



Values Education

Volume 3 Number 1, February 2009

- [FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS](#)
 - [Support at home increases chance of school success](#)
 - [New school networks for Australia:](#)
- [THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION: Towards a renaissance in Australian schooling](#)
- [NATIONAL VALUES EDUCATION PROGRAM: Values in Action Schools Project 2009](#)
- [BULLYING \(2 items\)](#)
- [VALUES, HEALTH & WELL-BEING: Richard Eckersley](#)
- [CELEBRATING TEACHERS: Tell the world about YOUR Favourite Teacher](#)
- [OPINION: The free-market: bad for the economy but good for schools?](#)
- [OPINION: Education must be about freedom of choice](#)
- [OPINION: Do Schools Kill Creativity?](#)
- [SCIENCE, RELIGION AND CHARLES DARWIN'S 200TH BIRTHDAY \(items\)](#)
- [CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP: Australian Citizens' Parliament 2009](#)
- [ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: National Solar Schools Program](#)
- [COMPETITIONS: National Art & Poetry Competition for Secondary Students](#)
- [CONFERENCES & EVENTS: \(6 items\)](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Support at home increases chance of school success

Queensland University of Technology, 13 February 2009

Family involvement can have a huge impact on the ability of children to learn and succeed in the education system, a Queensland University of Technology study has found.

Associate Professor Donna Berthelsen and Dr Sue Walker, from QUT's School of Early Childhood in the Faculty of Education, are both involved with an ongoing, government-funded, longitudinal study of 10,000 Australian children.

Data analyses from their study have so far centred largely around the influence of parents on children's learning and how parental involvement at school affects learning.

"The family has the largest influence on children's learning outcomes and how parents value school education is very important," Professor Berthelsen said.

"If parents are involved with their children's learning in the early years of school, it makes it more likely that their children will complete school and go on to further study."

Read more at <http://www.news.qut.edu.au/cgi-bin/WebObjects/News.woa/wa/goNewsPage?newsEventID=24297>

[< top >](#)

New school networks for Australia:

Partnerships are a key to improving educational outcomes

Rosalyn Black, Australian Policy Online, 1 February 2009

IF THERE is any one message that can be drawn from the vast body of research and commentary on school education in Australia, it is that tinkering around the edges of schooling will not solve the widening gaps in educational outcomes that limit opportunities for too many young people.

While the current national discourses about teacher quality, funding and a national curriculum are important, these strategies will not succeed without a more collaborative approach.

This collaboration is needed on a number of fronts, most importantly the systemic one. The biggest barrier to overcoming entrenched educational inequity is our current federal system with its differentially governed and funded education systems and its division of schools into three competitive sectors.

It is clear that these structures need to change. It is equally clear that they will not do so until the persistent focus on the private, positional benefits of education gives way to a new dialogue about our common responsibility for the wellbeing of children and young people.

As Alan Reid from the University of South Australia notes in my new book, Australia needs "a policy approach that emphasises the public benefits of public education, rather than causes public schools to become more private."

Read more at <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/pdf/black090201.pdf>

Rosalyn Black is senior research manager with The Foundation for Young Australians. Her new book, Beyond the Classroom: Building New School Networks is published by ACER Press.

[< top >](#)

BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Towards a renaissance in Australian schooling

Adam Rorris, Australian Policy Online, 17 February 2009

UNTIL a deal was struck with the small party and independent senators, Malcolm Turnbull's decision to oppose the federal government's economic stimulus package was putting at risk a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve education in Australia.

Why? Because this is a moment when we can begin to re-imagine and then build the schools that we want for our children and grandchildren in this century. These new public facilities will stand the test of time and will be seen in fifty or even a hundred years as evidence of our dedication to the education of all our children.

The federal government announcement to inject nearly \$15 billion into the rebuilding of Australian schools is much more than a major renovation job. Yes, investment will save thousands of jobs. It will help many builders and suppliers right across the country keep their heads above the rising waters of insolvency.

Every community has a school and this money (and therefore the jobs that will be created by it) will be spread widely across the country. These are no mean achievements when we need to do all we can to ward off the effects of recession in all of our communities.

