



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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

Several interested parties have responded to media reports last week that enrolments in Victorian independent schools increased in 2009.

[OECD Report Calls for Changes to Australian Education Funding](#)

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has called for Australian governments to encourage students to complete a senior secondary certificate or equivalent.

[Schools Criticised for Chasing Unpaid Fees](#)

Media reports have been critical of schools that have undertaken lawsuits to recover unpaid fees from parents.

[Australian Government Launches Teach for Australia Initiative](#)

Minister Julia Gillard has launched a project to encourage high-performing university graduates to undertake teaching as a profession.

[Australian Government Announces Plan to Increase Corporate Support for Education](#)

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd will establish a roundtable to encourage stronger links between schools and business.

[Coalition Launches Education for Australia Website](#)

The Federal Coalition has created a website to enable interested parties to outline ideas to improve Australian education.

[Interfaith Education for Justice and Peace Seminar](#)

A seminar will be held to discuss how schools can implement justice and peace education from an interfaith perspective.

[Interfaith School Educators' Conference](#)

The Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia has organised a conference to explore faith issues relating to schools.

[Seminars for the week beginning 27 April 2009](#)

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Enrolments in Non-Government Schools Increase

Herald Sun, John Masanauskas, 18/04/09; Media Release, The Hon Martin Dixon MLA, 20/04/09;

Data has indicated that the number of children in Victorian government schools decreased by 1300 between 2008 and 2009. As previously reported (see Weekly Briefing 11/2009), the number of students in both Catholic and independent schools increased in 2009. According to the *Herald Sun*, the increase in enrolments in non-government schools was 'defying predictions that the economic crisis is forcing many parents to take their children out of the private system'. Ms Michelle Green, Chief Executive, AISV, indicated that the data confirmed that parents valued the education provided by independent schools, regardless of the economic climate. She stated that 'independent schools in Victoria have continued to attract students despite, on average, only receiving a fraction of the funding available to government schools'. The President of Parents Victoria, Ms Elaine Crowle, argued that the 'drift' of enrolments from government schools was 'a worry' but argued that the public should not assume that government school education was inferior. She claimed that government school parents 'potentially had more time to spend with their children, as they weren't taking second jobs and working long hours to pay school fees'. The Victorian Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon Martin Dixon MLA, claimed that the decrease in government school enrolments indicated that the Victorian Government had 'neglected education in Victoria'. A spokesperson for the Victorian Minister for Education, The Hon Bronwyn Pike MLA, indicated that the Victorian Government's school building program was 'rebuilding confidence in the education system'.

OECD Report Calls for Changes to Australian Education Funding

The Advertiser, Lauren Novak, 21/04/09; The Age, Dan Harrison, 21/04/09; The Australian, David Uren, 21/04/09; Australian Financial Review, Joanna Mather, 21/04/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald, 21/04/09

A report prepared by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has warned that young Australians will be particularly vulnerable to long-term unemployment during the current economic climate, and has called on Australian governments to do more to encourage students to stay in school. The *Jobs for Youth: Australia* Report argued that an economic slowdown and the associated contraction of the labour market disproportionately affected young people and stated that 'experience shows that in an economic slowdown, young people are more likely to stay in education or undertake advanced studies rather than look for work. Policy initiatives should seek to capitalise on this trend. The government should encourage more teenagers to stay in school...to boost their skills and improve their long-term career prospects.' The report argued that more students needed to be encouraged to obtain a Year 12 certificate or equivalent trade qualification, stating that 'the focus should be on retention until a...[senior secondary] qualification is obtained rather than simply on staying in education until a given age.' The OECD report also argued that the state-based senior secondary certificates should be replaced by a single, national certificate. It claimed that the significant differences in the basic structure of schooling in each state and territory created difficulties for students who moved interstate. While the report welcomed the introduction of a national curriculum for years Prep to 10, it also argued that a national senior secondary certificate would be 'likely to be more effective at standardising the content and the outcomes of Australian secondary schools than the national curriculum alone'. Finally, the report called for additional vocational education and training courses and apprenticeships programs to be provided through secondary schools. In response, the Prime Minister, The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, indicated that he would recommend to the next Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting on 30 April 2009 that a national 'learning or earning age' of 17 years be introduced. Under Prime Minister Rudd's proposal, students would be required to attend school until 15 years of age. From 15 to 17 years of age, students would be required to be in school, learning a trade or working. A spokesperson for the Australian Government Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, indicated that the Australian Government 'was not currently considering changes' to state-based senior secondary certificates. Go to

www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_33729_42325586_1_1_1_1,00.html to access a copy of the report.

Schools Criticised for Chasing Unpaid Fees

Herald Sun, Ben Butler & John Masanauskas, 21/04/09

The *Herald Sun* has criticised 'hard-hearted schools' for using legal redress to obtain unpaid school fees. According to the newspaper, 'elite private schools' were 'bankrupting parents' by launching lawsuits when parents failed to pay fees. The Principal of Methodist Ladies' College, Ms Rosa Storelli, indicated that schools tried to negotiate payment plans with parents who fell behind on school fees, and that lawsuits were a last resort. She stated that 'it happens at the end of a very long, sensitive and confidential process, one on one with the family'. Ms Storelli also indicated that 'a very small percentage of families...do struggle to pay fees. We don't wish the majority of families who do the right thing to pay additional fees because of those who do not.' Ms Michelle Green confirmed that schools and parents all found it difficult when they faced financial pressures. She stated that 'the priority objective of all schools is to ensure sound financial management so [that] they can continue delivering the best possible educational outcomes for their students. It is unfortunate when schools are forced to pursue unpaid fees through the courts – nobody wants to be in that situation'.

