



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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[Australian Government Announces First Round of *Building Education Revolution* School Capital Funding](#)

Several newspapers have criticised the Australian Government for providing funding to non-government schools under the first round of the *National School Pride* program.

[Enrolments in Non-Government Schools Increase Despite Claims](#)

Data from the February 2009 Victorian Census of Schools has demonstrated that enrolments in both the Catholic and independent school sectors have continued to increase.

[Victorian Coalition Outlines Safe Schools Policy](#)

The Victorian Coalition has announced that, if elected, it would provide individual government school principals with greater flexibility to deal with student misbehaviour.

[Education Department Releases Data on Number of Students Undertaking Teacher Training](#)

The number of tertiary students studying teaching courses increased in 2008 but the number of students commencing teaching courses decreased.

[Reggio Emilia Australian Biennial Conference](#)

The Reggio Emilia Association will hold a conference in Adelaide in July 2009.

[William Buckland Fellowship](#)

The State Library of Victoria will offer an information session for teachers interested in undertaking a fellowship at the Library.

[Seminars for the week beginning 20 April 2009](#)

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Australian Government Announces First Round of *Building Education Revolution* School Capital Funding

Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 05/04/09; Sunday Herald Sun, Stephen Drill, 05/04/09; Sunday Telegraph, Sharri Markson, 05/04/09; ABC News Online, Nic MacBean, 06/04/09; The Age, Miki Perkins, 06/04/09; The Australian, Lex Hall, 06/04/09; Courier Mail, Stefanie Balogh, 06/04/09; Herald Sun, John Masanauskas, 06/04/09; Herald Sun, Editorial, 06/04/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Deborah Snow, 06/04/09; The West Australian, Kim Macdonald, 06/04/09; The Australian, Christian Kerr, 07/04/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald & Emily Sherlock, 07/04/09; Courier Mail, Stefanie Balogh, 07/04/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty, 09/04/09

Following the announcement by the Australian Government Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, of the first round of funding under the *National School Pride* (NSP) element of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program, several newspapers have focused on a supposed 'class war' between government schools and 'elite private schools'. Minister Gillard announced on Sunday 5 April 2009 that 5965 schools would receive a total of \$828.16 million for minor infrastructure and refurbishment projects under the first round of the NSP, that applications for round two would close on Monday 4 May 2009, and that all schools which did not receive funding in round one would be eligible to receive funding under the second round.

However, several newspapers have criticised the Australian Government for providing funding for 'the wealthiest private schools'. The *Herald Sun* claimed that 'a row has erupted over elite private schools getting hundreds of thousands of dollars...while needy state schools miss out'. They protested that several government schools which were in need of capital upgrades had not been included in the first round of funding while 'wealthy schools' had received funding. The *Herald Sun* also argued that 'most top private schools can raise substantial funds to build infrastructure. Poorer schools, however, cannot. While we welcome the Rudd Government's torrents of cash, some of it ought to be used to improve Canberra's aim'. They described the NSP as a 'scattergun' approach and called for any future funding to be allocated 'to schools that need it most'. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that 'most of the money will go to needy public schools' and recognised that 'not all independent schools receiving the handout are wealthy', but was also critical of funding for 'Sydney's best-endowed educational establishments'. The newspaper further argued that 'the inclusion of well-equipped private schools on the list will raise questions about equity in the Government's rush to stimulate the economy'.

The Chief Executive of AISV, Ms Michelle Green, claimed that critics of non-government schools receiving funding under the NSP were 'particularly mean-spirited'. She indicated that all schools that received funding were stimulating the economy, that there were needy schools in all sectors and that all schools had the same opportunity to apply for funding. She said that 'I think that this Government should be congratulated actually for putting out this money this way. They put this money out quickly – they didn't put fences around the money other than to say that every school in Australia should benefit. The money will make sure that all schools get the funds they need, not necessarily to one school over another.'

In response to the accusations, both Minister Gillard and the Australian Government Treasurer, The Hon Wayne Swan MP, have defended the BER program. A spokesperson for Minister Gillard argued that 'in the across the board sweep of the education revolution, we are not discriminating against school sectors. Our aim is to ensure that every school is a great school.' She also indicated that 'distortion that [suggests] somehow it's only private schools that have succeeded in this program is simply not correct – more than 60 per cent of the money has gone to public schools'.

Enrolments in Non-Government Schools Increase Despite Claims

Media Release, Catholic Education Office, 10/04/09; Sunday Herald Sun, Stephen Drill, 12/04/09; Media Release, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, 17/04/09

