remote schools and they don't have to take students with learning difficulties. Increased public funding for non-government schools has been used to produce a "superior" education environment, rather than reducing fees to make the schools more accessible to poorer students.

The original purpose of state aid for church schools (introduced by the Whitlam government in the 1970s) was to bring their resource levels up to the standards of government schools. That situation has now been reversed.

Read more: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/opinion/politics/gillard-ranks-as-a-failure-on-education-20100704-zvpt.html>

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## **BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

### **Opposition wants BER funding suspended**

*ABC News, 2 July 2010*

The Federal Opposition says common sense has not prevailed in the Government's decision to inject another \$2.1 billion into the Building the Education Revolution (BER) scheme.

Federal Education Minister Simon Crean says continued funding is needed to protect jobs and ensure that disadvantaged schools do not miss out on necessary upgrades.

A task force is currently investigating complaints from schools that building projects have been poorly managed and wasteful.

Opposition Education spokesman Christopher Pyne says the Government should put the scheme on hold until the investigation is complete.

"If Simon Crean had any integrity as a Minister he would immediately suspend those payments until he can be convinced that value for money is being obtained for taxpayers," he said.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/02/2943664.htm>

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### **School stimulus roting 'not widespread'**

*ABC News, 4 July 2010*

Federal Education Minister Simon Crean says he does not believe there has been widespread roting in the Government's school building program.

Former investment banker Brad Orgill is investigating claims from some schools that there has been waste and mismanagement in the stimulus program.

Mr Crean, who has taken over the Education portfolio from Prime Minister Julia Gillard, told Channel Nine that while there have been problems with the program, they have not been widespread.

"I am convinced from the initial discussions I've had with Brad Orgill [this] is not the case," he said.

"There are some instances of it, we have to address those and we are, we have to learn from it in terms of applications for the future, but they are not as widespread as people are making out."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/04/2944201.htm>

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## Public schools gypped

*Richard Fox, The Land, 4 July 2010*

New school buildings constructed across NSW under the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program have suffered from a "centralised" process.

According to the head of the taskforce set up to look into cost blow-outs, Brad Orgill, problems have been made worse by a lack of a localised system.

"Smaller projects have more complaints, it seems to me, because there's a fixed cost in the rollout, which is really not related to the size (of the building)," he said.

Calls have increased for a judicial inquiry into cost blow-outs in school building projects constructed under the BER program.

Read more: <http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/state/education/general/public-schools-gypped/1872460.aspx>

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## The BER: A WA Royal Commission?

*David Flint, Australian Conservative, 6 July 2010*

Royal Commissions are now in the news because of the allegations that up to \$5 billion have been lost in the \$16.2 billion "Building the Education Revolution" stimulus package. Reacting to claims that the public schools system had not obtained value for money and had been seriously overcharged, the then minister, now the Prime Minister Julia Gillard established an inquiry under business man Brad Orgill.

ACM of course takes no position on these matters, apart from arguing for the retention of and use of Royal Commissions.

Mr Brad Orgill has been criticised for expounding views close to the government when appearing before a NSW Legislative Council inquiry. (An extract of that evidence was broadcast by Ray Hadley on Sydney radio station 2GB.)

It is also said that Mr. Orgill cannot protect witnesses and for this reason has declined to hear some witnesses because of this: Anthony Klan "BER principals silenced by culture of fear," The Australian 30 June.

Cheryl McBride of the Public Schools Principals Forum, who compiled the complaints as part of a survey, said many principals were reluctant to go public with their complaints for fear of reprisals from the NSW Education Department.

Read more: <http://australianconservative.com/2010/07/the-ber-a-wa-royal-commission/>

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## Crean issues warning on school building waste

*Patricia Karvelas, The Australian, July 06, 2010*

AFTER 240 complaints about projects in the BER program, the new Education Minister has warned that funding could be withheld.

So far, \$75 million has been withheld from Building the Education Revolution projects in NSW.

