



AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Health & Well-being Special

29 July 2010

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MENTAL HEALTH

One in four young Australians has a mental disorder

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Media Release, 19 July 2010

One in four young Australians aged 16–24 years had a mental disorder in 2007, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Anxiety disorders were the most common, affecting 15% of young people, with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder the most commonly experienced Anxiety disorder (8%).

Substance Use disorders affected 13% of young people with Harmful Use of Alcohol the most common Substance Use Disorder (9%).

Around 6% of young people had an Affective disorder with Bipolar Affective Disorder and Depression (3% each) the most common Affective disorders.

Almost one-third of young women had a mental health disorder compared with around one-quarter of young men. Young women were more likely to have Anxiety or Affective disorders while Substance Use disorders were more common among young men.

Young people with a mental disorder were more than 5 times as likely as those without mental disorders to use illicit drugs or misuse legal drugs; twice as likely to be current smokers and around 1.5 times more likely to drink alcohol at least weekly.

Around 17% of young people with a mental disorder had a severe level of impairment, with the remainder having a mild or moderate level of impairment.

Read more:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4840.0.55.001Media%20Release12007?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4840.0.55.001&issue=2007&num=&view=>

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Getting perspective on youth mental health

Melissa Raven, Australian Policy Online, 22 July 2010

The recent spate of alarming headlines about youth mental health needs to be put into perspective.

Monday's release of the ABS report on youth mental health has generated predictable reactions of shock and outrage. Drawing on data from the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, the Mental Health of Young People, 2007 report highlighted the fact that one in four Australians aged 16–24 years had a mental disorder in 2007, but only a quarter of them accessed mental health services (including GP treatment of mental disorders).

In the Australian, headspace CEO Chris Tanti declared this 'a shocking state of affairs'. On Crikey, Richard Farmer described the ABS report as 'depressing and distressing'.

However, although we certainly should be concerned about mental disorders in young people, these prevalence rates and treatment access rates need to be seen in perspective. Firstly, the prevalence figures are significantly boosted by relatively high rates of substance use disorders, particularly harmful use of alcohol.

A superbly-timed paper by Nicola Reavley and colleagues from Orygen Youth Health has just been published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. It emphasises that the gulf between prevalence and help-seeking in young people is largely due to higher rates of substance use disorders and low rates of help-seeking for these disorders, particularly by young men. In most cases, the substance involved is alcohol, and the disorder is harmful use, not dependence.

Read more: <http://www.apo.org.au/commentary/getting-perspective-youth-mental-health>

Read the Reavley et al paper: <http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.3109/00048671003705458?journalCode=anp>

Melissa Raven is an adjunct lecturer in public health at Flinders University

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Taking action on suicide

Hon Nicola Roxon MP, Minister for Health & Ageing, 27 July 2010

On average, around six Australians take their own lives each day. Attempted suicide is also a serious issue in Australia. More than one in eight Australians have thought about taking their own life, four per cent have made suicide plans and 3.3 per cent have attempted suicide during their lifetime.

The social and financial costs of suicide are substantial. The human cost is incalculable.

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will invest in a comprehensive package of measures to tackle suicide and promote better mental health in our community.

Federal Labor will redouble our efforts to prevent suicide through a \$277 million investment to support our communities, our schools, our health services and our carers to do more to identify and prevent suicide.

Our comprehensive package will target four key areas:

- frontline services for those most at risk;
- direct prevention and crisis intervention;
- services targeted to men; and
- looking after kids, building resilience and providing services to those at risk.

.... Overwhelmingly, the evidence shows that taking early action reduces the incidence and severity of problems later in life. Federal Labor will promote resilience and good mental health for both our young children and our young people by investing in providing more services for children with mental health problems.

This will include increasing funding to promote good mental health in our schools and additional services to treat 26,000 young Australians with serious mental health, developmental and behavioural issues.

Read entire blogpost: <http://alp.org.au/blogs/alp-blog/july-2010/taking-action-on-suicide/>

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Mental health a second-term priority, says Gillard

Tom Arup, Sydney Morning Herald, 27 July 2010

Prime Minister Julia Gillard says she will make mental health a second-term priority for a re-elected Labor government, promising an immediate boost of \$277 million for suicide prevention measures. The announcement is an effort to heal a sore spot for Labor, which has been criticised by mental health experts, including Australian of the Year Patrick McGorry, for a lack of spending in the area.

Ms Gillard said the package of suicide prevention measures would include more for frontline services, crisis prevention, services targeting men and services targeting young people. "A first-class health system means dignity and it means peace of mind," she told an economic conference in Brisbane this morning. "Mental illness is a place where quality services can make a real difference to people's lives, indeed it can save lives."

The plan would include psychological counselling services for 12,500 people who have attempted suicide or are at risk of suicide, 20,000 specialist psychiatry sessions for people with severe mental illness and funding to provide a respite for carers of mentally ill people. Other measures include making calls from mobiles to Lifeline free and shoring up safety measures at notorious suicide spots such as The Gap in Sydney.

But the plan was not nearly enough to win over Professor McGorry, who told The Australian he was "devastated" by Ms Gillard's announcement.

The Coalition recently promised \$1.5 billion towards mental health services.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-election/mental-health-a-secondterm-priority-says-gillard-20100727-10tcm.html?autostart=1>

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Leading mental health advocate Professor Patrick McGorry has labelled the Government's mental health announcement "off focus".

Robert Burton-Bradley, news.com.au, 27 July 2010

Australian of the Year Prof McGorry said the \$277 million in spending commitments unveiled by Prime Minister Julia Gillard this morning failed to address the needs of more than 700,000 young people locked out of mental health services.

Ms Gillard said the funds would be funnelled into four key areas: Frontline services, direct prevention, crisis intervention and mental health services dedicated to men and children. "I want to make it clear that mental health will be a second-term priority for the Government," Ms Gillard said.

Services to improve children's mental resilience would also be expanded by training teachers, parents, frontline health and community workers to help those with serious mental health, developmental and behavioural issues.

Young people who are reluctant or unable to access face-to-face mental health services would soon have an online alternative under the plan.

Prof McGorry said it was "great" that Ms Gillard was committed to tackling mental health if elected. However, he said the investments were "off scale and off focus" by failing to identify the priorities raised in the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission's final report.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/features/federal-election/labor-prime-minister-julia-gillard-inks-277m-for-suicide-prevention/story-e6frflr-1225897387696#ixzz0urtiWtE>

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More support for young mental health patients

Hon John Hill MP, SA Minister for Health, Media Release, 26 July 2010

An early intervention team has been set up to support mental health professionals working with young people at risk of developing a serious mental illness.

Minister for Health John Hill said the Early Psychosis Intervention Service (EPIS) gives mental health staff the skills and knowledge to help adolescents through a first episode of psychosis (FEP).

“Getting help early to identify and treat someone the first time they become unwell is absolutely critical – both to the individual and their family.” Minister Hill said. “Since the start of this year, the EPIS team have been working with mental health staff across the state on how to spot the first symptoms of serious mental illness in young people. This in turn allows staff to begin early treatment and hopefully reduce the chances of another psychotic episode.”

In most cases, the first episode of psychosis occurs in younger people aged between 16 and 25.

The EPIS is an important element of the state’s mental health reform plan and will be a focus of clinical excellence, research and support for both the Adult Mental Health Services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in SA.

The development of a specialist Early Psychosis Intervention Service was recommended by the SA Social Inclusion Board’s 2007 ‘Stepping Up’ Report and supported by the COAG National Action Plan on Mental Health, 2006 to 2011.

Read entire release:

<http://www.ministers.sa.gov.au/images/stories/mediareleasesJUL10/early%20psychosis%20intervention.pdf>

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Parents and teachers working together to support young people’s resilience, well-being and engagement in strong sustaining networked communities

Peter Garrigan, ACSSO President, 29 July 2010

In highlighting the need for a greatly enhanced and appropriately resourced emphasis on young people’s mental health and positive social and emotional development, the Australian Government rightly recognises the importance not only of early identification of potential risk factors – but also and at least as importantly, putting in place processes to enhance the positive environments and protective factors which support young people’s building of resilience, well-being, community engagement, positive outlook and a sense of optimism for the future.