But the true significance of this initiative for our country is that it begins to rectify in a serious manner the massive under-investment by governments in Australian public schools. In the broader sweep of our country's social development, this massive investment may well be remembered as the first big step towards a renaissance in Australian schooling.

Read more at http://www.apo.org.au/webboard/comment_results.shtml?filename_num=262632

Adam Rorris, is an economist and research fellow with the Centre for Policy Development. He is the author of the report Rebuilding Public Schools: Investment Targets for 2020.

[< top >](#)

NATIONAL VALUES EDUCATION PROGRAM

Values in Action Schools Project 2009

In 2008 all Australian schools were invited to work in local area clusters to develop proposals for funding to design, implement and report on innovative education projects shaped around values in action during the 2009 school year.

The project reflects the Australian Government's commitment to high quality schooling and to the positive role which effective, planned and systematic values education can have in improving social and academic outcomes for Australian students, in all varieties of community contexts and locations.

Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) 2009 will build on, extend and enhance the significant body of values education work that has taken place in schools since the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools was adopted and disseminated to all schools in 2005.

The National Framework can be accessed online at:

http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/val_national_framework_for_values_education,8757.html

Fourteen school clusters located right across the country have been selected and funded to undertake their proposed high quality values education action research programs in 2009. The results of each of these projects will provide evidence-based guidance for all schools on how to use values education in highly effective and innovative ways to improve educational and personal development outcomes for students, teachers, families and the benefit of the whole community.

For details of each of the school clusters, and of each of their endorsed projects, go to:

http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/val_vasp_clusters,25921.html

[< top >](#)

BULLYING

Bullying 'pushing homosexual students to suicide'

By Nic MacBean, ABC News, 11 November 2008

Suicide attempts among lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) school students in Queensland are at disturbingly high levels, a report shows.

The report by LGB support organisation Open Doors has prompted calls to make Queensland schools more LGB-friendly, with the report - to be published on Friday - finding around two-thirds of respondents felt unsafe at school.

Open Doors surveyed 164 LGB students across the state, and 37 per cent of respondents said they had attempted suicide in the last 12 months, with 82 per cent considering taking their own life.

The report also revealed a general attitude of fear among LGB students, with 81 per cent saying they had experienced bullying based on their sexuality.

"Many young people felt so afraid at school that they had missed over two school weeks' worth of classes to ensure their safety," the report said.

"Clearly current school anti-bullying measures do not adequately protect LGB students; this is providing a discriminatory educational environment for LGB students which is illegal."

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/11/2416453.htm>

[< top >](#)

AMTA: Working with parents and children to cope with cyber-bullying

Randal Markey, Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA)

You can't put a wise head on young shoulders, so the old saying goes. And, in some cases, that applies to mobile phones and their misuse, which leads to unacceptable things like cyber-bullying.

Children these days use mobile phones as if they were second nature. They have mastered the technology and can use a wide range of applications, including social networking and accessing the internet. They are short on life skills and experience, but in the technology stakes they know it all.

Parents, on the other hand, struggle to keep up with their children when it comes to technology, including mobile phones. However, they know a thing or two about how the world works and what is acceptable behavior and what is not.

The mobile telecommunications industry in Australia aims to achieve an economically successful industry. The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) is the industry's peak body. Its charter is broader than just the bottom line.

Behind the economic success of the industry, innovation and services, people use mobile telecommunications technologies as an important part of their lifestyles and the way they interact with family, friends, work and the community.

We know parents value mobile phones as a way of staying in touch with their children.

We believe that the positive aspects of mobiles far outweigh the negative.

However, we are committed to providing practical advice to help prevent the misuse and promote the safe, responsible and affordable use of mobile telecommunications.

Cyber bullying is totally unacceptable and not to be tolerated. AMTA has, in conjunction with experts, produced a range of materials to assist parents and students to take steps to prevent cyber bullying and, in the unfortunate circumstance where it occurs, advice to assist.

We have practical tips to assist young people to protect their number from unwanted messages; to think before they send text messages; and what to do if they receive threatening or intimidating messages; we provide a range of numbers from the mobile phone companies, who may be able to assist by stopping certain numbers call you.

For parents, we have produced a range of tips so they can assist their children who have been the victims of cyber bullying. Often young victims of cyber bullying are reluctant to talk to their parents because they don't believe they understand the technology and they are fearful they will take their mobile phone away.

These helpful tips can be found on our website: <http://www.amta.org.au> under the heading Consumer Tips.

Other tips include advice to for parents buying mobiles for their children and taking steps to ensure that they keep within a budget.

AMTA has also has a website for young people, Str8tlk (Straight Talk), which has information for 10-18 year olds, covering subjects such as bullying, money, safety, recycling, technology and culture.

Finally, parents have a key role to play in ensuring their children use mobile phones responsibly and avoid potential pitfalls of extensive and/or unsupervised use of mobile phones.

Parents need to be aware of their children's mobile phone use and monitor their activities in a positive and supportive way. As part of this, parents should have a clear mobile phone policy in the home and work constructively with their children to see that the agreed policy elements are adhered to.

- For useful mobile phone tips: <http://www.amta.org.au/default.asp?id=367>
- For str8tlk - information for young people about mobiles: <http://www.str8tlk.amta.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

VALUES, HEALTH & WELL-BEING

"Never Better - or Getting Worse: the health & well-being of young Australians"

Richard Eckersley

The health and wellbeing of young people, an important indicator of Australia's future population health, is declining. This development is of immense social significance. It has implications not only for how we deal with specific current concerns such as

child abuse and neglect, obesity, media sexualisation of children, and binge drinking, but for national priorities and public policy more broadly.

With the possible exception of increasing wealth, improving health is the most widely used measure of human progress. Wealth has only ever been a means to the end of a better life; health is a core component of that end. If health is not improving, it is hard to sustain the belief that, as a society we are making progress.

The orthodox view of young people's health and wellbeing is of a continuing improvement in line with historic trends. It rests mainly on two lines of evidence: declining death rates and high levels of self-reported health and happiness. Both measures are flawed.

Mortality might once have been a good summary measure of overall health, but this is no longer true. In Australia, death now strikes very few young people: about 40 in every 100,000 each year. And trends in the major causes of death (especially the biggest killer, road accidents) do not necessarily reflect underlying changes in physical and mental health.

High levels of self-reported health and happiness cannot be taken at face value. Self-reported health is not an accurate measure of health status: many people with serious health problems will still say their health is excellent or very good. Likewise, happiness measures do not reflect all aspects of wellbeing.

From the introduction to: "Never Better - or getting worse: the health & well-being of young Australians" (2008) by Richard Eckersley, which may be accessed online at:

<http://www.australia21.org.au/pdf/A21%20youth%20health%20&%20wellbeing.pdf>

Richard Eckersley will be a keynote speaker at ACSSO's National Education Conference in Hobart 12-13 October 2009 - see below under Conferences & Events

[< top >](#)

CELEBRATING TEACHERS

Tell the world about YOUR Favourite Teacher

Teaching Australia is supporting a project by Robert and Wendy Macklin for a book to be entitled My Favourite Teacher, which will highlight the important role of teachers in our society and include a collection of stories about the way in which teachers have made a difference to the lives of prominent and ordinary Australians.

Robert is a well-known journalist, author and screen-writer and Wendy Macklin is a Canberra teacher.

Through a website set up at <http://www.myfavouriteteacher.com.au/> they are inviting Australians from across the nation to tell stories of how favourite teachers changed lives - stories that are humorous, poignant or just plain thankful. The Macklins see the book and the website as a celebration of teachers and teaching.

This is a great opportunity to raise community awareness of the importance of teaching and the respect in which teachers are held.

Teaching Australia would appreciate anything you can do to spread the word about the My Favourite Teacher Project and encourage people to write in to the website with their stories.

Further information - and already some fascinating stories (Can you really do an appendix operation with a tin can lid...?) at:

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

[< top >](#)

OPINION: THE SYSTEMICS OF EDUCATION

The free-market: bad for the economy but good for schools?

Chris Bonnor, Online Opinion, 5 February 2009

When Kevin Rudd took over the leadership of the ALP he spoke convincingly about Australia having reached a fork in the road. Social democrats warmed to his theme, anticipating new and exciting ALP policy directions. Alas, the alternative road proved to

go nowhere and Rudd fought an election on the road already neatly paved by Howard's own mix of opportunism and free-market ideology.