New minister Simon Crean told The Australian 140 complaints had been received by the taskforce set up to investigate complaints about the BER. Another 100 complaints were made directly to the department, he said. Of the complaints, 150 were about projects in NSW, and in her last days as education minister Julia Gillard announced that she was withholding \$75m from that state until problems were sorted out.

Mr Crean said 55 complaints were about projects in Victoria. There were fewer than 20 complaints about projects in Queensland. Problems in other states and territories were in single digits.

Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/crean-issues-ber-waste-warning/story-e6fgr6nf-1225888236182>

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## DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

### NBN way to better services - think tank

*Telstra Bigpond, July 05, 2010*

Fast broadband should improve health, education and the environment, says an industry expert ahead of a two-day think tank.

Terry Cutler, chair of the ATC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, said attention should shift from infrastructure to public benefits now that a deal had been struck with Telstra on the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN).

"The current focus is mostly on rolling it out - there has not been nearly enough emphasis on what we are actually going to do with it," he said in a statement.

"A nationwide e-health platform would be a huge benefit and give us one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world.

"A second opportunity lies in rethinking how we deliver knowledge to Australians, not just in school but throughout the whole of our lives.

"A third potential use for the network lies in the fast-radiating network of sensors which are reporting all our impacts on the environment."

Read more: [http://bigpondnews.com/articles/Business/2010/07/05/NBN\\_way\\_to\\_better\\_services\\_-\\_think\\_tank\\_480814.html](http://bigpondnews.com/articles/Business/2010/07/05/NBN_way_to_better_services_-_think_tank_480814.html)

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### School internet to go fibre-optic 'this year'

*Andrew Colley, The Australian, July 06, 2010*

TELSTRA is on track to blitz the deadline for NSW education's \$280 million schools fibre-optic broadband project.

A recent progress report by the state's standing committee on rural and regional broadband, revealed that the project wasn't expected to be finished until September.

The NSW Department of Education was yesterday keeping its official line on the project's progress conservative, saying only that it was due to be complete "this year".

"There has been no delay with the project, which is running on schedule, and no recent issues have emerged that affect its delivery," a spokesman for the department said.

However, it's understood that the project is 99 per cent complete, with fewer than 30 of the estimated 2400 schools and TAFE sites left to be wired up.

Read more: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/australian-it/school-internet-to-go-fibre-optic-this-year/story-e6frgakx-1225888236288>

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## LITERACY RESOURCES

### World Literacy International

World Literacy International (WLI) was founded in 1990 by Dr Julia Solomon.

The company was set to manage the various activities of Dr Solomon including the Reading for Sure™ clinic. After the initial success of the reading clinic, Dr Solomon trained a number of tutors in The Solomon Method.

The Solomon Method solves the problems caused by the irregular word in English through the Reading for Sure™ program.

The Reading for Sure System teaching Kit provides a systematic instructional method which is introduced when pupils have achieved sound by sound reading of regular words in FAT CAT SAM but are unsure and lacking in confidence when faced with irregular words in print.

The Reading for Sure system simply adds a pronunciation code to existing print. It adapts the model of standard dictionary pronunciation codes while dispensing with the usually daunting dictionary to work out pronunciation.

Read more: <http://www.worldliteracy.com.au/>

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## AROUND THE STATES & TERRITORIES

### ACT: Co-principals for Kambah P-10 school announced

*Andrew Barr MLA, Minister for Education and Training, 22 June 2010*

Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr today announced Lynn Petersen and Pam Rosser as co-principals of the new \$56.5 million Kambah P-10 school.

Mr Barr said appointing co-principals was an exciting new initiative in ACT public schools.

"This innovation put forward by Lynn and Pam supports recommendations in the review of school based management as well as my drive to give principals more powers to make their schools even better," Mr Barr said. "It is about providing school leaders with more flexibility to decide how to provide students in their care with the very best education."

Mr Barr said both Ms Rosser and Ms Petersen are passionate about public education and have a wealth of experience in ACT public schools.