Australian Government Launches Teach for Australia Initiative

Press Conference, The Hon Julia Gillard MP & The Hon John Brumby MLA, 21/04/09; Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 21/04/09; The Advertiser, Maria Moscaritolo, 22/04/09; The Age, Miki Perkins, 22/04/09; The Australian, Julia Gillard, 22/04/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald, 22/04/09; Herald Sun, John Masanauskas, 22/04/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Anna Patty, 22/04/09

Minister Gillard has officially launched the Australian Government's *Teach for Australia* program, which is aimed at attracting top university graduates into the teaching profession. Under the program, based on the *Teach First* program in the United Kingdom and *Teach for America* in the United States, high-achieving university graduates would undertake an intensive, six-week course before starting an intensive, two year placement in the most disadvantaged schools. At the same time, the graduates would

undertake an accredited teacher education course. Graduates would be allocated an 80 per cent teaching load during the two year period. The graduates would receive support and mentoring from experienced teachers and business leaders. At the end of the two year placement, they would earn a full teaching qualification. The program will commence in 2010 in Victorian schools, with up to 90 graduates expected to be recruited. The program will be funded partly through the Australian Government's National Partnership Agreement on Teacher Quality and partly through donations, in kind support and mentoring from corporate sponsors. Critics of the proposal, including the Australian Education Union and the Australian Council of Deans of Education, expressed concerns about the prospect of placing inexperienced teachers with the most vulnerable students and claimed that the program would 'demean' teaching. Go to www.teachforaustralia.org for further information on the program.

Australian Government Announces Plan to Increase Corporate Support for Education

Media Release, The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, 22/04/09; Herald Sun, Ben Packham, 22/04/09

Prime Minister Rudd has announced a range of reforms that will be introduced as a result of last year's *Australia 2020 Summit*. He stated that one of the projects would be to establish a *Business and School Connections Roundtable* to determine how to encourage opportunities for business and schools to work together to improve educational outcomes. As part of this idea, Minister Gillard indicated that she wanted to fund a program that would create stronger links between secondary schools and Australia's top 100 companies. The proposal would see companies 'adopt' up to 27 secondary schools each. The companies would provide mentoring, work experience opportunities and curriculum advice to the schools, which would include a range of 'needy' and 'well-off' schools. Under the proposal, Minister Gillard indicated that every secondary school in Australia would be paired with a 'corporate success story' and suggested that the scheme should be run by the Business Council of Australia.

Coalition Launches Education for Australia Website

Media Release, The Hon Christopher Pyne MP, 20/04/09

The Shadow Minister for Education in the Australian Parliament, The Hon Christopher Pyne MP, has announced that the Coalition will launch a new website in order 'to engage with the public on how to improve our education system'. Mr Pyne stated that the Australian Government had introduced guidelines for funding programs such as the *Building the Education Revolution* program which prohibited schools from publicly raising issues or problems. He indicated that the website would allow schools to raise issues anonymously without risking their funding. Mr Pyne also claimed that the website would act as a forum for education policy suggestions and would allow 'interested parties to forward submissions to improve education'. Go to www.educationforaustralia.com.au to access the website.

Interfaith Education for Justice and Peace Seminar

In the lead up to the Parliament of the World's Religions, which will be held in Melbourne in December 2009, Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and the Griffith University Multi-Faith Centre are running a professional learning seminar on interfaith education for justice and peace. The *Many Faiths: One Humanity* seminar will include a keynote address from the UNESCO Peace Laureate, Professor Toh Swee-Hin, and a range of workshops that will explore methods by which schools can implement justice and peace education from an interfaith perspective, as well as ways that educators and the wider community can support students to make a difference in their local and global communities. The seminar will take place on Monday 4 May 2009, from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm at the EREA National Office, 9 The Vaucluse Richmond. Go to www.parliamentofreligions.org/templates/templateprepar.cfm?ppid=46 to register to attend the seminar. For further information about the seminar, contact Brian Garrone at EREA on (03) 9426 3208.

Interfaith School Educators' Conference

The Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia and the VCE Religion and Society Teachers' Network have organised the first *Interfaith School Educators' Conference*. The Conference will provide educators from all sections of the community to explore pertinent contemporary faith issues relating to schools and the wider community. The conference will take place on Wednesday 13 May 2009 and Thursday 14 May 2009 at Amberley Conference Centre, 7 Amberley Way, Lower Plenty. Contact Ms Sylvie Leber at jcma@vcc.org.au for further information about the conference or to obtain a registration form.

Seminars for the week beginning 27 April 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 27/4	Enhancing Learning through ICT	9:00 – 4:30	Seminar Room
	Understanding Multiliteracies and their application to the classroom	9:00 – 3:30	Training Centre
Tuesday 28/4	Enhanced Learning through ICT (Di Wilson)	9:00-4:30	Seminar Room
Wednesday 29/4	Enhanced Learning through ICT (Di Wilson)	9:00-4:30	Seminar Room
Thursday 30/4	First Steps of Writing – Part 2 of 2 (Aine Maher)	9:00-3:30	Training Room
Friday 1/5	Improving Reading and the Middle Years	9:30-3:00	Seminar Room
	ACMA Cybersafety Outreach Program	8:30-3:30	Training Centre

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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