

# Values Education

Volume 3 Number 9, December 2009

- [LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Public schools bullying parents to comply with “religion”](#)
- [CHAPLAINCY IN SCHOOLS: \(4 items\)](#)
- [SCIENCE & RELIGION: Creationism ruled out of science lessons at North Queensland High School](#)
- [ETHICS EDUCATION: NSW Government plans to trial ethics alternative to scripture in schools](#)
- [SCIENTOLOGY IN SCHOOLS: \(2 items\)](#)
- [FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS: Parent-school ties should shift focus in teen years](#)
- [RACISM IN SCHOOLS: \(2 items\)](#)
- [VALUING TEACHERS: Trust in teachers vital to success of Finland's education system](#)
- [CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: \(3 items\)](#)
- [COMPETITION & FUNDRAISER: Living Fundraisers](#)
- [POST-SCHOOL VALUES EDUCATION: National Service](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

---

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Public schools bullying parents to comply with “religion”

I would like some advice. My wife and I are both firm believers in secular schools and fully against the chaplaincy program - and our eldest daughter is starting prep next year.

The deputy head has talked my wife into not opting out of the scheme, and I can't convince her otherwise! He has said that if you opt out of the scheme, our child will have to be specifically lead away from assemblies etc that have any prayers or mentions of God in them.

My wife is concerned that our daughter could be excluded by the other kids as being a freak or something... It's not my daughter's fight and she shouldn't be involved.

First of all, why is a state school saying prayers at assembly and in class?

Do you have a view on this dilemma? I feel it is our duty to send a message to the government by opting out, but can't convince my wife that it's worth it.

[Name & address supplied, Queensland]

[< top >](#)

---

## CHAPLAINCY IN SCHOOLS

### National School Chaplaincy Program

*Australian Education Union, 23 November 2009*

The AEU today condemned the decision by the Prime Minister to extend the Howard Government's controversial National School Chaplaincy Program until the end of 2011, at a cost of \$42.8 million.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said the union strongly supported the need for additional resources aimed at addressing the growing level of complex social and emotional issues experienced by young people in our schools.

However, these additional resources should be allocated to employ appropriately qualified school counsellors or psychologists. That would allow schools to expand and improve existing programs developed to meet the needs of young people.

Urgent resources are needed to achieve more manageable caseloads. In NSW, for example, the school counsellor to student ratio stands at about 1 to 1000.

The AEU considers the National School Chaplaincy Program one of the most misguided policies announced by the Howard Government. It undermines Australia's secular traditions.

Source: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Media/President/Natschoolchaplains.html>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Public schools do not need Christian chaplains**

*Maralyn Parker, Daily Telegraph, November 25, 2009*

As NSW finally introduces ethics classes as an alternative to scripture classes in public schools, the federal government is headed in the opposite direction.

Kevin Rudd announced last week another \$42 million, on top of the initial \$165 million, for the national school chaplaincy program that employs religious operatives to work in public schools.

Given only 2 million of 21 million Australians are church goers this is without doubt a misuse of taxpayer money.

Worse \_ Rudd justified the extra spending on a deeply flawed recent study of the chaplaincy program that deviously concluded it was a good thing for public schools to have Christian religious workers on staff.

The Effectiveness of Christian Chaplaincy in Government Schools was commissioned by the National School Chaplaincy Association, an umbrella association for organisations, such as the Scripture Union and GenR8 that supply chaplains to public schools and benefit directly from extra funding.

The study did not include one single NSW public school and one of the two researchers involved is a Uniting Church minister employed by the Christian Research Association

Of course it came up with the insidious recommendation that all public schools should have chaplains.

Read entire article:

[http://blogs.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/maralynparker/index.php/dailytelegraph/comments/public\\_schools\\_do\\_not\\_need\\_christian\\_chaplains/](http://blogs.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/maralynparker/index.php/dailytelegraph/comments/public_schools_do_not_need_christian_chaplains/)

[< top >](#)

---

## **Chaplaincy program study 'flawed and biased': conclusions not justified**

*John Kaye MP*

As the Rudd government moves towards reviewing its \$165 million National Chaplaincy in Schools Program (NCSP), the body representing the majority of chaplains has released a report suggesting the program makes a major and unique contribution to school welfare and morale and is effective in dealing with bullying and student welfare and wellbeing problems.