In making these announcements, both the Prime Minister and the Health Minister have specifically noted the vitally important role of teachers and parents – a role that as much about building a positive and supportive developmental environment for young people as about supporting those at risk. Prevention from the early stages being much better and more cost-effective than remediation further down the track.

That this provides the essential underpinning to enable the building of schools as integrated learning communities and to enable young people to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their learning and personal development is well understood by the national parent bodies – not only through the extensive and corroborative body of research from overseas over the past thirty years and more – but also by their own action research in some hundreds of school communities in all parts of Australia over the past decade.

The Australian Government identified the need for an effective parent and family led program drawing on these understandings – and in 2002 commissioned the national parent organisations to develop such a program building upon the learnings from our previous and current additional research – validating every step of the program’s development across a range of school communities.

That program was launched in 2003 as “Families Matter: families & schools working together to ensure the emotional well-being of young people” – and was enthusiastically taken up by some 200 schools and their communities across the country.

The Australian Council of State School Organisations, and the Australian Parents Council, who jointly developed, ran and validated the effectiveness of "Families Matter" initiative to achieve parents and teachers working together to support young people's resilience, well-being and engagement in strong sustaining networked communities, are firmly of the view that a renewal of funding for this proven effective program should be a central element in the Government's strategies for schools and their communities.

Read more and add your comment: <http://www.acsso.org.au/2010/07/young-people%E2%80%99s-mental-health-and-well-being/>

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SPECIAL NEEDS

Teachers overwhelmed by special needs

Heath Gilmore, Sydney Morning Herald, 21 July 2010

One in 10 students in NSW public schools are disabled or have special learning needs and teachers are struggling to educate them, to the detriment of other pupils, an inquiry has heard.

Up to 15,000 students with disabilities and 50,000 students with learning needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and language disorders are being taught mainly in mainstream classes across the state.

Over the past 20 years, government policy has emphasised greater integration of these students within the school system. But teachers gave evidence to a NSW upper house inquiry that they were failing to meet the educational needs of all their pupils because of the unmet demands of integrated students, and they received little support.

The parliamentary inquiry chairwoman, Robyn Parker, said that improved infant survival rates and more sensitive diagnostic tools had led to the increase in the number of students identified as having a disability or special needs.

The number of cases of autism and mental health conditions, in particular, had risen dramatically.

Michael Coutts-Trotter, the director-general of the Department of Education and Training, said a record \$1.1 billion was spent on students with special education needs in the past financial year. More than 80 per cent of students with disabilities were enrolled in public schools and there were more than 1400 specialist teachers to support students with difficulties.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/teachers-overwhelmed-by-special-needs-20100720-10jjh.html>

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Designing Giant Steps School

EdPod, ABC Radio National, 22 July 2010

Giant Steps is a Sydney school for young people with autism. It's a school that demonstrates how thoughtful design can comfort and nurture children.

It originally occupied a heritage building, designed by colonial architect James Barnett, on the site of the old Gladesville Hospital.

But when the time came to expand the school questions arose about how the design of a new building could assist the development of children with autism and cater for their special needs.

Read more, listen online or download audio: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/edpod/stories/2010/2957780.htm>

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Rocketing autism numbers met with education shortfall

Heath Gilmore, Sydney Morning Herald, 26 July 2010

AUTISTIC children are being forced into mainstream classes because of a lack of places in specialised learning groups in NSW schools, an inquiry has heard.

The families and teachers of autistic children have complained to the NSW parliamentary inquiry about the failure to provide an adequate number of places, despite a sharp increase in students diagnosed with learning problems.

The inquiry heard that one in 10 students in NSW public schools are disabled or have special learning needs. More than 7000 students were classified as autistic last year, a 165 per cent increase since 2003.

These students are educated either in specialist schools, support classes in regular schools or mainstream classes with specialist support.

A mildly autistic child, Lachlan Deitz, has been part of a support class at Sherwood Ridge Public School in Sydney's north-west for most of his education.

These classes inside regular schools are staffed by a teacher and a full-time school learning support officer, catering only for children with learning needs or disabilities.

Next year, however, the 11-year-old will start high school in a mainstream class, despite the protests of his family and a Department of Education panel deeming him eligible for a support class placement.

