

Values Education

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BEHAVIOUR EDUCATION

Helping improve young people's relationship skills

Hon Dr Jane Lomax-Smith MP, SA Education Minister & Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Federal Minister for Status of Women, June 10, 2009

Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek and South Australian Minister for Education, Jane Lomax-Smith today launched the evaluation of Keeping Safe at Black Forest Primary School.

South Australia's Keeping Safe child protection curriculum, the first update in more than two decades, was rolled out to the State's schools and preschools in 2008. Every teacher was required to undergo training before the program was taught in the classroom.

Through its new Respectful Relationship Program, the Australian Government is investing \$9.1 million over five years to test and evaluate best practice respectful relationships education programs with school-aged young people across the country.

Programs will be tested in school and non-school settings and will address the diversity of young people, including those with intellectual disabilities, young people who have left school, and young people living in remote communities.

It is expected that over 8,000 young people will benefit from the education and support that will be provided through the life of the program.

The Australian Government is investing \$130,000 through the Respectful Relationships program to build upon South Australia's successful Keeping Safe program.

"To reduce violence against women and children, it is important young people are taught the skills to build and maintain respectful relationships for life," Ms Plibersek said.

"The Rudd Government is determined to work in partnership with all levels of government and the non-government sector to prevent violence against women and their children.

"We are evaluating this program which is being delivered to young people in South Australia as part of the Rudd Government's increased focus on primary prevention."

Read entire release at: <http://tinyurl.com/mk35d6>

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Respectful Relationship Program to begin in 40 Northern Territory Schools

Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Joint Media Release with Tanya Plibersek, Minister for Housing

Malamdirri McCarthy MLA, Northern Territory Minister for Children and Families, 6 July 2009

The Australian and Northern Territory Governments today announced that 40 schools will receive funding to roll out respectful relationship programs.

Today's announcement means the Australian Government will invest \$785,000 to implement the South Australian Government's Keeping Safe child protection curriculum in five urban and 35 remote schools, with approximately 2,000 students benefitting from the program.

The program will adapt the Keeping Safe material to the Northern Territory environment and will be complemented by the South Australian Strategies for Managing Abuse and Trauma (SMART) support program for teachers.

The Keeping Safe child protection curriculum focuses on the right to be safe, respectful relationships, recognising and reporting abuse and protective strategies for children aged from pre-school through to Year 12 students.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/njn3je>

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Successful WA PATHS program expanded to tackle bad student behaviour

Hon Dr Elizabeth Constable MP, WA Education Minister, 23 June 2009

The State Government's commitment to improving student behaviour will continue with the investment of nearly \$1million in an early intervention and prevention program over the next four years.

Announcing a major expansion of the 'Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies' (PATHS) program in Western Australian schools today, Education Minister Liz Constable said it was essential to address behaviour problems in the early years to prevent them escalating later on.

Dr Constable said the PATHS program, which had proven results in reducing aggressive behaviour in students aged five to 12, would be rolled out to an additional 100 schools throughout the State.

The program, co-authored by Professor Mark Greenberg from Pennsylvania State University in the US, worked in two ways - it increased interpersonal problem-solving skills, while decreasing risk factors for behavioural and social problems.

Professor Greenberg, in Perth for the 'Making Secure Connections' conference, said PATHS was independently rated in the top 10 of 400 violence prevention programs in the US.

Read entire release: <http://tinyurl.com/l83nth>

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RELIGION IN EDUCATION

Religious schools 'undermine cohesion'

Farrah Tomazin, the Age, July 13, 2009

The rise of faith-based schools in Australia is restricting the ability of some students to relate to people of diverse backgrounds, a university sociologist has warned.

University of Technology Sydney professor Andrew Jakubowicz says that while public schools have traditionally had a crucial role in allowing students of broad backgrounds to "operate quite comfortably in different cultural environments", the proliferation of ethno-religious schools - largely because of federal government funding policies - has had social consequences.

"There is little doubt that the Howard government strategy (continued by the Rudd Government) of directing federal funds to private schools suits the idea of the market and the ideology of choice," says Professor Jakubowicz, co-director of the Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, in a discussion paper to be released today.