Read more:

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/139632/Kambah\\_and\\_Gungahlin\\_principals\\_and\\_website.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/139632/Kambah_and_Gungahlin_principals_and_website.pdf)

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## **NSW: Education minister misled, Palm Avenue parents claim**

*Northern Daily Leader, 2 July 2010*

PARENTS from Tamworth have queried whether bureaucrats were misinforming NSW Education Minister Verity Firth about the Dalwood Assessment Centre and Palm Avenue School.

They say the minister made numerous incorrect statements in an ABC Radio interview last week, which indicated she was being misinformed.

The questions come in the wake of alleged government department manipulation of an online survey of parents of children with learning disabilities who have used the service.

Tamworth parent Angela Brown quoted Ms Firth as saying the Palm Avenue School's relocation to Westmead Children's Hospital was working very well: "parents hopefully haven't noticed any difference at all".

"I can't see how she can possibly say this knowing there have been countless complaints made to her department about how the service has been compromised," Ms Brown said.

Read more: <http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/news/local/news/general/education-minister-misled-palm-avenue-parents-claim/1874436.aspx>

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## **NT: New literacy and numeracy strategy for Territory schools**

*Department of Education and Training, 1 July 2010*

A new literacy and numeracy strategy was released today to help boost education outcomes for Territory students.

Department of Education and Training Chief Executive, Gary Barnes, said Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy: A strategy to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes 2010-2012 was developed in consultation with DET's new Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce.

"We are delivering this new strategy to help all Territory students improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills," Mr Barnes said.

"They are the keys to children developing to their full potential and achieving good educational outcomes.

"To support the work teachers are already doing Territory-wide, this new strategy will ensure children leave school with the literacy and numeracy skills they need for life.

"The literacy and numeracy strategy 2010-2012 requires schools to look at their current practices against some common criteria, and teachers to look at students' progress against new literacy and numeracy targets in 'continua' which detail what stages students should reach in what year," Mr Barnes said.

Read more: <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/media-releases/media-releases/2010/july/new-literacy-and-numeracy-strategy-for-territory-schools>

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## **NT: Schools - Our Community Heart: Final call for public submissions**

*Department of Education and Training, 6 July 2010*

Territorians with ideas on how to maximise community use of school facilities are reminded that they have until this Friday, 9 July, to make a submission to the Department of Education's (DET) Schools – Our Community Heart project.

As part of this project DET is seeking opinions and views about how Territory government school facilities could be used outside normal schooling hours.

This information will be used by DET to develop a policy on ways schools can be used after hours for things such as community group meetings, adult education classes, sports training and cultural and language studies.

Department of Education and Training Chief Executive Gary Barnes said schools are important community assets.

Read more: <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/media-releases/media-releases/2010/july/schools-our-community-heart-final-call-for-public-submissions>

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## **QLD: Auditor says State Government's rollout of building education revolution is value for money**

*Tanya Chilcott, The Courier-Mail, July 02, 2010*

AN audit of State Government's rollout of the building education revolution has found it has been value for money.

But the report did not look at price comparisons between the Catholic and independent sectors with Education Minister Geoff Wilson announcing a third report to look at this.

PricewaterhouseCoopers partner Chris Johnson said they were unable to find any money wastage among the complaints investigated.

This comes despite a survey showing 26 per cent of stakeholders disagreed or strongly disagreed their school had received value for money.

Mr Johnson said these perceptions were based on comparisons with private dwellings which were not comparable.

Read more: <http://www.news.com.au/education/story-e6freoof-1225887035663>

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## **QLD: Gold Coast school sued over girl's fractured skull**

*Jeremy Pierce, The Courier-Mail, July 02, 2010*

THE family of a young girl who was sent home instead of to hospital after she received a fractured skull in a schoolyard basketball game on the Gold Coast has started legal action against the Education Department.

Chloe Marshall's mother Sam said she accepted that accidents happen but described the response by Upper Coomera State College to the incident on March 9 as "completely appalling".

School principal Lesley Englert said a first aid teacher made a "judgment call" that Chloe's injury did not require ambulance treatment.

But Ms Marshall said her 11-year-old daughter - who also broke her arm, still suffered headaches and can't play sport for nine months - was lucky to be alive.