The report 'The Effectiveness of Chaplaincy'[1] by Dr Philip Hughes of Edith Cowan University and Prof. Margaret Sims of University of New England is being used by the National Schools Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) to argue for the program to be continued.

It suggests that the contribution made by chaplains could not be made by other welfare professionals or teachers.

The Greens challenge the validity of both the report and its use to justify the continuation of the program, on the grounds of:

unsound research method (absence of control group) leading to unjustified conclusions: the report fails to compare results with schools that do not have chaplains but have similar access to welfare and community liaison workers.

While claiming a number of benefits for school communities derived from the presence of the chaplains, the report fails to account for the positive impacts of an additional welfare-focussed staff member other than by virtue of their chaplaincy, and

lack of independence: the report failed to disclose the affiliation of one of the authors to the Christian Research Association[2], established and run by a number of Christian churches that provide many of the chaplains.

Read entire article at: <http://www.johnkaye.org.au/campaigns/education/chaplaincy-program-study-flawed-and-biased-conclusions-not-justified>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Exercise caution in employing chaplains in schools**

*Australian Guidance & Counselling Association*

It is important to recognise the limits of what chaplains can provide, according to the Australian Guidance and Counselling Association.

Research and experience show that the issues facing school staff are becoming more complex and confronting. One in five students experiences mental health problems, which are appearing at an earlier age. Some students are behaving in ways that put them and others at risk. Mission Australia's National Youth Survey shows that young people are worried about issues such as body image, family conflict, abuse, alcohol and other drugs.

The notion that a chaplain or values education can address these issues is simplistic at best.

These problems require a range of coordinated responses, informed by professional staff who understand child and adolescent development and current research.

Chaplains are not required to have any qualifications or adhere to any professional standards and are frequently not obliged to follow policies and procedures.

Read entire release: <http://www.agca.com.au/article.php?id=16>

[< top >](#)

---

## **SCIENCE & RELIGION**

### **Creationism ruled out of science lessons at North Queensland High School**

*ABC News, Nov 11, 2009*

A north Queensland high school has been directed not to teach creationism during science lessons.

Bowen State High School invited a Seventh Day Adventist church pastor and creationist to address a Year 11 biology class about the religious-based theory of "intelligent design".

An official school newsletter said it was part of the study of the origins of life.

A spokesman for Education Queensland said although there had been no formal complaints the science classroom had been used inappropriately.

The school has been directed to keep science and religious studies separate in the future.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/11/2739157.htm>

[< top >](#)

---

## **ETHICS EDUCATION**

## **NSW Government plans to trial ethics alternative to scripture in schools**

*Andrew Clennell, Sydney Morning Herald, November 25, 2009*

ETHICS classes will be introduced in NSW schools, offering an alternative to religious studies for the first time in 100 years, the Premier, Nathan Rees, will announce today.

Ten primary schools will begin a trial next year of the classes as an alternative to religious education. The trial will involve year 5 and year 6 students and will teach students about "fairness", the importance of telling the truth and about how to deal with bullying.

Mr. Rees said the Government was developing a proposal with the St James Ethics Centre to conduct the trial in 10 schools for two terms next year.

"This is not about ending religious education in our schools, it's about providing a choice," Mr. Rees said. "Schools that are interested in being involved in the trial will be able to nominate themselves and students can only attend with the permission of their parents."

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/rees-plans-to-introduce-ethics-classes-in-school-20091124-jhef.html>

[< top >](#)

---

## **SCIENTOLOGY IN SCHOOLS**

### **Scientologists 'targeting' schoolchildren**

*Sean Rubinsztein-Dunlop, ABC News, 22 November 2009*

The New South Wales Government says the Church of Scientology is targeting Year 6 students using "marketing" material that claims to promote human rights. Education Minister Verity Firth has ordered principals not to distribute DVDs and booklets funded by the church and sent to schools by a group called Youth for Human Rights.

The material outlines the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and quotes Scientology founder L Ron Hubbard on a list of "famous human rights leaders".

Ms Firth only learned of the material when she was contacted by a Sydney journalist on Friday, three days after federal independent Senator Nick Xenophon accused the group of widespread criminal conduct and abuse.