His parents, Darren and Natalie, said all the support classes at nearby high schools were full and he had been placed on a list.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/rocketing-autism-numbers-met-with-education-shortfall-20100725-10qoj.html>

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BODY IMAGE

Launch of the Australian Government's response to the Body Image Advisory Group

The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, 27 June, 2010

Today I am delighted to announce that the Australian Government will be working with schools, the community and industry to take forward some of the key recommendations in the Advisory Group's report.

The Australian Government will be providing significant funding for The Butterfly Foundation, who as Australia's leading national charity on eating disorders and negative body image issues, is ideally placed to undertake this critical educational work.

Funding will assist the Butterfly Foundation to significantly expand their body image education services for students. The Butterfly Foundation will be supported to develop training and workshop materials that cover areas including media literacy. We cannot change the world that we live in today – we can't wind back the clock on technology, but what we can do is build resilience and confidence in our young people. These resources will help make sure that when a young person is watching an advertisement, they are media literate and understand what they are seeing and how to cope with it.

These resources will be piloted and evaluated by education and health experts prior to being rolled out to school teachers and counsellors across the country. Australian Government funding will mean that these resources will be distributed to around 2 500 educators who, through a 'train the trainer' approach will be able to reach over 100 000 young Australians.

The Australian Government will also be taking forward the Advisory Group's recommendation that we create and distribute a 'body image friendly checklist' for schools. We want schools to be safe places, where students feel comfortable and confident to be themselves.

Read more: http://deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_100707_075645.aspx

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CLASSROOM HEALTH & SAFETY

School heater report shows need for immediate action from Firth

John Kaye MP, Media Release, 27 July 2010

The public release of a key scientific report confirming the harmful effects of unflued gas heaters in NSW public schools shows the Keneally government must act immediately to replace the toxic devices before any more children are affected.

"The Woolcock report confirms what the NSW health department was telling private schools years ago. Unflued gas heaters are unsafe for kids whether they are standard or low NOx models.

"The report confirms that low NOx is a marketing term, not a scientific description.

"This report should spell the end of unflued gas heaters in the state's public schools."

Read entire release: <http://www.johnkaye.org.au>

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Risky school heaters to be removed

Ben Cubby & Louise Hall, Sydney Morning Herald, July 27, 2010

THE NSW government will spend an estimated \$400 million replacing all unflued gas heaters in public schools, despite insisting for years that the heaters were safe, after a report it commissioned showed clear links to respiratory illness.

The government announced its decision after keeping the results of a study by the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research secret for six months.

The report found that respiratory illness was higher in classrooms with the heaters and levels of nitrogen dioxide and formaldehyde were "substantially increased" when they were on.

"There are real health concerns about indoor exposure to combustion products from unflued gas heaters," said the report, published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Severe damage to children's lungs was unlikely in the short term, it said, but the study was not designed to measure longer-term impacts.

The Education Minister, Verity Firth, said a timetable to phase out the 55,000 heaters would be announced this year but could not say what it would cost or how long it would take. The opposition pledged to implement the replacement program should it be elected in March.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/risky-school-heaters-removed-20100727-10uek.html>

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Minister Firth hot foots it on school heater plan

Sydney Morning Herald, July 28, 2010 (AAP)

NSW Premier Kristina Keneally has given her education minister two weeks to detail the costs and timetable for the replacement of the state's unflued school heaters.

Education Minister Verity Firth on Tuesday announced 51,000 unflued gas heaters would be replaced, after a Woolcock Institute study found they increased the respiratory problems in some children. But she came under fire from the opposition and Greens when she couldn't say how long the program would take or how much it would cost.

An angry Ms Keneally reportedly called Ms Firth into her office on Wednesday to reprimand her for announcing the replacement program without cabinet approval, according to Fairfax.

In a statement, the premier later confirmed she had met with her education minister to discuss the replacement timetable and "budgetary implications".

"In order to finalise the government's response, the education minister, Verity Firth will now bring to NSW cabinet a proposal to outline the timeframe and budget for the replacement program," Ms Keneally said. "Cabinet had preliminary discussions several weeks ago on the issues surrounding unflued gas heaters. Cabinet will now consider the minister's plan to finalise the NSW government's response."