Now that the free-market road has developed serious potholes the PM has been emboldened to take centre stage in the allocation of blame and in the search for alternatives. While it might have been nice to hear his forthright comments a year or two ago they probably resonate well in an electorate smarting from reversals in personal well-being and nervous about the future.

The PM's analysis and vision is big: "This is a crisis spreading across a broad front" he says: an economic, employment, social and political crisis, even with long-term geo-political implications.

In parading the sins of the free-market he has reaffirmed the importance of government as the regulator and the funder or provider of public goods: "government offsets the inevitable inequalities of the market with a commitment to fairness for all", balancing the private and the public, profit and wages, the market and the state."

But Kevin Rudd should take a second look at the impact of free-market ideology at home. We have lost the public private balance and people are hurting: hapless commuters struggling to work on ramshackle public transport; public hospital staff and patients in despair; teachers and kids in public schools propped up by cash-strapped states while their private competition draws on multiple sources of funding and operates under different rules.

He needs to quickly discover what it is that decades of open and competitive markets have actually delivered for all the nation's children. We do have increased school competition and choice - but only for those who can afford it. He would find very little evidence of a consequential lift in student achievement - instead he would find that high achieving and low achieving students have been enticed or forced into very different schools, schools that are increasingly differentiated by family income and religion, even ethnicity.

Read more at <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=8502>

*Chris Bonnor is co-author with Jane Caro of *The stupid Country - How Australia is dismantling public education*, UNSW Press. He also manages a website of the same name www.thestupidcountry.com.*

[< top >](#)

Education must be about freedom of choice

Scott Prasser, Online Opinion, 29 January 2009

Australia is fortunate to have had parallel public and private education systems, established with bipartisan support and within a government regulatory framework, since the 1960s.

So any suggestion that we resort to a monopolistic, government-only, one-size-fits-all education system is as out of date as those who, in the 1940s, wanted to nationalise the banks or airline system, and limit private housing in favour of government housing commission estates, removing individual choice, demanding uniformity, limiting diversity and perpetuating a belief in government monopoly and that government knows best.

Surely grown-ups do not believe that any more. Haven't we seen enough government mistakes, white-elephant projects, wasted public spending and bureaucratic, centralised and inflexible decision-making to know that it is competition and choice that drives innovation, meets people's needs and promotes diversity?

The present dual public and non-government education system provides incentives for all education institutions to do better. Most importantly, it gives parents and their children real education choices not provided in many other countries.

This diversity reflects religious affiliation, teaching philosophies, cultural orientation, regional features or emphasis on activities like sport or specialised education needs and the very governance of the schools in terms of parental involvement.

But critics of the non-government education sector never get it. They never understand that choice matters. After all, why - in our increasingly diverse and tolerant society that likes choice in what we buy, how we live, the way we work - be somehow denied choice in relation to schools?

Critics ignore that parents have been voting with their feet and their hard-earned after-tax dollars for years to send their children to the schools they want, to meet their children's needs and to satisfy their standards.

Read more at <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=8458&page=0>

Dr Scott Prasser is Senior Lecturer in Management in the Faculty of Business at the University of Sunshine Coast.

[< top >](#)

Do Schools Kill Creativity?

Sir Ken Robinson

Creativity expert Sir Ken Robinson challenges the way we're educating our children.

He champions a radical rethink of our school systems, to cultivate creativity and acknowledge multiple types of intelligence.

Why don't we get the best out of people? Sir Ken Robinson argues that it's because we've been educated to become good workers, rather than creative thinkers.

Students with restless minds and bodies -- far from being cultivated for their energy and curiosity -- are ignored or even stigmatized, with terrible consequences. "We are educating people out of their creativity," Robinson says. It's a message with deep resonance.

Robinson's TEDTalk has been distributed widely around the Web since its release in June 2006. The most popular words framing blog posts on his talk? "Everyone should watch this."

A visionary cultural leader, Sir Ken led the British government's 1998 advisory committee on creative and cultural education, a massive inquiry into the significance of creativity in the educational system and the economy, and was knighted in 2003 for his achievements. His latest book, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, a deep look at human creativity and education, was published in January 2009.

Watch the video: http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

[< top >](#)

SCIENCE, RELIGION AND CHARLES DARWIN'S 200TH BIRTHDAY

Vatican view of Darwinism evolves into a compatible theory

Richard Owen, Rome: The Australian February 12, 2009 (From: The Times UK)

THE Vatican has admitted that Charles Darwin was on the right track when he claimed that man descended from apes.

A leading official declared yesterday that Darwin's theory of evolution was compatible with Christian faith, and could even be traced to St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas.

"In fact, what we mean by evolution is the world as created by God," said Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, head of the Pontifical Council for Culture.

The Vatican also dealt the final blow to speculation the Pope might be prepared to endorse the theory of intelligent design, whose advocates credit a "higher power" for the complexities of life.

Organisers of a papal-backed conference next month marking the 150th anniversary of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* said that at first it had even been proposed to ban intelligent design from the event, as "poor theology and poor science". Intelligent design would be discussed at the fringes of the conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University, but as a "cultural phenomenon" rather than a scientific or theological issue, organisers said. The conference is seen as a landmark in relations between faith and science.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25041499-30417,00.html>

[< top >](#)

Better late than never? Anglican clergyman says church owes Darwin an apology

Scientific American, 16 September 2008

A spokesman for the Anglican Church says it should admit it wronged Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution is still considered anti-Christian in some circles, even as it's become a cornerstone of science.

"The Church of England owes you an apology for misunderstanding you and, by getting our first reaction wrong, encouraging others to misunderstand you still," Rev Malcolm Brown writes on a church website for the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

"There is nothing here that contradicts Christian teaching," he says, adding that the church's "reaction now seems misjudged."

While the church didn't take an official stance against Darwin, its officials — in a widely publicized 1860 debate — made nasty arguments against his theory that species evolve through natural selection, the Church says on its website. Today, some fundamentalist Christians argue that evolution can't co-exist with the biblical story of creation - a concept gaining new traction thanks to Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who believes creationism should be taught along with evolution in schools.

Source: <http://www.sciam.com/blog/60-second-science/post.cfm?id=better-late-than-never-clergyman-sa-2008-09-16>

Read Rev Malcolm Brown's article at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/darwin/malcolmbrown.html>

[< top >](#)

US scientists defend Darwin from attacks on evolution

Mira Oberman February 13, 2009

While the rest of the world feted the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, US scientists were forced to defend the theory of evolution from a skeptical public and a concerted attack campaign.

Top researchers gathered in Chicago presented papers showing how evolution can be witnessed in everything from the genetic similarities between humans and Neanderthals to the way planets form and crows use tools to catch bugs.

"Evolution is not an idea. It's a fact," James McCarthy, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science said Thursday at the launch of a conference whose theme celebrated Darwin's work.

"It's impossible to deny evolution: the development of drug resistant microbes, pesticide resistant insects, there are abundant examples in ordinary life."

But the message has not gotten through to the US public.

Just 40 percent of Americans say they believe in the theory of evolution, according to a Gallup poll published Wednesday.

And previous polls taken over the past decade have consistently found that between 44 and 47 percent believe God created humans in their present form within the last 10,000 years or so.

Read more at <http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-world/us-scientists-defend-darwin-from-attacks-on-evolution-20090213-86u7.html>

[< top >](#)

UK ads spruiking atheism may be preaching to the increasingly unconverted...

Gwynne Dyer, Canberra Times, 11 February 2009

If the objective was to undermine people's belief in God, then turning the atheist buses loose in Britain was largely a waste of time, because most British people don't believe in God anyway.

The atheist buses are all over London and some other big British cities by now, with a large ad running down the sides saying, "There is probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life."

The real question is: what did the British Humanist Society think it would achieve with its ad campaign? It's not as though non-believers in Britain were an oppressed minority. In fact, they're not a minority at all; they are the majority, though you have to read the statistics carefully to realise that.

According to the 2001 census, only seven million people in Britain said they had no religion, while 37 million said they were Christian. Also, 1.5million were Muslim, half a million were Hindu, 390,000 were Jedi Knights (there was a conspiracy among younger Britons to mock the process by claiming allegiance to the religion of Star Wars), 329,000 were Sikhs and 260,000 were Jewish.

Those numbers suggest that Britain is an overwhelmingly Christian country, with under 20 per cent of the population non-believers. Yet three-quarters of the people in Britain do not go to church even once a year. On an average Sunday, only 6per cent of the population are in church, and that figure has been dropping by 2 per cent a decade since the 1970s. Something doesn't add up here.

When the International Social Survey Program conducted a more in-depth study of religious belief almost 20 years ago (in 1991 and 1993), it asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "I know God exists and I have no doubts about it." In Britain, only 23.8 per cent of people said they agreed.

That's normal for Europe. In that poll, most European countries registered confident belief in God at only somewhere between 20 per cent and 30 per cent, although Italy struggled up to 51 per cent, Ireland reached 58 per cent and Poland got the prize with 66 per cent of the population believers.

Read entire article: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/ads-spruiking-atheism-are-preaching-to-the-unconverted/1430477.aspx?storypage=0>

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based journalist.

[< top >](#)

CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP

Australian Citizens' Parliament 2009

Power of non-party people

John Warhurst, Canberra Times, 12 February 2009

Does Parliament work effectively for and connect constructively with its citizens?

From last Friday to Monday, sandwiched between official parliamentary sittings, a different type of parliament sat in Old Parliament House. The so-called Citizens' Parliament convened to consider how our democracy could be improved.

The message from the participants, randomly chosen from the electoral roll, was clear. Most of the Citizen Parliamentarians were deeply sceptical and often openly cynical about our parliamentary system and certain that it fails to connect sufficiently with its citizens. Particular disdain was felt for Australia's political parties and their divisive approach to politics. This deeply shocked those former politicians present, including co-chair, former Liberal federal minister Fred Chaney.

The Citizens' Parliament was convened by a coalition of interested individuals and groups that included the new Democracy Foundation, the idea of Sydney architect Luca Belgiorno-Nettis, and researchers from three universities Australian National University, Sydney and Curtin supported by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant.

At a cost of \$500,000 plus a lot of volunteer time, this experiment brought together a representative from each federal electorate, 150 in all, to form a parliament.

After earlier on-line discussions and one round of preparatory face-to-face regional meetings which generated 11 proposals, they gathered under the guidance of the co-chairs, Lowitja O'Donoghue and Chaney, as well as numerous professional facilitators. The 11 proposals quickly grew to nearly 50.

The time available was double that allocated to the recent 2020 Summit, though still much too short. What occurred was an intense mix of small-group interaction, engagement with expert panelists, brain-storming and quiet reflection with the aim of creating proposals, refining and consolidating them, and ultimately setting priorities for action. The final outcomes focused on

reducing duplication in Government, making it more open and accessible and empowering all citizens, especially the young, to take part in it.

Ultimately, however, the particular propositions that emerged are not as important as what the Citizens' Parliament stands for and what it says about Australian democracy.

Read entire article at: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/power-of-nonparty-people/1431693.aspx?storypage=0>

John Warhurst is an adjunct professor of political science in the Faculty of Arts at the Australian National University. He was an invited panelist at the Citizens Parliament.

Visit and explore proceedings via the website: <http://www.citizensparliament.org.au/>

Download the final Report "How can Australia's political system be strengthened to serve us better"
<http://www.citizensparliament.org.au/downloads/CP%20Final%20Report.pdf>

[< top >](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

BlueScope Water: Your complete solution for the National Solar Schools Program

The National Solar Schools Program (NSSP), administered by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has now been launched and will remain open until June 30 2015.

NSSP provides grants of up to \$50,000 to Primary and Secondary Schools for a range of eligible items; including rainwater harvesting systems, solar power systems, solar hot water systems, and other energy saving initiatives. NSSP is designed to assist Australian schools to take practical action to address issues relating to climate change. It will also facilitate increased learning and measurability of processes designed to reduce a schools environmental footprint.

To be eligible for the funding schools must be state registered primary or secondary schools and not be listed for closure within the next twelve months. For further information on NSSP and to download the program guidelines and other program documentation, visit the NSSP website at <http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/nationalsolarschools/>.

BlueScope Water is again proud to be supporting Australian schools in their sustainability journey and will be offering:

- Solar Power Systems (Photovoltaic)
- Wind Power Systems
- Solar Hot Water Systems
- Rainwater tanks and rainwater harvesting systems

For the NSSP, BlueScope Water continues its partnership with Rheem, offering premium quality Solarhart and Edwards Brands of Solar Hot Water Heaters.

Read more at <http://www.bluescopewater.com/go/schools/national-solar-schools-program>

[< top >](#)

COMPETITIONS

National Art & Poetry Competition for Secondary Students

Entries close 10 April 2009

AAHR (Australian Association for Humane Research) Inc is a not for profit organisation dedicated to ending the use of animals in all experiments. Our aim is to promote the use of scientific alternatives in all forms for medical, scientific and commercial research.

To coincide with World Week for Animals in Laboratories (April 2009), AAHR is inviting secondary school students to take part in its nationwide art and poetry competition. The topic is animal experimentation - a hotly debated subject amongst the

community.

World Week for Animals in Laboratories is designed to raise awareness of the plight of animals used in research and teaching, and is an important reminder to the community about the health dangers on relying on animal experimentation. The competition is designed to encourage students to research the subject in greater detail and give them the opportunity to express their opinions about the topic.

The competition is open nationally to all secondary school / college students, with two categories - Art & Poetry.

There will be three prize places - 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category. Prizes include a Kodak all-in-one printer and cruelty-free gift sets from Pure Gaisha.

Read more at <http://www.aahr.org.au>.

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Values & Public Policy: Fairness, Diversity & Social Change

Centre for Public Policy & University of Melbourne

26-27 February 2009: Jasper Hotel, Melbourne Victoria

On February 26 and 27, 2009, the Centre for Public Policy, in association with the University of Melbourne's Social Justice Initiative will be hosting a conference titled Values and Public Policy: Fairness, Diversity and Social Change in Melbourne.

This two-day event boasts a stellar line-up of speakers including

- Martha Nussbaum,
- Bob Goodin
- Jonathan Wolff
- Julian Burnside
- Frank Brennan
- Hilary Charlesworth
- David Cappo
- Linda Barclay

For more information or to download a registration form or full conference program, please visit: <http://www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/conference09/>

[< top >](#)

Teaching Values across the Curriculum Seminar

"Becoming Fully Human"

23-27 March 2009

2009 Venues:

- Brisbane 23 March,
- Sydney 24 March
- Adelaide 26 March,
- Melbourne 27/3

A Professional Development opportunity for teachers from all schools which will:

- Develop practical strategies for integrating values across the curriculum in a rigorous and relevant way
- Stimulate ideas for monitoring and assessing values education in the classroom
- Offer comprehensive teaching resources including a full unit on The Environment

For details and Registration: http://www.dialogueaustralasia.org/?page_id=238

[< top >](#)

2009 Dialogue Australasia Network Conference:

"Teaching the Abrahamic Religions: Christianity in dialogue with Judaism & Islam"

15-17 April 2009 - Old Parliament House - Canberra

Relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims are among the most divisive, challenging and important issues in the world today. Suspicion is fuelled by ignorance and now is the time for educators to be resourced and supported in their important task of helping young people to understand the basis of different belief systems and their impact on culture.

Recognising this, The Hon Julia Gillard recently drew attention to the importance of preparing children to live in a diverse, multicultural Australia.

In service of this aim, a range of voices will be heard at the 7th International DAN Conference; from international experts in education to experienced classroom teachers and the lived realities of Christians, Jews and Muslims.

The common ground held between the Abrahamic Religions will be explored, as well as the divergences and potential sources of conflict. These issues will be examined from different perspectives, informed by an awareness of the practical challenges teachers face, as well as the ideals they seek to foster.

Delegates will receive a DVD containing PowerPoints, teaching notes and video resources for their school or organization.

The Conference Programme and Registration are now online at <http://www.dialogueaustralasia.org>

[< top >](#)

Generation Next - National Seminar Program 2009

Exploring the health & well-being issues affecting young people

- Sydney (May 23 and 24),
- Melbourne (June 13 and 14),
- Brisbane (September 5 and 6),
- Adelaide (June 27) and
- Perth (November 28.)

Generation Next is a national seminar series exploring the unique pressures, needs and healthcare and sociological challenges facing Australian teenagers, adolescents, parents and anyone working with young people.

Generation Next is being conducted in partnership with beyondblue, the national, independent not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression anxiety disorders and substance abuse in Australia.

This initiative is being run by Healthed Pty Ltd, a Sydney company working in event management and health-related educational meetings since 2002. A proportion of profits will be directed to adolescent health research and the series is being rolled out with a view to it being self-sustaining and ongoing.

Presenters and topics for the inaugural Generation Next series are:

- Adolescent psychologist and media columnist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg on Building a Resilient Young Person in the Age of the Internet and Instant Gratification;
- Founder of the kids Free 2 b kids advocacy group and comedy writer/performer Julie Gale on Sexualisation of Children in the Media;
- Education and policy development expert Susan Maclean on what Parents Need to Know to Reduce the Risk of Cyberbullying and Increase Cybersafety;
- GP, radio host and columnist Dr Sally Cockburn on What Parents Need To Know About Teenage Relationships;
- Drug and Alcohol Research Australia's Paul Dillon on Teenagers, Alcohol and Drugs.

Download the brochure at: <http://gennextseminars.com/pdf/Generation-Next-brochure.pdf>

More information at:

- <http://www.gennextseminars.com/>
- <http://myspace.com/generationnextseminars>

[< top >](#)

Educating Youth for Citizenship: East and West

1-3 June 2009

Beijing Normal University

This international conference, hosted by Beijing Normal University School of Education and the College of Education at New Mexico State University, will address the question of how schools can educate youth to become productive citizens. The Conference is co-sponsored by the United States-China J. William Fulbright Program in conjunction with the Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the Confucius Institute of New Mexico State University.

Keynote speakers with international reputations will address the Conference on each of the themes. Panels, co-chaired by Beijing Normal University faculty and New Mexico State University faculty, and poster sessions will enable participants to present research, discuss insights and reflect. Confirmed speakers include: Dean James Conroy, University of Glasgow; Professor Candace Kaye, New Mexico State University; and Mr. Liu Guohua, Center for Civic Education.

Participants are invited to present proposals for addressing one of the four conference themes:

- Parenting: Beginning the Civic Education Process
- Schooling: Redefining Civic Education Instruction by Constructing a Middle Way Between State Direction and Individualism
- Institutions: Developing a Friendly Environment for Civic Education Between Schools and Communities
- Society: The Scholar's Role in Developing a Healthy Civic Society

All keynote addresses and plenary sessions will have simultaneous translation (Chinese and English). Translation will be available. Proceedings, containing long abstracts in both languages, will be available at the beginning of the Conference.

For further conference information, email: bnusoe@163.com (Chinese language) OR civiced@nmsu.edu (English language)

Conference Websites: <http://citizen-09.bnu.edu.cn/> (Chinese) and <http://citizen-09.nmsu.edu> (English language)

[< top >](#)

ACSSO National Conference 2009

Schools - heart of our community:

Building partnerships to support student health, resilience & well-being

12-13 October 2009 - Hobart, Tasmania

Internationally renowned educationalist Dr Neil Hawkes from the UK will lead an outstanding array of speakers, presenters and panellists drawn from across the country, exploring and illustrating the central importance of student health, resilience and well-being - and how to build effective community partnerships to support our young people's positive personal development.

ACSSO's national conferences are for everyone with an interest in education - parents, teachers, principals, researchers, academics, journalists - from all fields and sectors of education. Lively interactive discussion draws on the real-life experience of school communities - and seeks to focus on the practical things we can all do in our own local community to create an effective learning environment in a linked-up learning community.

So make sure you put these dates in your diary now!

In future issues of the newsletter we will bring you speaker profiles and background information - and the Conference Website will be operational shortly, with online registration facilities - and Early Bird discounts!

[< top >](#)

ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)

International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (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)

Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

Family School Partners : http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6 (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

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