A spokeswoman says the Minister later sent a memo to the state's primary school principals, warning them of the "marketing exercise for Year 6 students". Ms Firth wrote: "It would appear that this organisation has links to the Church of Scientology, which is not approved to conduct any activities in NSW public schools."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/22/2749868.htm>

[< top >](#)

---

### **Scientologist propaganda sent to 'most schools in Australia'**

*Sean Rubinsztein-Dunlop for AM and News Online, 23 November 2009*

An international group sponsored by the Church of Scientology says it has been targeting children in schools across Australia for at least three years.

The Youth for Human Rights group has been distributing DVDs and brochures that spread its message about rights and name Scientology founder L Ron Hubbard as a leader on the issue alongside Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

The New South Wales education minister confirmed yesterday that primary schools had been ordered not to hand out the material, but a volunteer from the group has revealed its efforts are far more widespread than the State Government appears to have suspected.

Tara Kuru, 25, was encouraged by the Church of Scientology to contact the ABC to hose down concerns about the material, but her attempt is likely to backfire. "Most schools in Australia would have at least seen the booklet once or twice," she said. "For like nine out of 10, I've had nothing but positive responses."

Ms Kuru says the group has sent the material to "most" primary and secondary schools over the past three years.

"Putting L Ron Hubbard in the same league as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi is laughable, but it's also very serious in the context of the sorts of things that L Ron Hubbard got up to when he was running the Church of Scientology," Senator Xenophon said.

But Ms Kuru says the Scientology founder and science fiction author deserves to be on the group's list of "famous human rights leaders" because "he's made some very profound help towards human rights."

Read entire article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/23/2750110.htm>

[< top >](#)

---

## **FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Study suggests parent-school ties should shift focus in teen years**

*Debra Viadero, Education Week, 18 November 2009*

Researcher Nancy Hill found that for teens, what parents do at home, including communicating expectations for their children's achievement, matters more than what they do at school.

In a series of studies and a new book, Ms. Hill makes the case that both research and policy initiatives aimed at promoting parent involvement fail to take into account the distinct needs of adolescents, a group of students that seems biologically driven to break free of parental vigilance.

"Having your parents involved in a field trip is not wholly consistent with what an adolescent wants," said Ms. Hill, an education professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the university's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Moreover, studies are beginning to show that such activities may not be nearly as important for promoting educational success as other things parents might be doing at home at this stage in their children's development.

The focus of the research is timely. The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires most schools to enact policies on parent involvement, but it makes no mention of how those efforts in middle and high schools might differ from those in elementary schools, which have been the focus of most of the research on parent involvement until recently.

For the new book, *Families, Schools, and the Adolescent*, which was published in August by Teachers College Press, Ms. Hill and her co-editor, Ruth K. Chao of the University of California, Riverside, recruited scholars from a variety of disciplines to share some newer findings on family-school partnerships at the secondary school level.

Read entire article:

[http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/11/18/12parent\\_ep.h29.html?tkn=WMTFNHsZRcvV%2BEo5jyYaVZa7c0n%2FHF0oPTyb](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/11/18/12parent_ep.h29.html?tkn=WMTFNHsZRcvV%2BEo5jyYaVZa7c0n%2FHF0oPTyb)

[< top >](#)

---

## **RACISM IN SCHOOLS**

### **Schools the major site for youth racism, new report finds**

*FYA Media Release, 19 November 2009*

A major report released today by The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) reveals that schools are the primary setting for the experience of racism among young people.

The national study, titled *The Impact of Racism upon the Health and Wellbeing of Young Australians*, also finds that 70% of secondary school students experienced at least one form of racism, with those from migrant backgrounds experiencing the highest levels.

“With the Federal Government launching Social Inclusion Week next week, this study is a stark and timely reminder that Australia has a long way to go in addressing the challenge of racism in schools, especially for students from migrant backgrounds,” says Dr Lucas Walsh, Director of Research at FYA. “This report confirms that schools are uniquely placed to engage the challenges and benefits of diversity and that a whole-community approach should support them to do this.”