The *Sunday Herald Sun* has claimed that many non-government schools are expecting that their enrolments will decrease in 2010 and, as a consequence, are attempting to reduce their spending in 2009. The newspaper argued that schools were reducing expenses, including teacher salaries and bus services, to ensure that they could survive in tougher economic times. It also claimed that, although official enrolment numbers for 2009 were not yet available, they were 'expected to reveal a dramatic shift to "free" public education'. However, the Catholic Education Office has released a statement indicating that, based on the February 2009 Census, enrolments in Catholic schools had increased by 1.2 per cent in 2009. The Director of Catholic Education, Mr Stephen Elder, indicated that the figures 'dispel the myth, perpetrated by the Australian Secondary Principals Association, of a drift to the Government sector'. Independent school enrolments have also continued to rise in 2009, with enrolments in independent schools increasing by two per cent since February 2008. According to the Victorian Government's February 2009 School Census, more than 120,000 students are enrolled in independent schools. Ms Michelle Green stated that 'over the last five years the number of students in Victorian independent schools has grown by almost 14,000 – representing a 13 per cent increase. There has been a decrease in the number of overseas students which might reflect international economic conditions. If this trend is excluded, total independent school enrolments grew by a healthy 2.4 per cent.' Ms Green declared that 'the rise in enrolments is a further endorsement of the quality education offered by the 220 independent schools in Victoria...We know that the entire community is increasingly under financial pressures as a result of the prevailing economic climate but these enrolment figures confirm that parents continue to value highly the education provided by independent schools throughout Victoria. Independent schools in Victoria have continued to attract students despite on average only receiving a fraction of the funding available to government schools.'

Victorian Coalition Outlines Safe Schools Policy

Media Release, The Hon Ted Baillieu MLA, 12/04/09

The Leader of the Victorian Liberal Party, The Hon Ted Baillieu MLA, has announced that, if elected, the Liberal Nationals Coalition would implement a plan to address rising schoolyard violence. Mr Baillieu criticised the Victorian Government's recent changes to guidelines for government schools on suspension and expulsion of students (see Weekly Briefing 09/2009) and called for school principals to be given greater flexibility to deal with student misbehaviour. Under the Coalition's plan, government school principals would be given the right to suspend or expel students 'for the appropriate length of time at their discretion'. Legislation would be introduced to ensure that school principals the right to ban dangerous or harmful items from school grounds. The Sentencing Advisory Council would be directed to explore the introduction of stronger punishments for offences such as assault, vandalism and property damage that occurred on school property. Finally, Mr Baillieu indicated that the Coalition would invest \$2 million to establish a teacher professional development program to train teachers in non-violent dispute resolution. Mr Baillieu stated that 'the Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition will give power back to school principals because schools, teachers and parents need support in stopping violence in schools'.

Education Department Releases Data on Number of Students Undertaking Teacher Training

The Age, Miki Perkins, 04/04/09

Data released by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has indicated that the number of students who enrolled in teaching courses fell between 2007 and 2008. The figures show that the total number of students undertaking teaching courses at university increased in 2008 by three per cent, but the number of new students starting in teaching courses fell by 4.5 per cent. Minister Gillard claimed that the decrease in teaching enrolments was 'disturbing'. The Federal President of the Australian Education Union, Mr Angelo Gavrielatos, expressed concern that the decreasing enrolments threatened the future supply of teachers. He stated that 'there is plenty of evidence that shows that a significant number of teachers are about to retire, and that will put incredible strain across the country'.

Reggio Emilia Australian Biennial Conference

The Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange will hold its biennial conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre from Thursday 9 July 2009 to Sunday 12 July 2009. The *Landscapes of Rights – Rights for Living, Learning and Building Democracy for Children, Families and Communities* Conference will investigate what it means to have a strong image of children and to advocate for their rights, both as citizens and to realise their potential. Speakers will include Tiziana Filippini, pedagoga, and Ivana Soncini, coordinator for the inclusion of children with special rights, both from the Municipal Preschools in Reggio Emilia. Go to www.reaie.org.au/ for further information about the Conference.

William Buckland Fellowship

The State Library of Victoria is offering a fellowship for educators in the first five years of their career to expand their curriculum planning skills by working within the Education Programs Unit of the State Library of Victoria for one school semester. The fellowship includes funding for the applicant's school to backfill the applicant's position. A free information session for interested teachers will be held in the Conference Centre at the State Library, Entry 3, Latrobe Street Melbourne, from 5.00 to 7.00 pm on Thursday 30 April 2009. Applications for the 2nd semester of 2009 and the first semester of 2010 close on Friday 15 May 2009. To register to attend the information session or to obtain an application kit, call Linda Angeloni, Education Programs and Offsite Learning Manager, on 8664 7015.

Seminars for the week beginning 20 April 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 20/4	LOTE Topic Based Planning – Years 7 to 10 Teaching and Reading in the Early Years	9.30 am – 3.30 pm 9.30 am – 3.00 pm	Seminar Room Training Centre
Tuesday 21/4	Developing a Clear Sequence for Teaching and Assessing the Four Processes	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
Wednesday 22/4	Successful Steps: Supporting Students with Language Difficulties in the Primary Classroom	9.30 am – 3.00 pm	Training Centre
Thursday 23/4	First Steps Writing – Second Edition (Program A) Determining a Positive Team Culture The Bilingual/ Integrated Approach to Language Learning in the Primary School	9.30 am – 3.30 pm 9.30 am – 3.30 pm 9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre Seminar Room Board Room
Friday 24/4			

The Seminar Room is located at 20 Garden Street. The Training Centre and Board Room are located at 30 Garden Street.

Note: The AISV Weekly Briefing is also available on the AISV web site, including back issues. The AISV web site is at <http://www.ais.vic.edu.au>.

To obtain further information on any of the above matters, please contact AISV

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