"I know kids will have accidents. I remember breaking my arm when I was at school, but this is about duty of care, which the school failed to provide," she said.

Read more: <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/gold-coast-school-sued-over-girls-fractured-skull/story-e6freon6-1225887319266>

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## **TAS: Health and Physical Education in Schools Vital**

*David O'Byrne, MP, Minister for Sport and Recreation, 2 July 2010*

Minister for Sport and Recreation, David O'Byrne MP, today stressed the importance of physical activity in schools as he officially opened the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) Tasmanian conference.

Mr O'Byrne said the conference, titled "Making connections through Health, Wellbeing and Physical Activity", provided a great opportunity for health and physical education teachers to improve their professional knowledge.

"Schools are an important place to teach children and their families about the importance of physical activity and how it can be sustained over time," Mr O'Byrne said.

"Establishing long-term physical activity patterns at an early age is crucial, as evidence shows that patterns of inactivity continue from childhood through to adulthood."

Mr O'Byrne said although the National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend young people aged between five and 18 years take part in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day, many Tasmanian children are not meeting that target.

"Findings from the Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey released in April this year indicate only 15 per cent of secondary students in Tasmania met the daily exercise recommendations," Mr O'Byrne said.

Read more: <http://www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=29905>

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## **TAS: National Recognition for John Smyth**

*David Bartlett, MP, Premier, 5 July 2010*

The Premier, David Bartlett, today recognised the outstanding contribution the Education Department Secretary, John Smyth, has made to Tasmania's education system over the past four years.

Mr Smyth is leaving his post, after being announced as the interim Chief Executive of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator.

"John's elevation to this prestigious position is fitting recognition of his ground-breaking work in Tasmania, and nationally," Mr Bartlett said.

"John Smyth has shown exceptional leadership in implementing the Government's reforms in public education, on a scale not seen before in Tasmania.

"John has shown his passionate desire to lift educational outcomes for all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, and give every child the opportunity to succeed in life.

"Under Mr Smyth's leadership, Tasmania has halved the gap in early literacy and numeracy skills, for children who attended Launching into Learning programs," Mr Bartlett said.

Read more: <http://www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=29919>

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## **VIC: Pike breaks vow to release school building costs**

*Jewel Topsfield, The Age, July 5, 2010*

EDUCATION Minister Bronwyn Pike has broken her promise to release cost breakdowns for hundreds of school stimulus projects by the middle of the year, because the government is yet to award 12 per cent of the tenders.

Victorian principals have been clamouring for a breakdown of costings for the new halls, libraries, gymnasiums and classrooms being built under the program, arguing the total price tag often seemed exorbitant and saying they resented the secrecy.

The New South Wales government has allowed far more scrutiny of the stimulus program by making costs publicly available, which has led to claims of overcharging.

In an interview with The Age in April, Ms Pike said she would release more detailed data on project costings mid-year, when all tenders were let. She has repeatedly said that for commercial in-confidence reasons the Victorian government cannot release detailed costings until every project has been tendered.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/pike-breaks-vow-to-release-school-building-costs-20100704-zvtj.html>

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## **VIC: Feds urge school building costs be revealed**

*Michelle Grattan and Jewel Topsfield, The Age, July 6, 2010*

NEW Education Minister Simon Crean has urged Victoria to be as transparent as possible with its data about the controversial school building program.

Victoria has been accused of secrecy because it has refused to publish cost estimates of hundreds of stimulus projects, despite state Education Minister Bronwyn Pike saying in April she would release details mid-year when all tenders were let.

It seems increasingly likely the information will not be made available before the federal election, with Ms Pike yesterday telling Melbourne Talk Radio the final 12 per cent of tenders are expected to be awarded within the next few months.

However, Ms Pike has vowed to release cost breakdowns of projects before the state election on November 27.

Although he was reluctant to be prescriptive until he has talked to Victoria, Mr Crean's message was clear. "We want transparency out there so we can ensure that we are receiving the value for money and that people see that what they're getting is what they would like to get," he told The Age.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/feds-urge-school-building-costs-be-revealed-20100705-zxnq.html>

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## **VIC: Principals in stress payouts**

*Farrah Tomazin, The Age, July 6, 2010*

RATE parents, violent students and growing workloads have led to millions of dollars in stress payouts for principals, with some so worried about being attacked they have designed office "escape doors" to use when aggression escalates.

Figures obtained by The Age under freedom of information laws show dozens of public school principals have been paid a total of \$2.4 million in stress claims over the past five years - despite state government promises to rectify the problem.

Almost \$1 million was paid to 22 principals in WorkCover stress claims in 2005 and 2006. A further 32 principals were paid a total of \$1.07 million in 2007 and 2008, and 13 principals have received \$318,000 in payouts since 2009. But principals say the figures are just the tip of the iceberg, warning that unless more is done to address the issue, fewer teachers will want to take on the top job in schools - leading to shortages.

"A significant number of principals do not submit a stress claim because they're concerned that it's essentially a career killer," said Ballarat Secondary College principal Paul Rose.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/principals-in-stress-payouts-20100705-zxn5.html>

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## **WA: Minor adjustment to term dates for WA schools in 2011**

*Education Minister Liz Constable, 23 June 2010*

The State Government today made a minor adjustment to the dates for terms one and two in 2011 for Western Australian schools to provide sufficient time to distribute the test materials State-wide and ensure students in WA are not disadvantaged by the timing of next year's National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing.

The Government schools' term dates for 2011 were originally gazetted in December 2007 by the director general of the then Department of Education and Training under the School Education Act. In 2007, it was also determined by the Australian Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) that NAPLAN tests would be held in the second week of May in 2011.

Education Minister Liz Constable said that was in the best interests of all students and schools that a minor adjustment to next year's term dates be made to allow sufficient time to distribute the tests in a secure fashion and importantly, more time for WA students to settle back into the school environment after school holidays and ahead of the NAPLAN testing.

Read more: <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=133676>

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **The Reading Revolution!**

*27 July, The Boulevard Centre, The Boulevard, Floreat (Perth), WA*

"Whatever else we may put in the National Curriculum, reading and writing are the basic ingredients for success in education." Julia Gillard

We are on the threshold of the now official mandate to teach phonics from the age of five as a preliminary skill for literacy.

Phonics has been defined in various ways. It has been taught in the past as letter combinations that dictate English pronunciation with the instruction : " See the letters - say the sound ."

The consequence of teaching this form of phonics as the basis for English reading has been frustration for all but the 'natural' reader, seemingly an endangered species .

Is there an alternative method of teaching phonics which overcomes the problem of the sound-symbol inconsistency of the English language, reduces confusion , frustration and stress and raises literacy levels ?

This question will be the subject of a symposium led by Dr Julia Solomon, clinical psychologist and specialist educator.

Read more: <http://www.worldliteracy.com.au>

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## REMINDERS

7-9 July - Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.aifs.gov.au/conference>

7-9 July - Conference of Association of Women Educators - Sydney, NSW - [http://www.awe.asn.au/documents/AWE\\_WAVE\\_2010\\_conference\\_brochure\\_&\\_registration\\_updated-2010-05-26.pdf](http://www.awe.asn.au/documents/AWE_WAVE_2010_conference_brochure_&_registration_updated-2010-05-26.pdf)

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/>

4-5 August - Isolated Children's Parents Association Conference - Fremantle, WA - <http://www.icpa.com.au/Conference.asp>

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/](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](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/ism/>

12-15 October - EDGE 2010: e-Learning: The horizon and beyond - Toronto, Canada - <http://www.mun.ca/edge2010/>

13 November - Hands on Literacy Conference - Singapore - <http://www.handsonlit.com/>

2-5 December - Second Annual Asian Conference on Education - Osaka, Japan - <http://ace.iafor.org/>

11-12 March - Going Global 2011 - Hong Kong - <http://www.britishcouncil.org/goingglobal-gg5-general-information.htm>

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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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