The research involved 823 students from 18 secondary schools across Australia and examined; their experiences of racism; the effects of that racist behaviour on health and wellbeing; where that racist behaviour most often occurs; how they respond to racism, and their attitudes towards race relations generally.

Read more at [http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/FYA-MedRel\\_ImpactOfRacism.pdf](http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/FYA-MedRel_ImpactOfRacism.pdf)

Download the report at [http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Impact\\_of\\_Racism\\_FYA\\_report.pdf](http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Impact_of_Racism_FYA_report.pdf)

[< top >](#)

---

## **Schools a hotbed of racism: study**

*Miki Perkins, Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November 2009*

MORE than two-thirds of young people are the victims of racism at school, with first-generation migrant women in years 11 and 12 most at risk.

A national study has found that racism permeates Australian schools, with 80 per cent of secondary students from non-Anglo backgrounds and 55 per cent of students from Anglo backgrounds saying they had experienced racial vilification.

Interviews conducted with 900 secondary school students across Australia also found Anglo-Australian youths displayed consistent prejudice towards other cultural groups, particularly towards darker-skinned students from places such as Africa and India.

The report, released yesterday by the Foundation for Young Australians, showed racial abuse ranged from verbal insults to cultural stereotyping, with its impact influenced by gender, age and the type of school.

Students who attended a Catholic school were 1.7 times less likely to report experiences of racism than students going to government schools.

Racism made students feel angry, depressed, increased headaches, muscle tension and made them not want to go to school, the study found.

Read more at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/schools-a-hotbed-of-racism-study-20091118-imk8.html>

[< top >](#)

---

## **VALUING TEACHERS**

### **Trust in teachers vital to success of Finland's education system**

*Jouni Valijarvi, Australian Teacher Magazine, 4 November 2009*

EDUCATION has always been seen important in the Finnish society. Parents regard education still as the best policy to ensure a positive future for their children. Moreover, parents' trust in teachers is high.

Teachers have always played an important and respected role in society. This high respect shows still today, for instance, in national surveys on public ratings for various professions and occupations.

Teacher's profession has remained a popular choice among young people. For example, in a survey among secondary school leavers in 2004 teacher's profession was clearly the number one on their list of favourites. For the approximately 800 student places offered in primary teacher training programs in the Finnish universities there are annually 5000-6000 applicants.

What might explain this sustained, exceptionally high regard and general trust for teachers in Finland? At least the answer does not lie in their salary benefits: In a comparison across OECD countries (in 2006), in Finland primary school teachers' annual pay equalled USD\$35,798 on average, while the OECD average was USD\$37,832. Correspondingly, the average annual salary of upper secondary school teachers in Finland was USD\$42,440 and the OECD average USD\$43,360.

In Finland, all teachers since the 1970s, already, have been trained and educated in universities. Master's degree is a basic qualification for teachers, also for primary schools, and an obligatory requirement for a permanent appointment.

University-level education also means that research becomes an essential part of teacher education. Teachers are expected to draw on the latest research knowledge in their work. They can also do some small-scale research at their own school. Such skills are considered essential teacher competencies in view of school's capability to respond to the needs of our increasingly knowledge-intensive society.

In comparison to other countries, teachers' work is subject to fairly little control in Finland. The national core curriculum sets targets for teachers' work but the teacher can independently decide the methods to reach the objectives. Inspection of schools was abolished in the early 1990s. In Finland, we do not have any national examination system, either, so as to rank the schools, teachers or students on a regular basis.

Read more at [http://www.ozteacher.com.au/html/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=405:trust-in-teachers-vital-to-success-of-finlands-education-system&catid=5:the-hard-word&Itemid=6](http://www.ozteacher.com.au/html/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=405:trust-in-teachers-vital-to-success-of-finlands-education-system&catid=5:the-hard-word&Itemid=6)

Professor Jouni Valijarvi is director of the Finnish Institute for Educational Research.

[< top >](#)

---

## **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

### **Call to establish children's advocate as Labor previously promised**

*Dan Harrison, the Age, November 20, 2009*

CHILD welfare activists are pressing Canberra to create a national children's commissioner, more than five years after Labor promised when in opposition to establish the post.

Children's rights group Save the Children led a protest in front of Parliament House in which children used a giant megaphone to convey their call.