Read entire article: <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/firth-hot-foots-it-on-heater-plan-20100728-10vrz.html>

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CYBER-BULLYING

The Psychiatric Issues Behind Cyber-bullying

Harold Koplewicz, Huffington Post (US), 28 July 2010

Peer aggression is never normal. While it doesn't cause a child to develop a psychiatric disorder, it is a red flag for pre-existing mental health problems and can contribute to depression, low self-esteem, irritability and feelings of hopelessness. Bullies usually have problems with impulse control and hyperactivity. Many of them have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and a co-occurring conduct disorder.

Victims, on the other hand, are more likely than their peers to feel low self-worth and experience depression. Their feelings of low self-worth can be compounded when any form of bullying occurs, but their emotional response to cyber-bullying may be especially devastating.

Since cyber-bullying occurs in virtual space (and without physical contact), victims can experience the double anguish of being powerless to stop their harassment - and unable to prove who's harassing them. As for cyber-bullies, they can be more vicious, their feelings of empathy minimized, since they don't see the impact of their meanness.

Amid the whirlwind of complex questions on how to deal with cyber-bullying, many parents feel helpless, and schools are unsure where they fit in the solution. The problem can seem too large and bewildering for individuals to address.

But we can all do something about this problem, first by being more vigilant about our children's mental health (a preventative step that may sound obvious in the context of this article, but as a matter of public interest, child mental health has repeatedly received too little, too late).

Read more: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-harold-koplewicz/the-psychiatric-issues-be_b_655556.html

Dr Harold Koplewicz is a leading US child psychiatrist.

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HYGIENE

Hand hygiene: A big issue for schools and families that we need to stay actively involved in recognising and fixing as a community

KeithJane, Our Patch Health & Well-being Forum, 28 July 2010

Because the hand hygiene issue in schools has been around for decades it's old news and generally perceived that we have lived with it up till now, so why make a fuss.... Those at the coal face know the issues but no longer have energy or the commitment to make change happen. So we have become lazy and complacent as a nation in our resolve to fix a simple problem that we as parents, educators and a government should be concerned about but are not.

If you ask the Health Department and the Education Department they will tell you we were not prepared when the Swine Flu episode happened. Whether you think it was blown out of proportion or not, our schools - the hibernation point and centre for community distribution of viruses, did not have the first line of defence - which all the experts agree is soap and water - nor the education systems to create the natural desire and behaviour to use them.

Read more: <http://www.ourpatch.com.au/australia/forums/health-wellbeing/topics/892-hand-hygiene-in-schools-a-complacent-australia?page=1>

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Global Hand Washing Day

15 October 2010

Hand hygiene is so important as a first-line of defence against the spread of germs, viruses and diseases that for several years a Global Hand Washing Day has been declared; and in 2010 this will involve more than 70 countries around the world, with the aim of improving hand washing practices.

It is mainly focussing on children, as they are affected the most by diseases spread by poor hygiene.

Key sponsoring partner UNICEF recognizes the potential of children as agents of hand-washing behaviour change by coupling water and sanitation improvements in schools with hygiene education. The use of environmental health clubs, drama groups and student focus groups creates the conditions for children themselves to be agents of change in their schools, families and communities

Information on the Website quotes research which shows, if widely practiced, hand-washing with soap could reduce diarrhoea by almost 50% and respiratory infections by nearly 25% (Fewtrell et al., 2005)

The challenge is to transform hand-washing with soap from an abstract good idea into an automatic behaviour performed in homes, schools, and communities worldwide.

Read more: <http://www.globalhandwashingday.org/Index.asp>

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GARDENING & FOOD EDUCATION

Gould League's Multicultural School Gardens Program

Multicultural School Gardens combines community volunteering, multicultural understanding, gardening and cooking into a unique and enriching whole school environmental education project.

The Multicultural School Gardens project has been funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to deliver to a limited number of Victorian State and Catholic schools until the end of 2011.

Schools involved so far in 2010 are Apollo Bay P-12 College, Carwatha College P-12, Chelsea Primary School, Glen Eira English Language Centre (Glen Eira College), Mother of God Primary, Ardeer and Stonnington Primary School and there will be more joining them as the year progresses. We congratulate all the schools for prioritising this unique sustainable community focussed program.

This program has generated positive long-term outcomes for participating school communities and particularly in communities of new migrants. Healthy food and fitness messages are a valuable part of the program for our children.

Students work with their gardening buddies to create multicultural food gardens, growing fruit, vegetables and herbs from across the world. Together they cook traditional dishes using the produce from their multicultural gardens and share stories and information about different cultures. In turn, students mentor their buddies.

Read more: <http://www.gould.edu.au/html/MulticulturalSchoolGardens.asp>

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Evaluation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program

15 June 2010

The Evaluation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) Program has demonstrated that in the first two years of the implementation of the SAKG Program in Victorian schools, there are clear changes in child attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence in relation to cooking and gardening.

The overwhelming response by school principals and all other stakeholder groups was that the SAKG Program was well worth the effort required to maintain it.

The strong additional benefits of the SAKG Program to the school community were clearly demonstrated in terms of child engagement in learning, increased child willingness to try new foods, improved child knowledge, confidence and skills in relation to cooking and gardening, improved school social environment, and increased school community connections.

There were also indications that the SAKG Program may be of greatest benefit to students of greatest disadvantage thereby addressing health inequities in a way that is difficult to achieve in health promotion programs. Further research is required to confirm this finding.

The evaluation showed that the program would benefit from improvements to the components addressing food literacy, specialist qualifications in area of expertise, and curriculum integration. Schools also require greater support and guidance in relation to funding and volunteer recruitment to ensure the sustainability of the program.

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

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New report shows school gardening boosts child development, teachers life skills and makes kids healthier and happier

Royal Horticultural Society (UK), Media Release, 28 June 2010

The Royal Horticultural Society is urging school gardening to be high on the education agenda and recognised as a key teaching tool.

New research "Gardening in schools – a vital tool for children's learning" published today shows for the first time the enormous impact gardening plays in a child's well-being, learning and development.

Dr Simon Thornton Wood, Director of Science & Learning at RHS, said: "As the new [UK] government considers a new approach to the primary curriculum we hope they acknowledge the striking conclusions of our research and that gardens enable a creative, flexible approach to teaching that has significant benefits.

"Schools which integrate gardens into the curriculum are developing children who are much more responsive to the challenges of adult life."

Read more: http://apps.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening/uploads/documents/Press%20Release%20research_820.pdf

Read the Report:

http://apps.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening/uploads/documents/Impact_of_school_gardening_on_learning_821.pdf

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DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Promoting the essential ergonomic use of laptops to parents, teachers and students

The Laptop Ergonomic Awareness Program (LEAP), 29 July 2010

At LEAP we feel it is imperative parents, teachers and students are aware of the potential health risks of laptop use.

Extended and unbroken time spent on laptops, and/or non-ergonomic practices of seating and set-up, can cause discomfort. The hunched position students assume when using a laptop causes short term pain especially in the neck and back. In turn this can lead to long term damage to growing bones and muscles.

We know that those students with physical problems are unlikely to complain - quite simply because parents would then limit the amount of time they are allowed to spend on them and the internet - and no teenager wants that!

Because the laptop's screen, mouse and keyboard cannot be separated to suit the individual's needs, it is impossible to achieve a safe working posture without the correct external equipment.

Professor Leon Straker of Curtin University is regarded as one of the world's leaders on laptop ergonomics. His latest research shows however that one in five children have health issues directly related to the incorrect use of laptops.

Julia Gillard's government has spent vast sums of money on the Digital Education Revolution including supplying tens of thousands of laptops - but little thought has been given to the potential long term health effects that can be caused by these un-ergonomic products.

Members of the Laptop Ergonomic Awareness Program (LEAP) are committed to deliver information to parents and guardians on this important and overlooked health issue. Our main concern is that students, teachers and parents are not being educated on how to set up laptops correctly leading to our children using them the wrong way.

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

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REMINDERS

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/

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>

29 August-4 September - National Literacy & Numeracy Week - <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/NationalLiteracyandNumeracyWeek/Pages/default.aspx>

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/>

8-10 September - Creative Innovation - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.ci2010.com.au/>

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/>

28 September - Australian Professional Teachers Association Conference - Sydney NSW - http://www.apta.edu.au/component/docman/doc_view/36-aptaconference2010.html

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/>

17-23 October - Anti-Poverty Week 2010 - <http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au>

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>

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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