"However, it may significantly undermine three key struts in the whole edifice of social cohesion and modern citizenship - namely intercultural competence, secularism as a core social value and interactive life-long learning."

In recent years, increased public funding to non-government schools has led to a sharp rise in the number of students attending private schools. Today, almost 40 per cent of students in Australia are enrolled in faith-based schools, including those of the Irish Catholic tradition, Greek Orthodox, Jewish and Islamic schools.

Professor Jakubowicz said he was not "getting stuck into" any particular types of ethno-religious schools. Rather, he said, "the place where the buck stops on this is the national government level, where some of the consequences have not been considered".

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/npmws7>

Download the discussion paper for the Australian Education Union, "Cultural Diversity, Cosmopolitan Citizenship & Education: Issues, Options and Implications for Australia", at <http://tinyurl.com/kujc9v>

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Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions & Beliefs in Public Schools

Organisation for Cooperation & Security in Europe (2007)

Recent events across the world, migratory processes and persistent misconceptions about religions and cultures have underscored the importance of issues related to tolerance and non-discrimination and freedom of religion or belief.

In the OSCE region - and indeed in many other parts of the world - it is becoming increasingly clear that a better understanding about religions and beliefs is needed. Misunderstandings, negative stereotypes, and provocative images used to depict others are leading to heightened antagonism and sometimes even violence.

The Guiding Principles offer practical guidance for preparing curricula for teaching about religions and beliefs, preferred procedures for assuring fairness in the development of curricula, and standards for how they could be implemented.

They do not propose a curriculum for teaching about religions and beliefs, nor do they promote any particular approach to the teaching about religions and beliefs. They highlight procedures and practices concerning the training of those who implement such curricula, and the treatment of the pupils from many different faith backgrounds who may be the recipients of such teaching.

The Toledo Guiding Principles have been prepared in order to contribute to an improved understanding of the world's increasing religious diversity and the growing presence of religion in the public sphere.

Their rationale is based on two core principles. First, that there is positive value in teaching that emphasizes respect for everyone's right to freedom of religion and belief. And second, that teaching about religions and beliefs can reduce harmful misunderstandings and stereotypes.

The Principles focus solely on the educational approach that seeks to provide teaching about different religions and beliefs as distinguished from instruction in a specific religion or belief.

They also aim to offer criteria that should be considered when and wherever teaching about religions and beliefs takes place.

Access the entire document: <http://tinyurl.com/39k7ko>

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Is Queensland the place where the 'Secular Experiment Failed'?

Hugh Wilson, Brisbane Institute, 01 July 2009

Just as Cardinal George Pell insists that the 'secular experiment' has failed, and the Roman Catholic Way, like some ancient airport moving-footpath crossing the Empire for Caesar's legions to march along will bring us all closer to the 'real purpose' of life, if only we stepped on to it, so too are our evangelical Christian colleagues from Hillsong Church, the Assembly of God, the Australian Christian Lobby, Tim Costello's World Vision Baptists and the Scripture Union crew, all telling us that the end is nigh, and salvation lies in a school chaplain and a mob of Christian mentors roaming freely in state schools.

The newly formed Australian Secular Lobby (ASL) met with the newly installed Education Minister, Mr. Geoff Wilson, and his acting Director-General of Education, at the Highfields Community Cabinet Meeting recently.

We went to discuss the failure of Education Queensland to cater to non-Christian parents and students who, foolishly, are trusting the public education system to 'be secular'.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/mk28a7>

Hugh Wilson is an independent researcher and doctoral student exploring the role of religion and faith in Australian foreign policy and society.

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Schools, religion and community diversity

Tim Mander, 17 July 2009

From reading Hugh Wilson's article (On Line Opinion, July 9, 2009), one would get the impression that students in Queensland state schools have to endure regular, large doses of unwelcome, imposed religion. Is that really an accurate picture of our state schools?

Perhaps anyone who is worried should ask students and find out how many of them think that Queensland state schools are dominantly religious environments.

Is Mr Wilson's assessment based on reality or is it a distortion based on his own anti-religious philosophy?

Does the mere presence of anything religious in state schools, regardless of the size of its contribution or its boundaries of operation, cause a concern for the majority of parents?

Hugh Wilson makes it clear that he stands for secularism. The Macquarie Dictionary defines secularism as that which "refuses to accept all forms of religious faith and worship".

Groups that promote secularism are entitled to their opinions, but are they entitled to impose those views on a multi-cultural and multi-faith society like Queensland?

Read entire article at: <http://tinyurl.com/kqnmxa>

Tim Mander is the CEO of Scripture Union Qld, a former senior NRL referee and Queensland Father of the Year in 2005.

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TEACHING THINKING

Philosophical Intelligence: What is it and how do we develop it?

Robert Fisher, "Thinking: the journal of philosophy for children" Vol 19 Number One

One of nine aptitudes described by Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, existential, or philosophical intelligence is the sensitivity to and ability to engage with questions of human existence. It is engaged when an individual

exercises creative thinking, such as posing or engaging with conceptual problems and concepts, and uses reason, logic, and evidence to express meanings, pose hypotheses and arguments, judge beliefs, or seek solutions.

To encourage this intelligence in students, they should be encouraged to think and act like philosophers. One effective way of doing this is by taking a dialogic approach known as a 'community of inquiry'.

This approach teaches students to ask questions and raise issues; explore, develop and explain their own ideas and points of view; and engage in discussion, listening to and considering the ideas of others. In a community of inquiry setting, an item such as a story or object is used as a stimulus to generate topics of thought and questioning.

Students sit in a circle to pose their questions and engage in a discussion around the stimulus item. A range of stimuli catering to the eight other Multiple Intelligences can be incorporated into discussions to help students develop their philosophical skills across different areas.

Over time, students' questions will become more philosophical and, as they develop skills in logic and reasoning, their discussion will demonstrate greater depth of focus, evidence of structured and sustained thinking, and improved conceptual engagement.

Find out more at: <http://tinyurl.com/mkkg3k>

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OPINION

Beyond reading and writing: Are schools too narrow in their focus?

Kathy Walker, the Age, May 18, 2009

To become competent in literacy and numeracy is a major foundation skill for a society. To be able to speak, listen, read, contribute to conversation, to solve problems and to understand the fundamentals of numeracy provide empowerment for children and adults.

However, we have become so focused on literacy and numeracy and attempting to measure these skills that, perhaps at times, other important skills lose out.

Education is about the "whole" child. It is about their identity, their self-esteem, their ability to form relationships and to interact productively with others. Successful schooling aims for children to become engaged in learning because it is meaningful and purposeful, not just because it "has to be learned".

The Federal Government's "education revolution" has a focus on new buildings and information technology. These are great things. And yet we undervalue other aspects of a successful education, such as building a strong culture and identity, and helping students to feel positive about themselves. In addition, the arts, music and drama are often not valued as a vital element of a rounded education.

Education and learning needs to embrace all the skills for a happy and meaningful life.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/ln3rp2>

Kathy Walker is an education consultant and the author of "What's the Hurry? - Reclaiming Childhood in an Overscheduled World".

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HUMANE EDUCATION: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Duck Hunting

SA Duck Hunting Farce: <http://tinyurl.com/kqjs89>

Victorian duck season decision illogical, unscientific and political: <http://tinyurl.com/nvawfm>

Tasmania kicks off duck hunting: <http://tinyurl.com/kswecr>

Hunting in National Parks

NSW Premier warned on national park hunting deal with Shooters Party: <http://tinyurl.com/2opb39>

NSW Premier offers shooters compromise deal to hunt in national parks: <http://tinyurl.com/m5hapn>

NSW Greens oppose bill to permit recreational hunting in national parks: <http://tinyurl.com/n4md22>

"Conservation hunting" an oxymoron - like 'guns for peace': <http://tinyurl.com/lrkufk>

Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: <http://tinyurl.com/npob8a>

Research: "Animal abuse and child maltreatment: A review of the literature and findings from a UK study":

<http://tinyurl.com/kubzrr>

Understanding the link between animal abuse and domestic violence: <http://tinyurl.com/c6fax9>

Animal Testing

International campaign to stop construction of a primate testing facility in Malaysia: <http://tinyurl.com/mgdeco>

Animal Experimentation – a Necessary Evil? <http://tinyurl.com/la99v>

Jumps Racing

Renewed calls to ban jumps as sixth horse dies: <http://tinyurl.com/nmhqzr>

From the 1991 Report of the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare: <http://tinyurl.com/nhcw2f>

Animals Threatened with Extinction

International report shows life on Earth under increasingly serious threat: <http://tinyurl.com/nyoc7r>

IUCN Red List: <http://tinyurl.com/nrb7fz>

Animals Rights and Political Activism

Europeans Agree Animals Count: <http://tinyurl.com/l4dlbj>

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PUBLICATIONS

This Little Kiddy Went to Market: The Corporate Capture of Childhood

Sharon Beder, Wendy Varney and Richard Gosden • UNSW Press, July 2009, 288pp, PB

This Little Kiddy Went to Market covers the way that corporations are targeting ever younger children with a barrage of advertising and marketing; the way that children's play has been turned into a commercial opportunity; and how corporations have taken advantage of childish anxieties and insecurities, and reshaped children's very identities.

It shows how school funding shortages have opened the door to an influx of corporate materials into schools aimed at inculcating consumer and business values.

The book analyses school reforms in English-speaking nations to uncover the hidden agendas behind them including: shifting of responsibility for the consequences of funding shortages to school management; turning schools into competing business enterprises where children are drilled and constantly tested; producing submissive employees with basic literacy and numeracy skills rather than developing an informed active citizenry with critical thinking skills; enabling businesses to take control of more and more aspects of schooling; and eroding the ideal and reality of public schooling.

Order online at <http://tinyurl.com/ncl4jm>

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Building Values Across the Whole School

Building Values Across the Whole School consists of two components: primary and secondary Teaching and Learning Units and a Professional Learning Program.

There are sixteen Teaching and Learning Units for primary years comprising eight units each for Early years and Middle childhood, and sixteen units for secondary years with eight units each for Early adolescence and Later adolescence.

Utilising key principles of values education good practice, the units deliver a sequence of teaching and learning activities and model how values concepts, understandings and practices can be integrated within curriculum contexts.

The Professional Learning Program promotes teacher learning about values education and supports teachers as they impart values within all areas of the curriculum.

Building Values Across the Whole School forms part of the Values for Australian Schooling series of resources to support schools in implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. This resource was delivered to Principals at all Australian schools in early May 2009.

Additional copies may also be downloaded by schools at: <http://tinyurl.com/la8tq7>

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AWARDS & PRIZES

National History Challenge 2009

Entries invited from students from Year 5 to Year 12

The National History Challenge is an exciting contest that encourages students to use research and inquiry based learning to discover more about Australia and its past. Students are the historians, they can investigate their community, explore their own and their family's past, explore major events that have taught Australia, as a nation, new ideas or theories. The Challenge encourages inquiry based learning, the use of primary and secondary sources and offers a variety of presentation styles that can cater to individual learning styles.

Included in the Challenge is a special category, Asia and Australia, sponsored by the Asia Education Foundation. In this category, students are encouraged to research the triumphs of Australians from Asian backgrounds in order to construct, negotiate and establish new identities and lives to achieve success in their new country.

The Asia Education Foundation is offering state/territory and national prizes to students for entries that best describe how Australians from an Asian background have confronted adversity to successfully settle in Australia and make valuable contributions to society. For possible research approaches go to "What's New" on the Asia Education Foundation website at <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/>

Entries for all categories must be received by State/Territory Co-ordinators by 11 September.

For more details go to <http://tinyurl.com/kImpan>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

ACSSO – APC 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 and APC jointly present a national conference 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.

Details and Registration Forms at <http://www.acsso.org.au/conf09/>



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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://tinyurl.com/d2o8zu> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://tinyurl.com/cswpka> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dls7rv> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://tinyurl.com/c59eda> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dedyz4> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : <http://tinyurl.com/qvleza> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://tinyurl.com/cy7s78> (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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