The group timed the protest to coincide with the 20th anniversary today of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Save the Children spokeswoman Annie Pettitt said that although all Australian states and territories had children's commissioners, national co-ordination was needed.

"The Australian Government must listen to children to effectively tackle issues such as child abuse, poverty and teenage homelessness," Dr Pettitt said.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/childrens-advocate-call-20091119-ioxq.html>

[< top >](#)

---

### **Greens call for a Commonwealth Commissioner to protect our kids**

*Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, Media Release, 20 November 2009*

The Australian Greens will move for the introduction of a new Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People to provide protection and a voice for all young Australians.

On the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Greens today announce they will introduce legislation to establish a Federal independent statutory body to oversee the rights of young Australians.

"Australia needs a properly-resourced Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People with the powers to ensure recognition of their needs, views and rights," Senator Hanson-Young said.

"According to a survey by the Save the Children charity, 78 per cent of Australians believe there is a role for a Commonwealth Commissioner - clearly this idea makes sense both to the public and to national organisations.

"Whether it's children in child care or state care, in the education system, the juvenile justice system or detention on Christmas Island, in big cities, small towns or outback communities, all young people deserve to have someone looking out for their interests.

Read entire release: <http://sarah-hanson-young.greensmps.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

---

### **Children's rights get short shrift in the 'lucky country'**

*Carolyn Hardy & Suzanne Dvorak, Sydney Morning Herald, 20 November 2009*

Australia could do more to fulfill its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child here at home.

In 2005, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Australia adopt a national framework for children, enshrined in federal legislation, to make state-based children's polices more consistent to increase accountability.

But this has not happened and children's policies in education, health and protection still differ across the states and territories. Likewise, the role of existing state and territory children's commissions varies between jurisdictions. Some take a broad focus on enhancing children's wellbeing in the community while others concentrate on children and young people at risk.

This lack of cohesion means that insufficient attention is given to children and young people in the national, political arena. Australia needs a long-term, national plan for all children to raise their status and importance in society.

Read the entire article at <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/childrens-rights-get-short-shrift-in-the-lucky-country-20091120-ip8b.html>

Carolyn Hardy is chief executive of UNICEF Australia. Suzanne Dvorak is chief executive of Save the Children in Australia.

[< top >](#)

---

### **COMPETITION & FUNDRAISER**

#### **Christmas comes alive for Aussie kids**

Children across Australia are encouraged to get creative for the chance to star on Christmas Cards with a recycling twist.

Living Fundraisers today launched a competition for children to design artwork and messages that will feature on 'living' Christmas Cards.

The cards are made from recycled paper embedded with seeds. Post Christmas, the cards can be planted to grow native Australian trees and shrubs.

The cards will be available to schools, pre-schools, childcare centres, sporting and community groups to sell as an alternative to the chocolate drive.

Rachel Taylor, organiser of the competition, said the cards were part of a larger initiative targeting child obesity and promoting healthy, active lifestyles for children.

The competition is open to children from Australian primary schools, kindergartens, preschools and childcare centres.

Read more at <http://www.livingfundraisers.com.au>

[< top >](#)

---

## POST-SCHOOL VALUES EDUCATION

### New call for national service to “re-integrate” disengaged young people

*Courier Mail, 16 November 2009 (AAP)*

A LEADING youth worker is calling for a return to national service to combat street violence, and unemployment.

Young men and women should be forced into the military through a universal conscription scheme after completing their high school exams, says Les Twentyman, a Melbourne social worker and former teacher who is pitching the controversial idea to the federal government.

Under Mr. Twentyman's proposal, the national service program would last 18 months and be called "Australian Education Services".

Youths who go on to a post-secondary education, an apprenticeship, a professional sports contract or skilled full-time work after high school would be exempt from joining the service.

But those youths who fall through the cracks earlier than Year 12 could be forced to join as young as 14 through alternative measures in the courts to avoid jail time.

Such a program is desperately needed to pull back a rising tide of social issues that has spiked crime rates and gang activity, Mr. Twentyman says.

Read entire article: <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,26355659-952,00.html>

[< 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)
- Family School Partners : <http://www.familyschool.org.au/news/> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

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

To unsubscribe from Values in Education click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeVAL>

To unsubscribe from all ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeALL>