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Special Report:

Clinical teaching with
Dean Field Rickards and
Professor John Hattie

Profile:

Holroyd High refugee
students flourish in culture
of tolerance

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We welcome you with great excitement to our first Australian edition of *School News*. Education in Australia is on the move. The reports haven't been glowing of late, but if 'necessity is the mother of all invention', then the baby has been born!

We hear from Dean Field Rickards and Professor John Hattie in our special report on clinical teaching, which places student learning front and centre, with ingenious appropriation of clinical practice into teaching.

Kambrya College has been in the news since the release of the ABC documentary series, *Revolution School*; dedicated principal, Michael Muscat shares the back-story not conveyed by the series.

At Holroyd High, 60 percent of students are from a refugee background; readers will hear

from formidable principal, Dorothy Hoddinott AO, on meeting the educational needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse student community.

Prolific Australian author, John Marsden shares both joys, and mundane tribulations from his not quite utopian school, in his characteristic humorous and plucky prose.

Intellectual fodder aside, schools can't run on ideas, so we explore student management systems, facilities and property management, along with topics from office supplies to school lunches.

To complement the print edition, *School News* will release a digital newsletter every Thursday, perfect for an afternoon coffee catch up on education related happenings.

Look out for our dedicated Facebook page, providing

a platform for engagement, feedback and comments, as well as a place to share ideas, concerns and triumphs about all aspects of school life.

Enjoy the discoveries, triumphs, and inventions of your colleagues within these pages, and until next time - *noli cedere cognoscere* (don't stop learning). **sn**



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news

04 News

education

08 Special Report – Clinical Teaching: Special report on clinical teaching with Field Rickards and John Hattie

10 Principal Speaks – John Marsden: Candlebark School: The dream of an author realised

12 Principal Speaks – Michael Muscat: The story behind the *Revolution School*

15 Oh Captain My Captain: Teachers who make you feel like saying "Oh Captain My Captain"

16 Up-skilling: Teachers up-skilling for specialisation and mastery

20 Indigenous Education: 'Starting at strengths' with strong Indigenous cultures

what's hot

22 What's Hot: The latest trending education industry products

profile

24 Holroyd High: Refugee students flourish in culture of tolerance

administration

27 SMS: Easing school administration woes

32 School Photography: School photo day can be organised and fun

34 Multifunctional Photocopiers: An essential tool for schools

36 Healthy Fundraising: Proven steps to successful healthy fundraising

38 Novated Leasing For Teachers: Salary sacrificing with a novated vehicle lease

teaching resources

41 Literacy: Stopping the literacy and numeracy free-fall

42 Interactive Teaching: Technology an ally for the interactive teacher

46 Technology: The primary goal of an agile learning environment

47 Book Reviews: Wonderful reads for children and teens
food & beverage

48 Water Options: A new wave of drinking water options in schools

51 Healthy Canteens: Optimum nutrition for the school day

external learning

54 Incursions: Extraordinary learning in ordinary places

56 Out Of School Care: The evolution of out of school hours care

58 Out Of School Care: Quality care for kids before and after school

sports & recreation

59 Synthetic Surfaces: Synthetic surfaces for multi-sport schools

62 Sport Participation: Government plan to get more kids active and into sport

health & safety

64 Sunsmart schools: Protecting from harmful UV rays

property

66 Air Conditioning: The hidden costs of classroom air conditioning

68 Air Conditioning: Classroom air quality a growing health concern

69 Playground Design: Designing a playground that captures the imagination

72 Solar Power: Schools and solar power - a perfect pair

74 Case Study – Bundaberg Christian College: Bundaberg Christian College goes solar



NAPLAN results worrying for many

NAPLAN results flat-lining

The latest NAPLAN data is out, and the plateaued results are raising some alarm bells.

Federal minister for education and training, Simon Birmingham released a summary indicating an increase in reading scores across the country of 0.40 percent since 2013, a decrease in writing scores of 0.20 percent and an increase in numeracy of 1.26 percent across all year levels. Individual results are concerning, with a significant decrease in writing results for years seven and nine since 2011.

The Liberal MP espoused “the evidence-based measures” in the government’s student achievement plan, which advocated a focus on going ‘back to basics’, and included objectives like improving outcomes in literacy, numeracy and STEM subjects, helping to reward our best teachers and better preparing our children for life after school.

“This NAPLAN data clearly shows that while strong levels of investment in schools are important, it’s more important to ensure that funding is being used on initiatives proven to boost student results”, cautioned the minister. Members of the opposition and the Greens still call for full implementation of Gonski recommendations, while teachers continue to express concern about

the value of NAPLAN. Kevin Bates, president of The Queensland Teachers’ Union told the ABC that “NAPLAN is still just a point-in-time test that may provide some broad indication of how an education system is performing on the five general areas tested”.

All teaching graduates to be tested for literacy and numeracy

The ‘literacy and numeracy test for initial teacher education students’ became compulsory from July 1, 2016 for potential graduates at a cost of \$92.50 per test, payable by the student.

Students must complete the test prior to graduation, and the aim is for future graduates to take the test towards the beginning of their studies, so universities can provide support to those not meeting the standards required.

Re-appointed minister pledges reform to lift outcomes

Re-appointed education and training minister Simon Birmingham has accepted the honour and included this promise in his acceptance release.

“We are committed to ensuring the delivery of reforms in school

education that lift outcomes for all Australian students, ensure the record funding we will continue to deliver into our schools is distributed according to need, increases the overall excellence of our educational outcomes and addresses those areas where student performance can be further improved.” It is unclear how many of the recommendations laid out in the Gonski report will be implemented to achieve this needs based funds distribution.

Teach for Australia scheme

Senator Birmingham’s office has released news of an increase to the Teach for Australia program.

The program reports having placed over 270 high achieving teachers in areas of highest need. The program enrolls graduates in other areas in intensive training and then places them in partner schools in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia, but program leaders are working towards expansion into remaining states.

Indigenous school leavers

Prior to the election, minister for education and training, Simon Birmingham had announced the launch of a new portal ‘Think Your Way’.

The portal will assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the country to make decisions about life after school through two new initiatives worth \$1.7 million.

The portal will provide information on courses and options, as well as real life stories of Indigenous students’ success at a university level and beyond.

There has also been a partnership developed between Business Deans Council and the federal department to encourage more Indigenous students into business courses, “as we know they can be a gateway to professions attracting higher salaries or starting your own business” minister Birmingham has explained.

Principals’ performance influence test results

University of Melbourne economists have found a direct correlation between the implementation of certain management activities from principals and positive test scores on NAPLAN.

Principals who set clear strategic principles for their schools, who encourage open communication, and who encourage staff development have students who do better on standardised tests. [SN](#)

Australian Capital Territory

Schools for All program begins

The Education Directorate has begun a three-year program of system reform, the Schools for All program. The program has been established to progress work related to the 2015 report 'Schools for all children and young people: report of the expert panel on students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.'

It not only aims to implement the 50 recommendations of the expert panel, but most importantly to continue the "ambitious, evidence based, and single-minded, 'whatever it takes' student-centred vision that:

- gives priority to each student's needs in education policy and practice in our schools;
- is derived from policy and research on child and adolescent development, pedagogy, neuroscience and family and community studies;
- reflects a pervasive and unrelenting focus on student needs and outstanding student centred practice that will benefit all students, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviours;
- reflects the value of involving and including the broader community in school responses for the benefit of all students."

ACT Government expand student capacity on paper only

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government has received criticism for adding extra places to most school without adding classrooms or allocating resources for the new students.

A change in the definition of school capacity means that school population can increase without infrastructure support or proper planning. P&C, opposition government ministers and unions are concerned that this

will lead to teacher burnout and inadequate teaching spaces for ACT students.

New South Wales

Standards-based pay

The New South Wales Government has rejected claims that women on maternity leave are disadvantaged by standards based pay.

A media release sought to correct the misconception that the women are disadvantaged because, as at the end of 2015, only four teachers had taken the full five years as maternity leave. Under the new arrangement, these teachers could maintain their accreditation and associated level of pay by completing some casual work and undertaking professional development.

The new award, which requires a degree of active service or professional development is in keeping with national standards and was agreed to by the NSW Teachers Federation in 2014.

The release stipulated that the department has generous maternity leave entitlements, while encouraging teachers to maintain connectivity with their profession, through right of return and part time work. In order to practice, teachers, like other professionals, need to maintain accreditation.

Changes to the HSC to boost outcomes

From 2020, students will need to demonstrate they have met a minimum standard in both literacy and numeracy to receive the HSC.

From 2017, year nine students will have their first opportunity to meet this new standard by achieving minimum band eight results when they sit NAPLAN.

"Evidence shows us that students perform better when schools focus on improving essential literacy and numeracy skills for all students," said education minister, Mr Adrian Piccoli said.

From 2018, senior students will be taught more about Indigenous culture, Asia, feminism and the environment under sweeping

new changes to the English and history curriculums.

From 2019, other HSC reforms will introduce better, fairer assessments to reduce excessive student stress; introduce a science extension course, and encourage more students to study maths at the highest possible level; update the syllabuses in English, maths, science and history; and update exam questions to encourage deeper analysis.

The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) has developed the changes. President, Tom Alegounarias said there were no new requirements for this year and indicated that the HSC hasn't been updated in 17 years.

The Conversation is re-imagining NSW education

As part of *The Conversation's*, 'Reimagining New South Wales (NSW)' series, vice-chancellors in NSW asked a select group of early and mid-career researchers to envisage new ways to tackle old problems, and identify emerging opportunities across the state.

Solutions presented for tackling education inequality were early intervention, a strong emphasis on equalising disadvantage by delivering opportunities to students who are underperforming in school, and finally, more rigorous research, including randomised trials, as are the norm in medical research.

Northern Territory

Every Child Every Day program falls short

The federal program uses attendance officers to drive around and collect students and take them to school.

Northern Territory education minister, Peter Chandler says that while "any new student that comes to school is valuable," if the program doesn't improve soon, they will be reviewing how the funding is applied.

No remote schools had met the target of 90 percent attendance as of June 2016.

NT schools to lose \$309 million in federal funding

The Northern Territory (NT) public education system will lose the equivalent of 200 teachers and \$309 million under a new federal funding arrangement to come into effect in 2017/18.

Territory education minister Peter Chandler's submission to the Senate Committee on School Funding Investment shows that under the current federal budget forward estimates, \$20.7 million will be ripped from the NT's education budget for government schools in a single year. A second reduction would follow the next year, bringing the total federal allocation to Territory government schools to \$134.7 million in 2018/19. Australian Education Union NT branch president Jarvis Ryan said the cuts would have a "devastating impact" on schools. "How will these schools continue to function? Many of them are on life support as it is," he said. "They will really struggle to be able to do anything more than put a warm body in front of a classroom. It could well exacerbate the divide even more between schools that are really struggling."

Queensland

Pay rise for Queensland teachers

Queensland Teachers' Union has reached agreement with the Queensland State Government on salary increases.

The agreement includes a 2.5 percent salary increase for all Queensland state school teachers, with a new \$101,000 salary for experienced senior teachers by the end of the three-year agreement.

"Until now, Queensland teachers could only earn more than \$100,000 a year by taking their experience and expertise outside of the classroom.

"We want to encourage teachers to stay in the classroom to use their experience and expertise to ensure Queensland students get a quality education", premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said. ▶

◀ The implementation of the Government's commitment to introduce highly accomplished teacher (HAT) and lead teacher (LT) classifications. The agreement also features a strengthened commitment to maximising permanency for temporary classroom teachers and measures to address workload concerns raised by the Queensland Teachers' Union. "We committed to employ more than 2,500 additional teachers this term of government."

Upskilling teachers in STEM

STEM is on the agenda in Queensland with a new professional development program open to all Queensland teachers announced by education minister, Kate Jones in July.

Round one of the program saw 1502 applicants begin studies in July, and successful round two applicants will begin on October 4. Teachers will study one of seven online courses with Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology, and 500 teachers signed up to upskill in

coding and robotics, a priority area in government's advancing education' action plan. The program is supporting teachers to deliver subjects such as prep to year ten digital technologies, primary science, year seven to nine mathematics and science, and years 11 and 12 mathematics B, chemistry and physics subjects.

Review into disability education in Queensland state schools

Education minister, Kate Jones told a parliamentary estimates hearing that Deloitte would conduct a review into how state government can better support special education teachers.

"Importantly, the review will engage the views of students with disability, their families and peers, and other crucial members of school communities, particularly principals and teachers."

Currently there are more than 31,000 students, representing 5.8 percent of total state school enrolments, who have a verified disability.

Ms Jones said the review was



Safer road crossing for school students

Students at 24 schools across Queensland will be safer with the introduction of new crossing supervisors this financial year.

"Importantly, the review will engage the views of students with disability, their families and peers, and other crucial members of school communities, particularly principals and teachers." Main roads and road safety minister, Mark Bailey said the supervisors were among 75 being introduced to Queensland schools over three years. Education minister, Kate Jones welcomed the extra supervised crossings. "These new supervised school crossings will help our students safely travel to and from school," Ms Jones said.

Photo: Queensland Department of Main Roads and Transport

expected to take approximately 14 weeks and would be finalised by the end of October 2016.

South Australia

Students travel to Vietnam as ANZAC Spirit winners

Eight South Australian students have been awarded the 2016 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize, and will embark on a study tour of Vietnam in October to learn about the experiences of Australian soldiers and nurses who served in the Vietnam War.

South Australian year nine and ten students were eligible to enter the annual competition, which required them to research a South Australian soldier or nurse who served in World War I. Essays are available to view at www.anzaccentenary.sa.gov.au.

Principal swap – skill sharing across the Tasman

A Kiwi principal has landed in Adelaide for a ten-week role for South Australia's debut exchange program with a New Zealand primary school.

Steven Berezowski began on Monday July 25 at Richmond Primary School, where he temporarily replaces incumbent Tracey Davies, who has taken up Mr Berezowski's role as principal at Te Wharau School in Gisborne, New Zealand. Mr Berezowski brings more than 20 years' experience as a principal. The two highly qualified and experienced educators are participating in Australia and New Zealand's first Principal Exchange program, rewarding and acknowledging the outstanding commitment and contribution of public school principals in both countries.

\$250m STEM investment

The state budget for 2016 includes a record \$3.528 billion investment in education and care to support South Australian children and families.

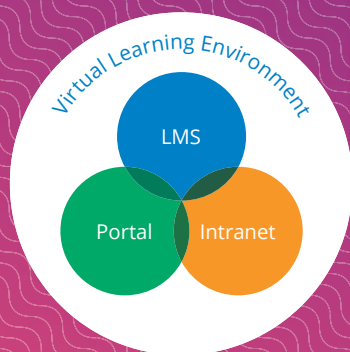
A key feature of the budget was the announcement of \$250 million to build or refurbish existing STEM facilities across 139 primary and secondary schools.

Known as 'STEM works' the initiative will not only create contemporary facilities for student learning, but will also support jobs for local businesses and tradespeople.



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Excellence in Public Education winners to be announced in October

Finalists have been named for the 2016 South Australian Excellence in Public Education Awards after South Australians nominated teachers, leaders and support staff who have made outstanding contributions to education across the state.

Finalists have come from all over the state and winners will be announced at a ceremony on October 14, at the National Wine Centre.

Tasmania



What is the right age to start school?

Tasmanian kids to start school at four years

As part of the review of the Education Act, the Tasmanian State Government is proposing to lower the compulsory school starting age by six months, from five years to four years and six months.

The proposed change to the school starting age will apply to children born in 2016 and means that beginning in 2021, a child who is four years and six months by the start of the year must be enrolled in Prep or be provided with registered home education. The plan has attracted both support, and intense opposition from some within the state. A Facebook page called 'Tasmanians Say NO to a Lower School Starting Age' has been established in an attempt to have the decision revoked. Opposing parties cite the psychological harm of rushing through the social and emotional intelligence learning that occurs through unstructured play, in favour of an emphasis on academic performance at a young age.

Tasmanian high schools to include years 11 and 12

The Tasmanian Department of Education have been working on extending regional high schools to include years eleven and twelve.



L-R Jazmin Cecchi, education minister, James Merlino, Jana Hoeffler, Belgrave Primary principal Kerryn Baillie

To date, high schools in Tasmania have only taught up to a year ten level, and many cite this as a reason for a low rate of enrolment in the TCE years. Students must travel, and sometimes board in cities to attend 'college' which offers the senior program. The first 18 schools to participate will begin teaching senior years in 2017.

Government to fund anti-bullying programs

According to a Tasmanian government media release, their strategic direction is to improve child health, wellbeing and child protection, and to help vulnerable Tasmanians.

The government communication said Tasmanian schools are committed to combating bullying, particularly cyber bullying, and continuing to create safe and supportive school communities. Funding of \$3 million, over four years, has been allocated to combat bullying and cyber bullying in schools and further strengthen the Respectful Schools and Workplaces Framework.

Victoria

Bringing opportunities to regional students

Thirty students from across regional Victoria will have the opportunity to study nanoscience, stem cells and astrophysics.

Through the John Monash Science School's 2016 regional science exchange program the students will study at the Victoria's leading specialist school in science, maths and associated technologies. The

annual exchange program gives year ten students from regional Victoria the opportunity to attend the specialist science school in Clayton for four weeks of intensive study. Students from areas including Sunraysia, Bright, Bendigo, Morwell, Maryborough and Geelong will work with other like-minded students at the John Monash Science School.

Breakfast club to support families in need

Children from families in need will get a brighter and healthier start to the day, with 255 more schools starting school 'breakfast clubs' across the state.

One in seven children arrives at school with an empty stomach, affecting their ability to learn and do their best. The Andrews Labor Government has partnered with welfare food agency, Foodbank to provide a free breakfast to up to 25,000 kids in 500 of Victoria's most disadvantaged government primary schools. The \$13.7 million program aims to ensure every child, regardless of their postcode, has access to a first-rate education.

Special needs funding roll out

Teachers and students are being encouraged to think about how they can improve school facilities for students with disabilities or special needs, with round two of funding now open under the Inclusive Schools Fund.

The Andrews Labor Government established the Inclusive Schools Fund to help government schools build new facilities to better support the social and educational needs of children with a disability. Belgrave Primary School will receive a new pirate themed inclusive playground; a play spaces that will benefit all

students, including those with special needs. The Fund is one of nine initiatives in the Special Needs Plan for Victorian schools to ensure the same possibilities for all students. Applications close on September 29 2016. Schools can download the guidelines and application form for the Inclusive Schools Fund at www.education.vic.gov.au.

Western Australia

Specialist support for students with autism unveiled

Director of Statewide Services, Lindsay Hale, said specialist autism programs would be established in 16 primary and secondary schools by 2020, with the first new program underway in 2017.

"Our schools already provide excellent early intervention services for children with autism, and these new programs will help to ensure that students with autism get the right support with their learning from kindergarten to secondary school," he said. "The new programs are designed to help students with autism who demonstrate more challenging behaviours and need extra support with specialist teachers to help them to achieve their best."

New WA primary schools built in high growth areas

Students in the growing areas of Landsdale East, Alkimos South West, Baldivis North and Byford South West will be welcomed in 2017 at their brand new public primary schools.

In a first-ever for Western Australia, the four new schools are being designed, built, financed and maintained by project company EduWest under a public private partnership. Department of Education Executive director, infrastructure, John Fischer said while this was a new and very different way of delivering public education facilities, the way schooling was delivered will not change. "All school staff will still be employed by the Department of Education as they are still all working in public schools," Mr Fischer said. "EduWest will manage the schools' facilities including general maintenance, helpdesk services, gardens and grounds. [SA](#)

Special report on clinical teaching with Field Rickards and John Hattie



L-R Professor John Hattie, and Dean Field Rickards, Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Professor Field Rickards is the Dean of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE). He began his career as an audiologist, and then lectured in audiology, before applying his clinical approach to education.

Lecturers from MGSE appeared in the ABC documentary, *Revolution School*, as both academic advisor and mentors to the teaching staff of Kambrya College. The college is a member of the MGSE Partnership of Schools, which facilitates clinical practice for pre-service teachers, and professional support and mentorship to the schools' teaching staff. The successful series has engaged audiences and propelled the concept of clinical teaching into the public domain.

What is clinical teaching?

in a 2015 *Journal of Education for Teaching* article titled, 'Teaching as a clinical profession: translational practices in initial teacher education, an international perspective', McLean Davies et al. referred to the movement as, "the adaptation of a medical



While doctors are "trying to fix problems, teachers are trying to enhance learning"

– Dean Field Rickards

discourse to the preparation of teachers, offering a new paradigm for teacher preparation learning, which has, at its centre, the 'translation' and application of theory and research in the sites of practice".

Professor Rickards has also referred to this concept of a new paradigm, and it's a system that places the learning process of the student at the centre of operations. Teachers analyse the efficacy of their teaching by looking to the student for evidence. In any other clinical profession, the client is both the focus and the yard stick by which a practitioner's success is measured. If the client does not benefit from the practitioner's work, the practitioner must change their input.

"A doctor will take a history, do an examination, do some tests, and come up with a hypothesis of what might be the cause. It might be one of two comparable causes, so there will be a treatment, but if the patient comes back a week later, and hasn't improved, then we have to test something else", was Dean Rickards' example. "Clinical teaching is evidence based decision making that enables teachers to meet the needs of individual learners. While doctors are "trying to fix problems, teachers are trying to enhance learning", he concluded.

Clinical teachers ask:

- What does each student know now, and what are they ready to learn next?

- What are the evidence-based practices that can be used in that area so that their learning progresses from the current stage to the next?
- What teaching strategies should the teacher use to implement those 'interventions'?
- What has been the impact of the intervention and what should happen next?

During an interview with Maxine McKew on ABC podcast *The Conversation*, Director of Melbourne Educational Research Institute, Professor John Hattie said, "quite frankly Maxine, I don't care how you teach, I only care that you have an impact from your teaching". This exciting comment appears to indicate that clinical teaching is such an individualised approach to teaching, that it allows for variation in learning styles, and teacher individuality. A teacher can use their own interests or talents to enhance the learning of their students, as long as it works. According to Professor Rickards, "the critical thing is: does the teacher have the capability to evaluate the impact they've had on student learning?".

“ I don’t care how you teach, I only care that you have an impact from your teaching.”

– Professor John Hattie

How can teachers evaluate the impact of their teaching?

An initial assessment must ascertain the starting point, or the building blocks, with which you may construct the program for a student. Each student presents with a number of factors that will influence how you approach their learning. A student may have arrived in Australia as a refugee and missed years of schooling, be learning impaired, speak an Indigenous language as their first language, or come from a low socioeconomic background; the teachers must have a deep understanding of each student's individual circumstances and prior learning experiences.

After identifying the starting point, clinical protocol dictates that the practitioner combine their knowledge of the patient with their knowledge of current research, to devise a ‘treatment’ or in the case of teaching, an educational plan. After delivery of each unit of that plan, (which may be as small as ‘a lesson’), the students are assessed to see if they have progressed along their own learning trajectory. However, in order to assess learning outcomes, teachers need to be trained in “what knowledge of subject matter looks like”, and obtain evidence of learning from their students on a week-to-week basis. Evidence can be defined as, “what the children do, make, say or write”, a phrase attributed to MSGE Professor Patrick Griffin.

While teachers remain aware of target competencies along the curriculum continuum, the idea is not to test all students across lateral benchmarks. “Clinical teaching is about going through an evidence-based decision making process, to ensure that *each child has at least*

a year’s growth in any calendar year”, Professor Rickards clarified. While clinical teaching practitioners ask themselves what the *expected* competency would be at this stage, their focus remains on stewarding the learner along their own educational path.

While Professor Rickards reassured that clinical teaching does not mean 30 individual lessons, managing these differences does involve tailoring your ‘treatment’ to groups or individuals on a case-by-case basis. Clinical teaching is inextricably linked to the need for “complex and challenging area” of the teaching to be more collaborative. “In no other profession are complex problems dealt with in a team of one”, Professor Rickards remarked. “We need to move away from this culture of one teacher one craft, we want teachers working in teams”.

With some exceptions, mainstream practice still favours the ‘one teacher, one class’ model, leaving little opportunity for individualised education or collaborative support. With considerable variances in student ability, teachers are faced with stretching themselves across ability gaps spanning years of schooling.

Team-teaching allows teachers to support each other, and “stretch the most able students”, while supporting struggling students. “We want our most able teachers to be working with the most challenging children.” Teaching teams also allow cross-training and mentorship, and “every school needs at least one lead teacher who is an expert at identifying the learning needs of children, and devising programs that will accelerate, and align with learning outcomes” the Dean recommended. In a modern school setting, non-teaching staff also engage in supporting students, and

as Professor Rickards pointed out, “when teachers are using evidence-based decision making, they are speaking the same language as other professionals working at the schools, like the speech pathologists and the educational psychologists”.

In a 2009 paper, titled ‘Teaching as a Clinical Profession’, which was prepared for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, USA, Alter and Coggs outlined a set of five key characteristics of clinical practice.


The characteristics are, *centrality of clients*, involving direct observation; *knowledge domains*, practitioners must have specialised skills and expertise; *use of evidence and judgment in practice*, including knowledge of the individual (through observation and diagnostic tools), as well as knowing what interventions have worked on

similar clients; *accountability to professional community standards*; and finally, rigorous *academic and practical training* before having access to clients.

While Australian teacher training certainly includes a practical element, it can hardly qualify as ‘clinical practice’ when considered in the context of these criteria. Clinical teaching emphasises the importance of data, theory and research in informing interventionist teacher practice. As Professor John Hattie suggests all teachers ask themselves: “Can you actually measure if you are changing the learning lives of students?” The clinical teaching approach applies a simple clinical paradigm to answer this question. Aspects of teaching are certainly an art form, but, evidence suggests, there’s also a science to it. [SN](#)

By Suzy Barry, Industry Reporter


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Shaping minds, shaping the world

Candlebark School: The dream of an author realised

John Marsden is a prolific Australian author, teacher and principal of Candlebark School. His experiences, and views on education inspired him to create an alternative to traditional schooling, though he says it's not the 'utopia' some expect.



If a car is a dud, it doesn't matter how often you respray it, change the tyres, fit spunky new seat covers, it won't go. You can install a reversing camera, BOSE sound system and satellite navigation, but it'll continue to sit in your driveway, gathering bird droppings...

As a school student, student teacher, teacher, and author-in-residence, I spent more than 50 years bemused, baffled, frustrated and appalled by the blind adherence of governments, bureaucrats and school leaders to a model, which was inherently hopeless. Changes to the curriculum, the timetable, the architecture, the seating made, and continue to make, no substantial difference.

Increasing teacher training from two years, to three years, to four; paying teachers more; keeping students at school longer; abolishing streaming or gender-segregation or corporal punishment – as welcome as some of these measures have been, they can never compensate for the fact that the model is unworkable.



Using a blow torch; a real experience

For all the talk of excellence/realising your potential/achieving your dreams, schools are still sitting in the driveway, belching out toxic gases.

It's easy to understand why the model doesn't work. It's because it is, was, and has always been based on economic factors. It started with legislators trying to squash the largest number of kids possible into the smallest space possible, and assign the fewest number of adults possible to look after them, so that the other adults could get on with business (keeping the factories working, the

mines producing, and the wheels of commerce turning).

How could such a model ever succeed in teaching children to be thoughtful, discerning, creative, generous, responsible and mature?

One inevitable by-product of the disproportionate ratio of adults to students is the development of subcultures, which are rarely glimpsed by the adults but are often more powerful than the culture that the adults claim to be inculcating.

In starting a school from scratch I had no complex philosophical

treatise, on which to rely. I had only a few basic beliefs.

They were these:

1. I wanted students to have first-hand experiences. Recently I watched a "wonderful" example of "stunning new technology". An American teacher toured the Large Hadron Collider in France, while his students, sitting in a classroom in California, watched in live time and communicated with him. This was supposed to be an advance in education. The adults have the experience; the students sit on their butts and watch someone else doing stuff.

People need their own stories. Our stories define us, shape us, enrich us. They help us grow.

Stories do not come from watching TV or playing Xbox games.

They come from riding skateboards, climbing trees, making jam, catching a ferry, meeting people, going to Sri Lanka, touring a factory, nursing babies, holding a post for a road surveyor.



John Marsden says: "Eating together creates a lovely vibe"



Candlebark students enjoying the acres of school grounds

2. I wanted teachers who had stories to tell. People whose lives were filled with wide-ranging experiences, and who were creative, adventurous and interesting.

3. I was determined to strip out from the schooling model everything that could not be justified on sensible grounds. So many schools are obsessed with students wearing the 'correct' uniform. Ergo, let's do away with uniform. At a stroke, 20, 30, 40 percent of the potential conflicts between students and teachers are eliminated. Report-writing? A waste of time and energy – the involved parents already know how their children are going; the others don't read the reports anyway. Solution: reduce reports to a letter grade, sent out twice a year -- the bare minimum to ensure that we comply with government regulations. Staff meetings: nearly always a further waste of time and energy. We have one staff meeting a week.

To cut out the endless chasing of kids and parents for permission slips and money we require parents to sign a generic permission form when they enrol their children, giving us permission to take their darlings anywhere we want, any time we want. All excursions and incursions are "free"; that is to say, school fees are charged as a lump sum each term, and cover everything.

4. On a more abstract level, I thought it important to counteract the prevailing hysteria, which valued physical safety above all other considerations. Children can only grow emotionally, socially, spiritually if we encourage them to be adventurous, to take risks. Our Candlebark children get injured, sure, but mostly at home, doing banal things like

“ Changes to the curriculum, the timetable, the architecture, the seating, made and continue to make no substantial difference

crossing the room to get food, or playing Monopoly. Despite the daring stuff our kids do at school our rate of significant injuries is extremely low. Go figure.

Anyway, enough of the theory. It's time to get down to the nitty-gritty of what it's like to run Candlebark.

On the plus side, we have very few behaviour problems or classroom management issues. Those we have tend to be a result of deeply disturbed, badly damaged children whose behaviour, by our standards, may be seriously difficult but tends to be better than the behaviours they have shown in previous schools. Our students love coming to school, and are charged with energy and vitality. They look healthy and alert.

Staff members have a fantastic working relationship with each other – we have had virtually no tensions, political issues, feuds. We've also had no passengers – we've never had a lazy teacher here.

The kids are a delight to take on excursions and camps, and staff frequently remark that taking them off campus doesn't feel like work.

The staff without exception embrace experiments, adventures, new ideas. When experts at educational conferences talk earnestly about the difficulties of persuading teachers to be innovative I can (smugly) get out my iPad and play Plants vs Zombies.

Eating together creates a lovely vibe, which helps make the school

feel like a warm place. The word most commonly used to describe our graduates by teachers at other schools is "mature". It seems that our kids are unafraid to ask questions or to take the lead. They treat teachers courteously but warmly, and they show a sophisticated understanding of complex issues. Sometimes, thanks to their parents, they would be like this anyway; sometimes it's a mixture of influences from home and school; sometimes we have done most of the work ourselves.

But let's get down and dirty now. Face it, it's really the negatives that are the most interesting. Our problems include parents who think the school is utopian and are shocked if their child is insulted or hit. I'm about to draft a letter for parents who are contemplating sending their children here, which will include a statement to the effect that "whilst your child is at school there is every likelihood that he or she will be bitten, kicked, hit, sworn at, abused and insulted (and that's just by the teachers – no, on second thoughts, I might leave that joke out). This will happen because we are a community of normal people, and normal life includes moments of friction, anger, tension, jealousy. It's likely that your child will bite someone, kick someone, hit someone (etc.) at some stage too. We do not provide a magical oasis of beauty and peace. We do provide an environment where people can learn to cope with the vicissitudes of life. Every relationship has some ugly moments and some difficult aspects. It's never too early to

develop an understanding of that and acquire strategies to help us to keep moving forwards".

In the last five years we have seen a staggering growth in the levels of anxiety among children and parents. This impacts on us every day and sometimes I feel we run ourselves ragged trying to support anxious children and teenagers, and pacify panicky parents.

Many teachers who are new here, particularly young and inexperienced teachers, make the mistake of thinking that because the children are "so nice and friendly", the teachers can be nice and friendly too, from day one. Despite what I said earlier about the low frequency of behaviour problems, students and classes here will behave poorly if they sense a teacher, to borrow from the traditional chant of school kids everywhere, "can't control us". It can be a long hard slog for a teacher who loses the respect of kids in the early stages of the relationship. It seems very difficult for some teachers to understand that being respected is infinitely more important than being liked. Being liked is only ever a by-product of being respected.

But really, our only major problems stem from children or parents with mental health issues. And I guess every school struggles with such issues. I was talking to a principal from a Sydney government primary school the other day, and she mentioned that they have three psychologists, two speech therapists and an occupational therapist on their staff. I wondered how it is that so many schools have evolved so quickly and quietly into entities, which almost seem to resemble community health centres, rather than the educational institutions that we are popularly supposed to be. [SN](#)

By John Marsden, author and Candlebark School principal



From left – The principal team: Nalini Naidu, Michael Muscat, Keith Perry and Joanne Wastle

The story behind the *Revolution School*

The recent ABC documentary series *Revolution School* was a ground breaking event in the Australian education landscape.

Why did we do it?

Early in 2014, I was approached by the CJZ production company about the possibility of participating in a “landmark series” on education in Australia. They were searching across the nation for an ‘average’ suburban secondary school, neither significantly privileged nor underprivileged, that had shown significant improvement. It was at once a tantalising and frightening suggestion. Extensive consultations followed with the leadership team, staff, school council and the Victorian Department of Education. In the end, with some trepidation, we agreed to participate for the following reasons. Firstly, we believed that Kambrya College had a good story to tell. There is abundant evidence of ‘root and branch’ school improvement in recent years. Secondly, we were convinced that the ABC and the CJZ production company were serious about creating an insightful, ‘non-tabloid’ series with an understanding that neither

the school’s, nor any particular individual’s reputation would be damaged. Yes, there would be depictions of every day rough-and-tumble, but the focus would be on the positive outcomes. Thirdly, we would have the opportunity to work closely with a number of luminaries from the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

Cameras everywhere

It was a prerequisite to have

signed release forms from all staff, students and parents who would appear in the documentary. Obtaining these releases was a big job in itself. Over 90 percent of students and staff were willing to provide signed releases from the outset. It was certainly understood that cameras could enter classrooms only when prior agreement had been made with the relevant teacher. Staff and students grew accustomed to having the cameras around

very quickly. Where sensitive issues were captured on film, the production team showed themselves to be responsive to requests I made. One great outcome for the staff was the fantastic collection of ‘bloopers’ collated by the production team strictly for the enjoyment of staff at our 2015 end of year break up. It was hilarious, and indicative of the trust and friendship that had been built up between the very talented production team and the staff. But I must also say that there is a lovely sense of freedom in 2016 – without the cameras!

The role played by University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE).

The MGSE runs a number of networks of schools, which are made up of cross sector, metropolitan and regional schools, keen on improving teaching and learning. Kambrya College became part of one of these networks at the beginning of 2015. There is no doubt the MSGE, ranked in the top ten internationally, is a brilliant organisation to work with, but this point needs to be made clear. The reality was that Kambrya College had already embedded significant



Michael Muscat with a year 11 student



Martin McDonald, Keith Perry and Darrabi boys

improvement when it joined the MGSE Network of Schools in 2015. Indeed, the college was in a high state of 'readiness' to embark on further improvement in teaching and learning when it joined the network. And this was the great benefit of our connection with the MGSE. Professor Lea Waters guided the piloting of the "Visible Wellbeing" project, which grew out the positive psychology area. The internationally renowned Professor John Hattie provided us with observations and feedback on our approaches to teaching. The MGSE also accessed Dianne Snowball who mentored us in the "Independent Reading". This we believe will build further on the gains our literacy program has already achieved in improved reading results. Dr Bill Rogers illuminated teachers on effectively managing difficult students and classes. These projects are sure to further enhance learning and wellbeing outcomes for our students.

In the narrative of the documentary however, viewers may have gained the impression that Kambrya College was dysfunctional, experts from the University of Melbourne were brought in during the course of the year and they 'fixed' the college. This is clearly not the case. We were fortunate to join the Network of Schools just at the right time to take further wonderful steps towards improve learning and wellbeing in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

School improvement at Kambrya College

By viewing "Revolution School" the fact that significant improvement had taken place is certainly evident. However, the long and sometimes excruciating process of improvement is not told in the documentary. Potentially, the hard lessons we have learned about school improvement may be valuable to other schools. It is important, therefore, to provide at least a brief outline of where we were, the steps were put in place, and the impact of these measures in a number of key areas.

When I became principal in 2008, the college was in a pretty grim place. Our student achievement data was poor. Our VCE results in 2007 and 2008 placed us in the bottom 10 percent of state schools in Victoria. Results for

VCE English placed us in the bottom 5 percent. Education Department run surveys of students, parents and staff brought dismal results. Student absenteeism, staff turnover, student suspensions and expulsions were unacceptably high. We had some work to do!

We needed a plan. We chose to adopt the approach to school improvement outlined by Zbar, Kimber and Marshall in 'How our best performing schools come out on top...' (2008). The principal team collectively put our shoulders to the wheel with a focus on establishing the preconditions for improvement:

- Strong and stable leadership with a shared and strategic vision
- Creating an orderly learning environment

- Focusing on what matters most
- Building teacher efficacy

Our first task was to build leadership capacity. To this end, frequent and lengthy principal team meetings and meetings with leading teachers focused on: redrawing school goals, refining plans to achieve them, weathering the implementation storm and just winning over hearts and minds! Principals worked 'shoulder to shoulder' with middle leaders in a relentless manner to achieve school goals.

Of critical importance was the decision to appoint a leadership coach to help build the capacity of our new leadership team. We were fortunate to obtain the services of exceptional leadership coach, Pamela Macklin.

The value of leadership coaching is perhaps best illustrated by one of our leading teachers who observed:

"Leadership coaching allows the individual to discuss how their work contributes to achieving school goals, and how to work through challenges they may meet along the way. For time poor leaders, it's a great advantage to have ready access to this valuable resource in an ongoing manner. Our leadership coach has been with us for seven years now.

In effect, it has built a critical mass of minds that are focused on agreed priorities for school improvement."



Poly Tzimortas and Roz Muscat with year nine independent reading students



◀ Simultaneously, we began work to establish an orderly learning environment. Vertical sub schools (years seven to ten) were set up to ensure all students are well known by a stable team of teachers. These sub schools have become the four pillars of our school. A behaviour management plan was collaboratively developed and consistently implemented. Consistent and supportive processes for managing complaints and unsatisfactory performance of staff were utilised. Strong and visible support was provided by the principal team every step of the way. We 'got back to the basics' and focused on what matters most.

For us this meant a number of things. Firstly, we supported the diagnostic use of student achievement data. This was a big step for us at the time, and we were fortunate to have the services of the extraordinary data analysis expert Philip Holmes Smith.

Secondly, well-resourced literacy and numeracy programs were established and these have evolved over time. More rigorous course selection processes to the VCE were implemented and energetic steps were taken to improve the quality of our VCAL pathway and VET options. Strong measures were taken to reduce disruption to teaching programs and a 'no opt out' approach to completing class work was consistently applied.

Established programs and practices that did not add value were tossed out. We withdrew

from the IB Middle Years program. Educational fads were strenuously resisted.

It is probably fair to say that we spent three years of very heavy lifting to improve in these areas, change mindsets and set new cultural norms. It was hard going and often there seemed to be little reward for effort, but gradually the improvement came.

Staff liked the improvement in student behaviour, clarity in school processes, and the sustained focus on school goals. Students showed their greater sense of connectedness to school by dramatically improved attendance and survey results. We were now ready to give building teacher efficacy our full attention.

This work began by introducing the non-negotiable expectation that all staff plan lessons using the template developed by the staff. This was a much more difficult task than some may realise! We collaboratively developed a Kambrya College Model of Teaching Instruction, which has been modified on several occasions.

Professional learning teams were implemented with a focus

on using data/assessment to inform lesson planning, setting clear, precise and visible learning goals every lesson, differentiating teaching. The teams also provided opportunity for collaboration on effective teaching strategies and moderation to ensure consistent teacher judgements. Over the next couple of years, in-house professional development for teachers was designed to build teacher capacity in these areas.

By 2014-15, some remarkable improvement has been achieved. Our VCE median study score has been among the top 25 to 30 percent of state schools over the past four years. The median study score for English; from bottom five percent in 2008 to top 20 percent of state schools in 2015. According to NAPLAN data, Kambrya's students have been growing above the state average academically. Testing year seven students in 2012 and the same students in year nine two years later, revealed learning progress above the state average, by 24 percent in reading, 17 percent in grammar and punctuation, and 13 percent in numeracy.

In the *Attitudes to School Surveys* conducted by the Victorian

Department of Education, students rated Kambrya's teacher effectiveness at 15 percent in 2008. This had grown to 80 percent in 2015. The stimulating learning environment was rated by students at just 18 percent in 2008, but had grown to 74 percent in 2015. School connectedness was rated at 10 percent in 2008, which fell in the lowest four percent in the state. In 2015, students rated their connectedness at 75 percent - among the highest 25 percent in the state. In *Parent Opinion Surveys* the general satisfaction of parents stood at 35 percent in 2008. In 2015 it was 79 percent. In 2008 the school expelled 12 students, and since 2013 there have been no expulsions. Kambrya College has increased its year seven intake from 155 students in 2015 to 330 students for the coming 2017 school year.

The story of this improvement, lightly touched on above, is implied rather than explained in *Revolution School*. Yet this is what makes us a 'revolution school'. But for me, this takes nothing away from the documentary. For the first time, Australians have been given a window into a large suburban secondary school that is functioning very well. Above all, I am gratified by the fact that the nation has seen the complex, challenging and incredibly valuable work done by teachers. And by all accounts, this has been incredibly well received by the community. [SN](#)

By Michael Muscat, principal, Kambrya College

“ The long and sometimes excruciating process of improvement is not told in the documentary

Teachers who make you feel like saying “Oh Captain My Captain”

Although we may have lost Robin Williams, that phrase from *Dead Poets’ Society* will never die. “Oh Captain my captain” will forever echo in the minds of educators around the world.

Some of us have memories of teachers that make us shudder – especially the older among us. Most of us however, had one or two benevolent guiding lights, piercing through the maelstrom of character forming primary years, and the darkest hours of hormonally charged dismay during high school.

For me, it was Mrs Betty Starr, my year nine history teacher; the woman who helped me understand the real meaning of Australian history, and shattered the illusions of some sheltered Sydney school girls. I adored her, I wrote about her during my first years as a journalist and editor, and I will never forget her. High school history died for me the day they moved me out of her class. I’m not sure if it was one of those teenage protests that only hurt the teenager, or a realisation that I needed to learn history my own way.

As I sit here, almost a quarter of a century later, I remember her, and tears still come to my eyes. That’s an inspirational teacher. If someone has asked me to write about an inspirational teacher at 14 years old, my subject matter would have been Betty then, as it is Betty now.

In classrooms across Australia, there are students who feel the way I did. They are sitting in their seats, on task, because their leader has expert power, but also referent power. They know what they are talking about, and they inspire the students to cooperate because they are well liked, and above all else, they have an interest in the students’ success.

John Hattie, director of Melbourne Educational Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, recently stated on ABC documentary



Revolution School that the single biggest determinant of student success is not the size of the class, or the student’s postcode: “what really matters is interaction with teachers”, Professor Hattie told Maxine McKew during an interview on *The Conversation*.

Teachers matter, and School News is interested in hearing from students about their most inspirational teacher.

So we ask all high schools to

engage with their student body, and offer them the opportunity to formally acknowledge their most inspirational teacher in a piece to be published in national education magazine, *School News*, Australia.

There will be space dedicated on the *School News* website for highly commended entries, and one stand-out piece will be selected for publication in our print magazine. [SN](#)

Please forward all entries of no more than 500 words to: Suzy Barry, editorial@school-news.com.au

Please include the following details with each entry:

- student name
- age and year level
- school name and contact details

Teachers up-skilling for specialisation and mastery



James Cook University

In 2015, *The Sydney Morning Herald* published an article called, 'Your future job: 2020 trends for uni graduates', 2015, reporting that "well-qualified education professionals are currently in high demand, with employment rates predicting a 5.6 percent boost by 2020".

That's good news for well-qualified professionals, and equally good news for those with first stage qualifications and a plan to up-skill. Pathways towards senior teaching positions, school leadership and specialisations can all be paved with the bricks of extra qualifications and new skills.

While the tertiary sector conducts research; develops new techniques to enhance student wellbeing; designs accurate and meaningful assessment tools; and makes breakthroughs in special education programs, teachers are on the frontline, often without the benefit of these advances. New teachers emerge from the latest university courses, with a different approach to student learning, and departments can lack a common

language. Teachers' unions are negotiating better rates of pay, and with current attention on our education system, some are speculating that the industry seems on the brink of a transformation into outcomes-based financial rewards. Even if you aren't particularly ambitious, access to relevant professional learning can ensure that your teaching has an impact on the learning lives of your students.

In 2012, all state education ministers endorsed the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework. The performance and development cycle has been embraced by

education professionals in all sectors, and comes at a time when the Australian education system is producing some worrying statistics. Also in 2012, All education ministers endorsed The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (PL Charter), which states that, "professional learning will be most effective when it takes place within a culture where teachers and school leaders expect, and are expected to be, active learners, to reflect on, receive feedback on and improve their pedagogical practice, and by doing so, improve student outcomes."

In 2013, The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) commissioned a research project. The aims of the so-called 'scan' were to "deepen our understandings about what contributes to effective teacher performance and improvement, and find out what fresh approaches to professional growth were being trialled within the education sector and other industries, both here and internationally". AITSL "wanted to identify and interrogate what the innovators were doing in this space, and explore new ways of driving positive changes in practice".

The report found that successful professional learning, and performance and development had some elements in common.

Two such features were that they were integrated within the culture and practice of the organisation, and also immersive, intensive experiences that challenged beliefs. Professional development courses in education are doing just that.

“ The only way to become a master of something, is to be really with it.”
– Alan Watts



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Francesca Panake, Master of Education in Leadership and Management at James Cook University

- ◀ The ambient mood in education is one of integrated practical experience, and new approaches that are challenging old beliefs.

The writing is on the wall, so to speak. Student outcomes are concerning sector stakeholders. Our backwards slide in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test shows our fifteen-year-olds are becoming less competent, and in the context of record levels of federal funding, many call for change. With these issues centre-stage, professional associations, tertiary providers, and schools themselves, are embracing the phase that may one day be seen as a watershed in Australia's educational past. Something has shifted. The coverage is not all doom and gloom. Triumphs like those in *Revolution School* have created a sense of hope, and indeed empowerment among teachers. Clinical teaching, developed at Melbourne Graduate School of Education, is an excellent example of flexibility of thought, and logical appropriation. In

“ Access to relevant professional learning can ensure that your teaching has an impact

a deft manoeuvre of lateral thinking, the approach borrows from a medical practitioner model of clinical practice, and with fascinating simplicity, refocusses teaching on the learner. There have been fresh approaches developed, new methods are gaining traction, and in the case of the surging notoriety of clinical teaching, it's because the new ways are working for teachers. It's an exciting time to learn.

Studying and working has never been easier. Faculties across Australia have designed courses to complement your working life as a teacher, and far from your

employment being a distraction from your studies, it's the perfect setting to explore your new skills, as you learn and grow as an educator. Your choice of institution will depend on several factors, such as geography, research areas, and preferred learning modes. Increasingly, institutions are recognising the changing face of education and offering teaching and learning in multiple modes, such as distance, blended, flexible or fully online. This has resulted in ever-increasing numbers of students interacting, and accessing course materials online.

Deciding to embark on further study is the first step, and the next stage involves a rousing time of research and imagination. The current climate is characterized by a commitment to an advanced body of knowledge, scholarship and professional development, with a focus on teaching that has an impact. In response to the specifications of the Australian Quality Framework (AQF), most Master of Education (Coursework) qualifications have expanded from 24 credit points to 36 credit points.

Dr Margaret Anne Carter, senior lecturer and coordinator of the Master of Education course at James Cook University (JCU) has welcomed the change, and the Education Academic Group made it the catalyst for redesigning the course. James Cook University has campuses located in three tropical locations, Townsville, Cairns and Singapore, giving the university a global bent combined with the tenor of Northern Australia. Drawing from global, national and regional trends in education,

JCU's Master of Education now includes three distinct majors in leadership and management; global contexts or sustainability.

"Our challenge with our postgraduate education program is ensuring our learning and teaching and assessment is learner centred, contemporary, culturally inclusive and future focused", explained Dr Carter.

Professional development is not always about up-skilling; there are a myriad of opportunities available for obtaining qualifications in an allied profession, or a specialisation within the teaching profession.

If student wellbeing is of particular interest, then qualifying as a school guidance counsellor, through a Master of Guidance and Counselling at JCU, might offer scope for role

diversification, or a sideways step. Special education is another specialisation offered by various institutions, with qualifications ranging from certificate level to a masters, and further study in the education of gifted students is also gaining popularity.

As British philosopher and writer Alan Watts reminded his students in vocational counselling sessions, "the only way to become a master of something, is to be really with it."

With so many options, he might suggest you discern the area within the field that motivates you, identify the aspect of the job you spend your evenings researching, and become a master of that. [SN](#)

By Suzy Barry, Industry Reporter

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Professional development **QuickSmart** courses are now available for 2017. Sessions focus on the science of learning, automaticity and hands-on activities. The training is aimed at teachers and support staff wanting to learn the **QuickSmart** programs. The course runs for six days over twelve months.

QuickSmart courses are regularly available in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, while other locations are added according to expressions of interest. All resource materials are supplied.

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‘Starting at strengths’ with strong Indigenous cultures

The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous literacy remains alarmingly wide. A consultative approach, with a focus on culturally appropriate pedagogy and policy is advised.

I have written this first article for our Indigenous education section, however Indigenous issues are best discussed by Indigenous voices, some of whom I have quoted. *School News* welcomes submissions from Indigenous educators, program providers and community stakeholders for future editions.

The 2016 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) Preliminary Report was released at the beginning of August 2016, and the significant decrease in writing results for years seven and nine since 2011 is alarming in the context of the following findings

from Indigenous education portal www.CreativeSpirits.info.

“The National Report on Schooling in Australia 2005 found falling literacy rates the longer [Indigenous] children stay in school.” Standardised test scores reveal a gap of one year between Indigenous and non-Indigenous pre-schoolers, but this gap widens as Indigenous children reach the middle years.

So how do we stop that gap from widening? And why are schools not working as well for Indigenous students? While that question might be asked often enough, we are probably asking the wrong people.

While we might feel drawn to start at the problems, those working with Indigenous communities would be advised to engage in



Cherbourg children creating artwork for the book *Budburra's Alphabet*

what Dr Chelsea Bond, Munanjahli and South Sea Islander woman, and senior lecturer at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland, referred to as “country mapping” in her award winning essay ‘Starting at strengths . . . an Indigenous early years intervention’. Dr Bond wrote that, while it was called “asset mapping” by “white fellas”, “mapping country is about taking the time to explore and identify the existing energies, strengths, and skills of the community, its members and the service sector.”

Waverley Stanley, a Wakka Wakka man, who was a founding director of not-for-profit Indigenous education scholarship provider, Yalari, told SBS in December 2015 that for Indigenous education to move forward, Indigenous Australians must play a big part. While Mr Stanley emphasised the communities’ own responsibility, saying “no more excuses” and “we have to get the kids to school”, a welcome trend in education is to focus on how pedagogical adjustments, and greater adaptation for cultural differences can support those aims.

A resource was published on www.creativespirits.info called, ‘Teaching Aboriginal students’. The article encouraged educators to consider characteristics of the Australian Aboriginal experience, including intergenerational trauma caused by the “pain of the Stolen

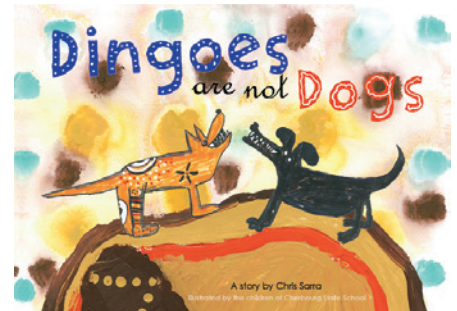
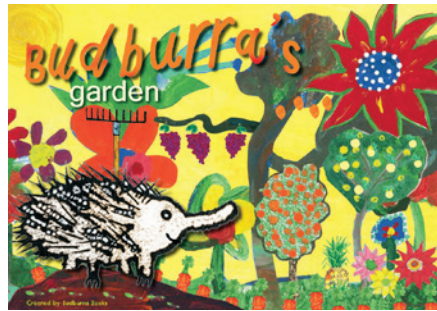
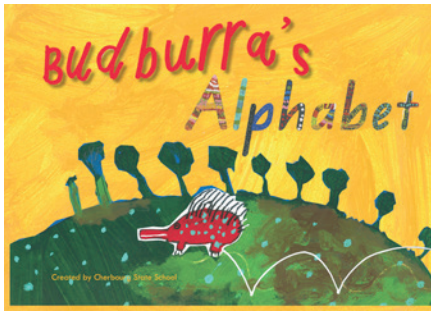
Generations”; an awareness of the greater sense of autonomy and independence that Indigenous children have been raised to embody; and my personal favourite, the fact that an Aboriginal cultural context means students may be more comfortable with “working for the collective good, rather than focussing on individual achievement”.

A 2015 NITV panel discussion called *Square Peg, Round Hole: The shape of education* explored how flexibility in education is needed to engage Indigenous students and improve learning outcomes. This message is echoed by Amelia Kunoth-Monks from the Utopia homelands north of Alice Springs. “More kids would go, and parents would be encouraging them to go to school, if the lessons were more relevant, taught in both languages with a strong focus on our culture”. Ms Kunoth-Monks completed year 12 at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, which offers bilingual education. “Having both-ways and the two cultures there, is absolutely amazing, rather than being at school and feeling like you’re not really wanted in society,” she told *The Epoch Times*.

The determinants of success are there, it seems, if you ask the right people the right questions. As Dr Chelsea Bond wrote in her essay referring to community programs for early education in Brisbane



Ratartat artist Geoff Bonney and young Cherbourg artist with artwork for *Budburra's Alphabet*



suburb, Inala, "...ownership can only be facilitated by engaging our mob in the yarning process from the very beginning."

The issues are many, but Indigenous stakeholders are matching them with solutions that fit. Here are just a few consultative programs and organisations working towards transforming outcomes for young Indigenous students.

Budburra Books

Not-for-profit organisation, Budburra books celebrates the strengths and creativity of a 'deadly' Indigenous school and community. The students at Cherbourg State School, an Indigenous school in south east Queensland, have proved that they are talented authors, artists and filmmakers. They have produced 12 beautifully illustrated books and five films. Budburra Books engages students and community members in the production of books, art and films, by drawing on the cultural strengths, historical ties and artistic skills in the community. The project aspires to encourage a love of learning and literacy and continue cultivating pride in local Indigenous culture.

Producing Budburra Books embeds cultural awareness, local knowledge, interests and creativity for students and provides pathways to explore careers as authors, artists, designers, storytellers, scriptwriters and filmmakers. The published books are designed to be a supportive teaching tool that allows several skills and strategies to be employed across a range of learning areas, including Indigenous perspectives. The books provide language and literary value and are visually engaging. www.budburrabooks.com.au

Indigenous Literacy Foundation

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) is a national



Community launch for book *Budburra's Garden: eating colours*. Renowned Cherbourg artist Venus Rabbitt supported her granddaughter Mirandah Bond-Blackman during her Junior Master Murri Chef cooking competition and loved the Budburra book as well

charity that was founded and set up by members of the Australian book industry in 2005. It draws on the skills and expertise of the book industry to address children's literacy levels in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The foundation also supports the production of Indigenous books, which promote the proliferation of examples of words from Indigenous languages. Books with Indigenous content, can build awareness of concepts and themes that are important to many Indigenous cultures, as well as telling Indigenous stories. The ILF's work is done through three core programs: Book Supply, Book Buzz and Community Literacy Projects. The ILF also advocates to raise community awareness of Indigenous literacy issues.

Since 2011, the ILF has worked as a not-for-profit charity without

any government support or major corporate funding. It works with the support of the Australian Publishers Association, the Australian Booksellers Association and the Australian Society of Authors, along with a team of ambassadors, volunteers, and five full-time staff members.

www.indigenousliteracyfoundation.org.au

Show Me The Way

Show Me The Way was launched in 2010 as Australia's first national online mentoring and social networking program for Aboriginal students. It is a government initiative but enjoys the participation of Indigenous community members as role models for young Indigenous people. Role model videos tell the stories of Aboriginal men and women who have become successful in their professions and trades through good education. www.showmetheway.org.au

Yalari Scholarships

Yalari is a not-for-profit organisation that offers quality, secondary education scholarships at leading Australian boarding schools for Indigenous children from regional, rural and remote communities. Yalari operates under the conviction that education is the key to generational change and a brighter future.

Since 2005, Yalari has been providing Indigenous children with full scholarships for their entire secondary school education. Strong and productive partnerships with 30 of Australia's leading boarding schools are vital to their success. www.yalari.org [SI](#)

By Suzy Barry, Industry Reporter



Ratartat artists and Cherbourg community artists, elders and children creating the artwork for Cherbourg Seasons.

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Refugee students flourish in culture of tolerance

Holroyd High is a state high school in Greystanes, in Sydney's Western Suburbs. With 60 percent of students from a refugee background, and 88 percent with English as their second language, the school is a joyfully tolerant multicultural environment, where students from diverse backgrounds feel safe, accepted and supported. I spoke with principal, Dorothy Hoddinott about the school's successes, challenges and unique cultural landscape.

Dorothy Hoddinott was honoured with the 2014 Australian Human Rights Medal, for her tireless work in support of human rights for refugees, and appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2008 for commitment to social justice. Ms Dorothy Hoddinott AO is a fellow of senate and pro-chancellor of the University of Sydney.

Ms Hoddinott has been principal of one of Australia's most multicultural schools, Holroyd High School, since 1995. "It was not always like it is; when I came here as principal, it was much more Anglophone. It was not achieving as highly as it should have been."

There was already an Intensive English Centre (IEC), which had been moved to Holroyd High from an office building in Parramatta in the early 90s. "The centre was



Dorothy Hoddinott, principal, Holroyd High School

isolated and alienated within the school community. There were far fewer students from a non-English speaking background and not much commitment to anti-racism," Ms Hoddinott explained.

"The high proportion of refugees at the school came about because children of a high school age need to enrol in an IEC first, before they can enter the mainstream school system. We had one of the larger IECs. We were seeing young Iranians, survivors of the Yugoslav holocaust, Serbians, and students from various Middle Eastern backgrounds. Every new wave of refugees has swept through the school. There's been a more recent influx of Kurds and Bosnians, then



Afghans and Iraqis, and the school has a much higher proportion of young refugees now."

There had always been refugee students at the IEC, but it was the school's cultural shift that changed the face of the school forever. "The tipping point was when these young people decided to stay and enrol in Holroyd High, as the climate of the school became more welcoming". As Ms Hoddinott assured me, "any group will flourish in schools where they are welcomed, and we moved across that line a long time ago".

Holroyd High's creed is not merely to support the students from a refugee background. Their approach is more wholistic in

nature. Ms Hoddinott cited their collective desire to support all children in the school, including those living with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the aim of providing an "individual education" for each young person.

Dorothy Hoddinott, who has been the principal of Holroyd High for more than two decades, said, "I never thought I would be this long at a school." The journey has been "very interesting", and, I suspect, very rewarding.

"It took 10 years to completely change the culture of the school. It was a long haul; it involved a lot of changes". One of the first major changes was to



Principal Dorothy Hoddinott with happy Holroyd High students



Multicultural Day at Holroyd High

the management structure, redistributing power within the school from a small number of decision makers to a model of “participatory decision making”, which serves by “democratising the way things work, while still allowing accountability”. With a very low staff turnover and reports of people ‘crying and sobbing’ as they leave, it seems clear that teachers love working at Holroyd High. “What we have now is a very purposeful sort of school; people working together in a collegial and cooperative way”, Ms Hoddinott expounded. The objective for this cooperation is “successful education of all the children” at Holroyd High. With such a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and needs, this is no mean feat and requires dedicated staff, well targeted programs, and of course, funding.

Via an agreement between the federal government and the NSW Department of Education, high school aged children with refugee backgrounds may undertake up to four terms of intensive English tuition at an IEC. If indicated, the school can apply for an extension of an extra term, in cases where a student may have arrived illiterate in their language of origin or has experienced trauma, the effects of which interfere with study. Once students have had five terms, however, they are eligible for no more. Holroyd High operates an intensive support program for

students, offering English as a second language and literacy and numeracy assistance.

There are two support teachers in the high school, who work one on one with students, and Gonski funding has allowed for the addition of a support teacher in the IEC. As a school with a high number of students from a non-English speaking background, Holroyd High has an allocation of 5.4 full time equivalent ESL teachers.

Because of the high proportion of refugees, Holroyd High has received funding for a head teacher in the area of refugee support.

Ms Hoddinott is determined to provide a great deal of support to students, recognising that to progress, the students “need to get up to speed educationally.”

“While we’ve got the money

we’re spending it on supporting our kids”. With the funding only guaranteed until the end of 2017, (after which anything could happen), she likened the funding ups and downs to playing Monopoly. “Yes, you’ve passed Go! And then “No, go directly to jail, do not collect \$200”. I see her point.

Last year, 61 percent of the 2015 cohort of students were offered university places, almost 30 percent above the state average. In a school newsletter, Ms Hoddinott asked readers to “think about this achievement in relation to the recent comments by immigration minister, Peter Dutton, who said that many refugees were illiterate and innumerate (sic) and stayed so forever, as they both took Australians’ jobs and cluttered up social security.”

Holroyd High’s academic success is drawing an increase in

enrolments from the surrounding areas, and parents are choosing the school for its academic success and a reputation for fair but firm discipline. “I don’t tolerate misbehaviour”, said Ms Hoddinott. Enthusiasm for the school from the local community “waxes and wanes”, however. In the context of current anti-Muslim feeling from some within Australia, those who see the school as ‘too Muslim’ are reluctant to engage with the school.

I asked Ms Hoddinott if she was concerned about terrorism directed at the school, and realised afterwards that she had understood the question to refer to her students as potential terrorists. In fact, I meant quite the opposite, and had wondered if they were concerned at becoming a target of anti-Muslim terrorists.

Her response reminded me of just what creates radicalisation, and what combats it. “Our students are very unlikely to become radicalised, because they have hope, they have a pathway to a future”.

While many of Holroyd High’s female Muslim students wear hijab, they are “relatively undressed”, compared to how they would be in their own country. When people ask her about her students’ headwear, Ms Hoddinott often replies, “I’m interested in what’s inside people’s heads, not what’s on their heads”.



Holroyd High students bringing cultures together



The school operates on respect and responsibility, and at the core of the school community's ethos is the understanding that "we all gain from the diversity of our community". A student or staff member at Holroyd High comes to understand that "we derive strength from finding our common humanity, and that is more important than the things that make us different".

New students draw support from largely remaining within their first language group in the IEC, but as students move into the main school, ethnic lines blur. Holroyd High runs events and programs to aid that interaction. "All the activities mix the kids up, so friendships form across ethnic

lines. We play a soccer 'world cup'". The competition is made up of national teams, though "half the kids in each team can be from another national group, it's very fluid".

The school doesn't only forge new experiences and opportunities for students within the school's walls. The students have access to programs that develop skills in areas from business acumen to opera. The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a coalition of CEOs from big business who operate a mentorship program for the benefit of disadvantaged school communities. The program began in NSW, and now operates nationally. Year nine Holroyd High

students participate in a one-on-one mentoring program in second semester, and in year 11, girls can access mentorship from successful professional women. The school participates in the Beacon Foundation programs, which aim to 'light the path' from school to further study or employment.

Ms Hoddinott audibly lit up when she mentioned the school's partnership with Opera Australia. Following student participation in a workshop, "they were so impressed with us, they invited us to participate in 'Wot Opera'". The students created and performed their own opera, which was a raging success, and students thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Ms Hoddinott spoke of a "long and cheerful arrangement with Opera Australia", about which she is delighted, as the experience "exposed the kids to aspects of high culture, to which they would otherwise have no access".

In a school with such complexity, in a place where so many students have lived through deeply traumatic experiences; where families have been lost; where most of the population has English as a second language; and where 60 percent of the population has experienced fear for their lives, I wondered what the biggest challenges were. It was interesting

to note that Dorothy Hoddinott's biggest challenges do not come from those within her gates, but are "all external to the school."

Ms Hoddinott cited the following as her biggest challenges: "changing policy, rigidity of immigration laws, approach to asylum seekers and refugees, lack of flexibility of federal bureaucracy, and politically motivated changes to curriculum."

I swallowed up an hour of her time, and following her call with me, she was off to speak with a lawyer on behalf of a member of her school community. "I've spent the morning working on a case for a family, who is trapped in an immigration situation with a degree of complexity. I can't say more." Another of her concerns was the "weakening of the TAFE system," making it hard "to chart effective pathways" for those students who may not be destined for university.

Her challenges were not quite what I expected. "Kids are kids" she said, and expressed a desire to support them with challenges related to all that has happened to them in their short lives. I think I understand why she has remained their principal for so long.

And for their sake, I'm very glad she has. [SN](#)

By Suzy Barry, Industry Reporter



Easing school administration woes

Schools generate an enormous amount of data - the challenge is to easily and effectively communicate relevant information to parents, the government and other educators.

I spoke with Stan Wawrzyniak from Sentral Education, and Domenic Zappia and Jason Corbett from uEducatUs about how School Management Systems can help schools reduce their admin workload, effectively collect and use data, and most importantly, free up teachers to teach.

Other challenges include effective application of this data, and how to collate the information collected about the learning journey of students in a way that best serves educational outcomes. School Management Systems, also called Student Management

Systems (SMS) or even School Information Systems (SIS) provide a one-stop shop for all the administration needs of your school. Systems vary in their cost and method of provision, but are often modular, and can be tailored to suit your school's needs. The range of applications include but are not limited to, tracking attendance, student wellbeing monitoring, accountability; academic, and government report writing; assessment and learning outcomes; scheduling and calendars, and portals for communication. In order to fully understand the scope of application, you would be advised to arrange a few demonstrations.

Data collection and analysis

There is a trend in modern education towards data collection and effective use of that data. The rationale behind clinical



teaching, for example, (see our Special Report – clinical teaching) is that collecting data allows us to track trends and discover possible environmental (or other causative) factors to improve outcomes. Positive Behaviour Plans employed in a growing number of schools emphasise

the importance of incident data collection, allowing educators to zoom out and identify trouble locations, times of day, or other environmental factors.

SMS also allows schools to focus on positive behaviour. Sentral director of operations and former high school executive, ►



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◀ Stan Wawrzyniak said “teachers have a habit of calling out the negative, but don’t always have time to notice a pattern of positive behaviour”.

A “House Module” can allow schools to work in with their existing house colours to create a positive behaviour awards system whereby positive outcomes are tracked and then rewarded, in whichever style suits the school. Providers will have their own positive behaviour programs, so ask them to show you at demonstration time.

Managing attendance

With attendance, immediacy of notification can be key to resolving issues, finding causes and cooperating with parents to achieve the best results for the student. If a student is marked absent, parents receive a push notification, though uEducateUs director, Jason Corbett assured me that filters were in place so alarms won’t be raised if “a

student is in the office getting a Band-Aid”.

SMS can analyse recorded attendance data to identify repeated absences in individuals or groups, allowing schools to address the cause of recurring absences. Domenic Zappia, former assistant principal and specialist consultant to the uEducateUs team explained. “If a student repeatedly misses school every second Monday because they’re with the other parent, we can see that pattern, identify the cause, and address it appropriately”.

School reports and parent communication made easy

Like with most aspects of modern life, we are hungry for updates and information. Student Management Systems are providing that for schools. The biannual report is issued as a summary of progress, but frequent inputs all year allow a more balanced overview, not reliant on the memory of

busy teachers. Reporting with SMS sounds straightforward, wholistic and precise. “It’s easy to gain a historically complete record, not just in the classroom, sport, music, or awards, or any programs the school might participate in”, Mr Zappia said. Modules such as continuum tracking, continuous assessment, and academic reporting, particularly when aligned with the parent portal, provide real time access to student data.

Accountability reporting

Accountability legislation mandates a gruelling government reporting schedule for schools.

While many software systems collect data, they do not generate reports. SMS can tap into your school’s existing software and collect data to develop reports that would normally consume staff hours.

The Systems Interoperability Framework – Australia (SIF)

is the latest data exchange standard preferred by schools, education departments and software programs nationwide. This framework refers to the software’s ability to ‘talk to’ other software that is sharing or passing information between them. According to Jason Corbett and the uEducateUs team, the capacity of SMS to ‘interoperate’ with these systems saves “hours and hours, if not days” of their schools’ accountability reporting workload.

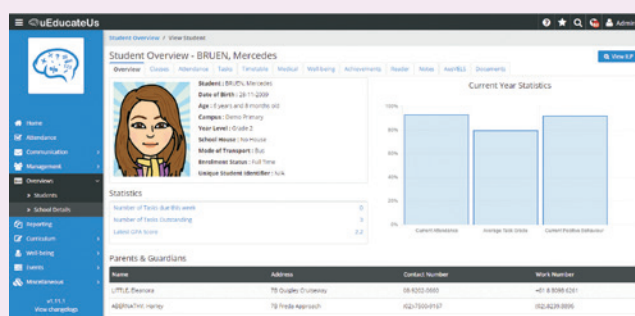
Stan Wawrzyniak highlighted the need for interoperability of systems in the modern world. “Slowly but surely, and sooner rather than later, all schools will need to have SIF based systems. If you haven’t got that ability, it’s like talking to a brick wall”. Informed by his school leadership background, Mr Wawrzyniak is concerned about increased reporting. “I can see the impact it has on the day-to-day running of the school.” ▶

School reports a breeze

uEducateUs School Management software was trialled by Tyers Primary School, and while there was no obligation to continue after the trial, they have been using uEducateUs for two years.

Principal, Peter Harrison said the software “has been a real boon” to their day-to-day school operations. “It’s fantastic, our staff mark all their roles from it, and it goes straight onto CASES 21” (the Victorian state school administration package).

According to Mr Harrison, parent communication has become a breeze. “Parents can send absent notes, sign permission notes, and make payments, all through the system”. Peter Harrison echoed current view of school-family partnerships as the bedrock of effective education. “If you’re



not working with parents, you won’t get the best student outcomes. Strong partnerships need to be the basis, on which you build your education system.”

Building partnerships has been simplified and enhanced at Tyers Primary School. “It’s the fact that we can talk to parents in real time, or they can tell us if something happens at home. It’s a two-way conversation.”

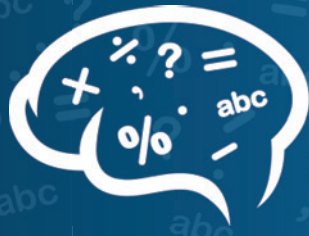
One of Peter Harrison’s favourite applications of this communication is supporting

students with homework.

“When teachers set homework tasks, they just type it in as a new task and the students or their parents can ask questions.” The messages are restricted to a number of characters, so “they can’t write an essay to the teacher”, and teachers can respond if they are able. “It makes learning really responsive”, Mr Harrison pointed out, “and also means that students don’t get to the end of the weekend stressed about a task they don’t understand”.

UeducateUs prides itself on its collaborative and inclusive approach. “We work on the team model, and the operation reflects the outcomes”, said director, Jason Corbett. This approach is mirrored by Peter Harrison, who advised schools to “trial a few, but make sure the staff are happy with it, because if they’re not, they won’t take ownership of it”. Tyers Primary included the parents in the feedback and selection process, and they also asked the kids. “It’s very important that everyone is on board”, Mr Harrison urged.

New software can be a learning curve, and problems will occur. Tyers Primary staff found that the “patient” service team at uEducateUs quickly set them straight. “They’re fantastic, and very responsive, even though most of the problems were ones we had created”, Peter Harrison admitted.



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◀ The amount of work flowing down to schools is increasing, schools are struggling to find quality time to address educational outcomes for the students so effective SMS software reduces the time engaged with administration and reporting on school data, freeing time for greater focus on school improvement goals”.

Individual Education Plans

Individual Learning or Education Plans can provide an incredible source of frustration to everyone concerned. The idea of the plan is to tailor an education plan to a student or group of students, and measure outcomes against the plan, tracking progress and reporting back to the government. Domenic Zappia said that for a plan to be effective, “it needs to be a living one”.

Using SMS software, any task produced within the system can be referenced against relevant standards, and schools can select their preferred time period or cycle. “Every aspect of student’s school life is then available”. An effective process for Independent Education Plans needs to involve real time collaboration and updating. “Systems like uEducateUs work across all devices, and are available 24/7. Without instant access to information, you can have a delay of up to a month before any change is implemented, and sometimes the information has become irrelevant”, Mr Zappia explained.

Goals can be recorded and updated in real time and achievements noted, making way for new goals for that student. Mr Zappia related some frustrations from his time in school leadership. “In the old format, goals were never immediate enough for people to address, and we couldn’t measure outcomes. Time frames never meshed”. Stan Wawrzyniak noted that student plans in an SMS can be visible to all relevant staff. This makes it much easier to have a consistent input by all staff to assist in achieving the goals of the plan.

Sentral Education harnesses the capabilities of its ‘Continuum Tracker’ to provide a framework for teachers to address the ‘personalised continuum’ initiative. The software allows teachers to track student competencies against curriculum benchmarks to produce an educational timeline that can then inform lesson planning, or provide an alternate style of progress-over-time reporting to parents and governing systems.

My research has left me fascinated by the scope of School Management Systems and what they can contribute to the smooth running of a school.

After accessing international data citing upwards of 30 percent of teacher’s time is spent on administration, it became clear that school staff are under enormous administrative pressure. Match that with the public pressure to improve educational outcomes, and I wonder if there is a new core unit in education faculties called “Superhero 101”.

Accountability requirements are there to engage and inform stakeholders, and with good reason. Australian Council of State School Organisations president, Peter Garrigan is quoted in government website www.partners4learning.edu.au

saying, “all parents can contribute to their children’s education... a paradigm shift is necessary in how we think about parent engagement in school”. It does indeed ‘take a village to raise a child’ and school management systems allow parents and carers, and stakeholders in each child’s learning journey to stay informed about their progress and wellbeing.

For examples of SMS application, check out the case studies and see how an SMS revolution can get you back to the real business of teaching kids. [SII](#)

By Suzy Barry, Industry Reporter

Data integration lighthouse

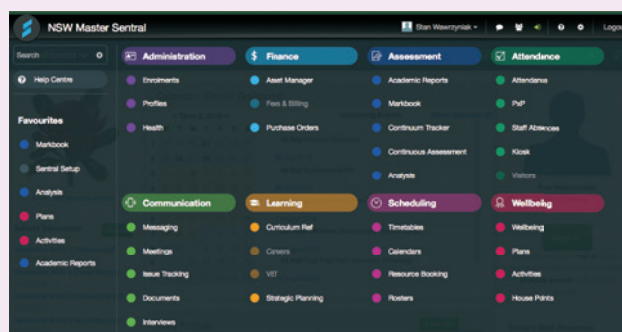
Sentral Education has been taking care of business at Callaghan College since 2010.

David Summerville is head teacher technology at the Wallsend Campus, a specialist school focussing on middle school practices that address the specific needs of students in years seven to ten. The campus operates under Callaghan Education Pathways, a group of 19 schools working to deliver specialised educational outcomes at each campus.

David Summerville’s contact with Sentral goes back to “day dot”. Formerly employed at Rutherford Technology High School, Mr Summerville was involved in the early days of Sentral’s development. Mr Summerville, and principal, Paul Tracey, are leading the way in technological integration in schools.

The school is a considered a ‘lighthouse school’, with leadership teams coming from other schools to see how Callaghan College integrates technology.

“Paul and I, both coming from a technology high school, are invited to present at conferences about our technological integration, and Sentral is a



cornerstone to what we do here.”

Mr Summerville is currently working with Sentral’s new Enterprise Solution software to improve the flow of data from one campus to another. “Ultimately what we will have with Enterprise is one entity, so all kids are in one system with our Canvas lesson management system syncing. Data would be seamless.”

The system is web-based and allows administrators to effectively ‘reach down’ into an individual school and pluck out data without having to request a report from busy school staff. The software allows schools to share resources and manage groups of schools simultaneously. Even from a single campus perspective, the benefits are considerable. The parent portal centralises all

communications, and they are immediate. The school marks the roll every period, with absences recorded and communicated immediately, truancy is reduced, and parents engaged.

Callaghan College Wallsend Campus staff were preparing for parent teacher interviews when we spoke, and the booking process had been seamless, but Mr Summerville’s favourite application was deliverance from the abyss of school report time. “Report-writing used to take six weeks. You’d do up reports, comments, copy marks from mark books, fill in grades, activities and assessments. They’d be checked by the deputy, and sent back, now, with Sentral, it’s a case of pressing a button for activities, a button for marks, and it’s all automatic. We save an amazing amount of time.”

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School photo day can be organised and fun

School photo day can be one day of the year you'd rather forget, or a smooth day of laughter and fun. Your choice of photo provider makes all the difference.

I remember standing as still as possible with a grimace like smile on my face, wondering if I had dirty smudges all over my face, which I always did. A surly, bored-looking man would snap a few photos, and then nod at me, and call out, "Next!". The day was often a shambles of missed lessons and cold tuck-shop, punctuated by frantic demands over the loudspeaker for families to corral for sibling photos, or the third call for "Year 7B Hockey to report, *immediately*, in full sports uniform, to the gymnasium".

Photo day can be anything but fun for teachers and school administrators, but an organised, well trained, and professional school photography provider can turn that mayhem into a well-oiled machine. Zachary Kendall from advancedlife Photography told *School News* how a dedicated customer service team can make all the difference, by working with schools in the lead-up to the big day.

"Our customer service team have the experience to guide schools every step of the way from identifying the best location in wet or dry weather all the way down to working out how the traffic will flow; they liaise with school and plan for minimal



An advancedlife 50th Anniversary shot at Pittwater High School

disruption to normal school activities." Traditional or large group photography requires certain expertise, and without the benefit of experience these organisational feats can go very wrong.

Traditional school photography shots may involve coordinating hundreds of children and staff, while school anniversary photography could mean arranging up to a thousand people into precise formations.

Undeterred by the challenges, Mr Kendall tells me, "it's one of our favourites", and, actually, it does sound like fun. Children are arranged into specific designs to reflect the commemorative occasion. Cherry pickers are used to elevate the photographer and provide a bird's eye view, the photographic crew strap on harnesses, and up they go. "It's quite specialised, and when you go to all that effort you want it looking sharp", Mr Kendall added.

Making photo day fun

Health and wellbeing is always paramount for schools, and school photographers also take this very seriously.

Students can expect care and sensitivity, minimal lining up in the sun, (absolutely no surly, bored-looking photographers), and teacher stress levels considerably lower than explosion point.

Photographers from My School Days are passionate owner operators, and all fully trained to work with children. The training includes all aspect of school photography from preparation, to photography and processing, and

importantly, customer service. The photographers are adept at relaxing their subjects to maximise smiles, and minimise strained grimaces, and have to clock up experience and expertise before working with schools.

School photographers seem to be fun-loving folk who are convinced that photo day can be both enjoyable for kids, and simple and straight-forward for the families and schools. Geoff Hunt said My School Days captures a 'fun class photo' (teachers included), which are always a much loved part of the process. "We want the day to be fun and relaxed and being flexible and extremely organised are the key attributes to achieving this".

The production timeline

A school can expect the whole process to take around four to six weeks. School photography has come a long way from the days when the photo was printed on a ten-by-eight, laminated and tucked inside a school folder back at school. Professional design teams craft the look of each school's packages; images and associated data are proofed and inspected by schools, to create individual

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advancedlife photographer, Burt De Campo takes group shot of delegates at the 2016 SBMAQ Conference



Promotional images by My School Days

packages unique to every student. The photos also pass through multiple quality checks, ensuring that they're right the first time they come back. Once everyone is happy with the quality, photos have to be packed for easy distribution.

Photos in a digital world

With digital photography, providers are able to capture the best photo of your students, by retaking and discarding more images than we realise.

"We take a photo every 20 seconds" Zachary Kendall from

advancedlife revealed. Digital photography means that schools and families can place their school photo orders online and access electronic copies of their images.

"An online archive preserves a timeline for future access," said Mr Kendall, adding that he wishes he could access his formal photos but they are "gone forever". All providers I spoke with included digital photos in their packages, and digital copies of all photos are provided to the school, which, according to Geoff Hunt, can then be incorporated into a school's

student management systems.

Broader printing solutions

Providers can also offer a more wholistic business service, which caters to the modern paradigm of 'school as a business structure', responsible for publicity and maintaining their public image in the community. Mr Kendall said many schools now look to them for help with printing and branding. "Designing your prospectus, and promotional images of schools, that can all be taken care of".

Geoff Hunt of My School Days said, "some schools request 'funky

style' photography or playground shots for promotional use. We can incorporate that into photo day as well." School photography has changed dramatically over the last few decades, and all for the better. Principals, teachers and administration staff need not wake to school photo day with a shudder. Providers are focused on customer service, seamless organisation, accessible and intelligent photo distribution and, believe it or not, fun. **SN**

*By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter*

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An essential tool for schools

In the earlier years of the desk-top computer age, there were confident predictions that the average office would soon be paperless. Those predictions have proved to be far from the mark, with many offices and schools handling more paper than ever.

Those early predictions almost certainly did not consider the rapid transformation of the photocopier. Earlier versions were extremely limited in functionality and tended to jam frequently. Printing had to be done separately.

However, even these far simpler machines were still a modern scientific miracle. Few in a contemporary office will recall what situations and tasks were endured, before photocopiers liberated us. Imagine having to resort to making carbon copies of important documents?

Or worse, let's cast the historical net even further back and imagine the tedium of making copies of things by hand.

In essence, a copier works because of one basic physical principle: opposite charges attract. Static electricity is the copier's secret.

Inside a copier there is a special drum. The drum acts a lot like a balloon; it can be charged with a form of static electricity.

Inside the copier there is also a very fine black powder known as toner. The drum, charged with static electricity, can attract the toner particles. There are three things about the drum and the toner that let a copier perform its magic:

- The drum can be selectively charged, so that only parts of it attract toner. In a copier, you make an 'image', in static electricity, on the surface of the drum. Where the original sheet of paper is black, you create static electricity on the drum. Where it is white, you do not. The idea is for the white areas of the original sheet of paper *not* to attract toner. This selectivity is accomplished using light, which is why it's called a photocopier.
- Somehow the toner has to get onto the drum, and then onto a sheet of paper. The drum selectively attracts toner. Then the sheet of paper gets charged with static electricity and it pulls the toner off the drum.
- The toner is heat sensitive, so the loose toner particles are attached, or fused, to the paper with heat, as soon as they come off the drum. The drum, or belt, is made out of photoconductive material.

This is only a small part of the technology involved.

The complexity of the lighting and lenses involved could seem baffling to all but advanced experts in their fields.

This very short introduction might just be enough to demonstrate that even the earliest versions involved highly sophisticated science, delivering us from the drudgery of the carbon paper age.



The age of the multi-function-device

Photocopiers have come a long way since those early models. Far from a simple tool for making copies of worksheets and school documents, today's photocopiers have merged with printers, allowing users to copy, print, scan and fax documents.

The latest multifunctional photocopier models (MFDs) can also access the internet, be a portal for using software applications, and wirelessly interact with smart phones, laptops and tablets.

There are many benefits to using a multifunctional photocopier in place of a range of standalone devices. In particular, the cost savings can be quite significant.

The technology involved in MFDs has evolved to the point where the cost per page is much lower than that of stand-alone desktop printers. MFDs also offer functions of greater flexibility – whether that be print, via colour control tools; distribution, via scanning to email/network/internet/USB or hard drive; or document output finishing, via punching, stapling, folding and booklet making.

As well as being cheaper to run overall, MFDs also utilise reporting technology that means schools can track costs and monitor departmental or individual usage.

With current technology, schools can set limits for certain staff or students, and can set rules that recommend another print device be used. These print rules are chosen by the school, based on factors around cost-effectiveness, usage trends and security.

As MFDs and printers are an integral part of a school's document workflow and process, security becomes a serious concern. Securely managing department and user data is critical for the integrity of schools. The suite of integrated security features incorporated into MFDs are designed to help protect information and document assets. A recent trend emerging is card or pin access for MFDs, which can be extended to other 'purchases' around the school. Parents can view all transactions and add value online if the school is on-charging, which allows flexibility in controlling spend, across multiple areas of a student's typical school day. [SN](#)



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Proven steps to successful healthy fundraising

Unfortunately, school fundraising seems to be a necessity and some of the old ways of achieving it are not always considered acceptable these days.

With far more emphasis on obesity and associated health issues, the old fundraising standbys like fatty sausage sizzles and sugary jams, cakes stalls and fizzy drinks, are more likely

to be avoided by parents, for the sake of their own health and their children's.

Combine those health concerns with the risks of bad dental health, followed by steep dental bills, and old fundraising favourites are difficult for schools to engage in with a clear conscience. Modern-day fundraisers are required to put on their thinking caps, and cast their ideas nets a little wider.

Even with health awareness deterring schools from unhealthy options of old, food and beverage fundraisers can still be a great solution.

Healthy food fundraisers options include trail mix, fruit, nuts, popcorn, customising bottled water with school branding, healthy granola bars, and an endless list of health conscious alternatives. Schools are beginning to embrace cooking courses, allowing students to create their own delicious

fundraising treats, based on principals of good nutrition. Parents can be invited to help, but nutritional and health requirements must be specified so food items fit within a framework of optimum nutrition. With healthy eating at the forefront of children's wellbeing discussions, the healthy profile of the food items can actually prove a selling point.

Not all fundraising is about food, and the list of novelties and useful items that can be sold is curbed only by your imagination, motivation and resources.

Items used for fundraising include clothing purchased cheaply from manufacturers, glow sticks, lamp shades, art, first aid kits, calendars, trendy wrist bands, musical instruments or sports equipment that is no longer needed.

Whichever form school fundraising takes; certain protocol should be followed.



Healthy fundraising can be easy and profitable

Healthy fundraising options for schools

Sipahh Fundraising Ventures is a new fundraising program designed to help kids, clubs and schools raise money for their causes through the sale of Sipahh Milk Flavouring Straws.

Rating 4.5 healthy star rating, less than half a teaspoon of sugar per straw and nominated for best new fundraising company in 2016, it's a more wholesome, healthy and unique way of fundraising.

Sipahh provides two fundraising options; first, the Sipahh Fundraising Crates. These cute Fundraising Crates enable everyone in the school or group to participate by selling little packs of Sipahh straws. Each crate contains 24 four-packs with a profit of \$22 per crate sold, a margin of 46 percent.

The second option is to hold a Sipahh fundraising event at your school fetes, carnivals, markets or special days. It involves raising money by selling glasses of milk with Sipahh straws. The vintage, pop-up Sipahh Milk Bar is available to order online, and combined with a wider selection of Sipahh flavours, it makes for an exciting and unique way of fundraising.

Kids love Sipahh straws as they're so unique and parents love them because they're lower in sugar and more profitable than many fundraising options. Sipahh helps people drink more milk with less sugar every day. It's a fundraising drive you can feel good about. For a limited time, Sipahh are offering eight free crates for every 40 ordered. That's \$380 additional profit for your fundraiser.



A Facebook page can be an excellent platform for promoting school fundraisers to a wider audience



Photo: Leanne Collett

Healthy ingredients can be a selling point



Learning about good nutrition through fundraising

Initially, the team should consult with the principal, and the school board or council as a courtesy, but also due to the board's responsibility for the state of the buildings and grounds.

Taking accurate minutes of plans, costs and personnel assigned to tasks is vital for accountability purposes, leaving the treasurer and all others involved covered in the event of any query into operations.

These requirements apply to all organisations, including parent associations, friends of the school, a gala committee, or even a sub-committee of the board.

Setting a time-frame and assigning roles, and determining project deadlines also contributes to the smooth running of a fundraising project.

And then, the curly question: how do you actually raise some money?

Consider selecting activities that spread their influence beyond the school, so contributions

can be collected from people other than just parents. Social media can be of enormous value here, and a Facebook page can be an excellent platform for promoting school fundraisers to a wider audience, reaching friends and family, and can even result in donations from overseas relatives.

Fundraising is most successful with clear, well-communicated objectives. At the conclusion of the fundraisers, the total achievements should be clearly communicated to parents.

Finally, be sure to communicate the benefits of your fundraising aims and achievements, as people need to know where their money and effort is going, or support may wear thin. Don't forget to have fun!

Enjoyable and collaborative fundraising is an excellent way to maintain community focus and energy, and keep everybody working towards common goals.

SN

By Brent Leslie,
Industry Reporter



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Salary sacrificing with a novated vehicle lease



Novated leasing involves financing a private vehicle as a method of salary packaging. The option constitutes a tripartite agreement between an employee, their employer and a financier. The employee enters into a vehicle lease agreement with the financier, and the employer then agrees to make lease payments, using funds deducted from the employee's pre-tax salary.

Novated leases can be either a 'fully maintained novated lease' or a 'non-maintained novated lease'. The former refers to novated leasing and salary packaging agreements that include both the vehicle, and the operating costs.

The length of the lease will be set at a point between 12 months and five years, calibrated at 12 month intervals. The liability for



Tailoring a lease plan to suit lifestyle and circumstances should be straightforward

a novated lease remains with the leaseholder, and can be transferred to a new employer, or serviced by the employee through post-tax salary contributions.

At the conclusion of the lease period, the employee can choose to lease a new car, re-lease the existing vehicle, or purchase the vehicle outright by paying the residual amount.

Benefits of a novated lease

Employee benefits include the power to select a vehicle that is most suited to their needs, interests and lifestyle, instead of being constrained by employer fleet selection.

There is a caveat however, that the vehicle be either a new vehicle, or a vehicle that will be no more than eight years old

at the end of the lease, though some exceptions do occur when the market value of the model is resilient.

The employee, not the employer, is the registered owner of the vehicle, and therefore retains equity amassed in the vehicle.

As the registered owner, the employee can make choices about vehicle care and maintenance, and may add options or extras on their selected model.

The portability of the arrangement suits contemporary employment trends, characterised by higher staff mobility than in previous decades.

With no minimum business use requirements, the car can be used entirely for private use, and still qualify.

Dreaming of a new car? It could be more affordable than you think

Getting a new car is one of the most important financial decisions you'll make. And although it sounds like fun, in reality it can be time consuming, expensive and stressful.

You may believe that buying is the only option to get you that new car smell.

But the truth is, leasing rather than buying could save you both time and money.

Stephen Brown, Queensland state manager - Novated of novated lease provider RemServ, explains.

"More people look for an easy and convenient way to get into a new car without having to waste their time scouring websites and car yards, haggling with salespeople, and looking for the best financing option," Stephen says.

"That's why novated leasing is the perfect solution – our customers tell



us which car they're interested in, and we do the rest for them. That includes negotiating on the customer's behalf to get the best deal and arranging finance."

A novated lease works by using a combination of your pre and post-tax salary to conveniently pay for all day-to-day running costs like fuel, insurance, registration and servicing,

in one regular repayment. On top of your potential day-to-day savings, if you purchase a new car from a dealer you don't pay any GST. That could free-up thousands, allowing you to get those add-ons you'd been eyeing off, or even go for the model up.

"All RemServ novated leases also have access to our in-house car maintenance authorisation team, which means you get a second opinion on any servicing and repairs," reveals Stephen.

"Our team has saved some customers thousands of dollars thanks to their industry knowledge and expertise. They're one of our most valuable resources!"

Your employer must offer salary packaging to access novated leasing – more than 25,000 people across Queensland already benefit from novated leasing.

Get in touch with RemServ today on 1300 73 14 29 or visit remserv.com.au to find out more.

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◀ As the car payments are deducted from pre-tax income, a smaller portion of an employee's disposable income is consumed.

For employers, the absence of residual risk is compelling, when compared to traditional fleet maintenance. If employees change workplace, employers can be left with excess vehicles, and associated finance obligations. If the lease is connected to the employee, it moves on with them resulting in no residual risk. Salary-sacrificing is an attractive prospect, and with restrictions on education budgets and fixed pay brackets, it can be a challenge to attract and retain staff. Immediate financial benefits include reduction on payroll tax and WorkCover costs for all employees using this salary sacrificing option. And for schools already inundated with administrative tasks, novated lease agreements require significantly less administrative time and cost than operating a traditional fleet.

Probably the most significant financial advantage to the employee is the fact that under a novated lease, the financier and the employer can claim Input Tax Credits (ITC) for the GST of the purchase price of the vehicle, and with a fully maintained lease, also vehicle related expenses for the term of the lease. The GST tax credits are passed on to the employee by way of reduced lease payments, in the case of the non-maintained leases, making the vehicle GST free. For the fully maintained novated lease the financial gains are even more significant, with both the purchase price of the vehicle and all motor vehicle related expenses rendered GST free for the life of the lease. The employee only pays GST on the residual amount at the conclusion of the lease, or in the case of early termination.

More on FBT

As novated leases are a form of salary sacrificing, they attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT), and this expense is normally paid by the employee. For the years prior to 2011, FBT was dependent on the



“ The car can be used entirely for private use, and still qualify

number of kilometres travelled, with inverse correlation between kilometres and the amount of FBT payable. In the 2011-2012 federal budget, new legislation was introduced, and since April 2014, FBT calculations are all executed using the same formula, regardless of kilometres travelled.

This amount can be off-set using an Employee Contribution Method (ECM), which is a financial contribution to the running costs of the vehicle, drawn from the employee's post-tax salary. An explanation supplied on www.remserv.com.au states that, “to help offset any FBT payable on the novated lease, you can use post-tax funds from your salary. They are classed as post-tax funds because they are taken from your salary after income tax has been deducted. The ECM method is an easier way to manage your lease. By using the ECM method (or post-tax deduction), you reduce the taxable value of the car, which reduces the FBT payable and also helps prevent a FBT liability at the end of a FBT year (March 31).”

Tailoring a lease plan

In the case of a fully managed novated lease, repayments will vary based on the length of the lease, as in the non-managed lease plan, but will also vary according to the employee's motoring habits. As everyone has individual motoring needs, distances to travel, and family

transport requirements, leases can be tailored to suit the specific requirements of each applicant. Employees interested in entering a fully managed novated lease agreement would be advised to ascertain the level of flexibility in lease plan conditions. The initial stage involves obtaining a quote, at which time information is gathered and recorded, including your average mileage figures.

Informed by these figures, a 'budget' is established to cover the employee's monthly motor vehicle expenditure, and the monthly repayments are calculated by adding this figure to the monthly car repayment, to create a single monthly payment for all car-related costs. This budget covers petrol, servicing and maintenance, tyres, registration, insurance, roadside assistance and other running costs.

If, during the lease, costs come in under budget, an excess of funds will pool in the lease plan expense account. These funds can be returned through payroll as salary. When circumstances change and running costs are exceeding projections, a new budget is developed and implemented, which will raise the monthly repayment. Tailoring a lease plan to suit lifestyle and circumstances should be straightforward, and most providers will be only too willing to ensure the plan is a good fit.

Features that vary from plan to plan include nominating a trusted car care and maintenance provider, instead of the financier's usual service centres, and deciding on the level and nature of insurance. The security that the compulsory fully comprehensive insurance provides can be enhanced with optional lease protection, safeguarding against illness, injury or involuntary unemployment. Employees can also use their own comprehensive insurance and roadside assistance provider, excluding this element from the package. As interest is charged on all lease plan inclusions, applicants can request that the financier invoice them for registration and stamp duty, excluding these items from the agreement.

Entering a novated lease agreement appears to have benefits in areas of tax savings, expediency and administrative relief. A survey of the information available indicates some great scope for teachers maximising their take home pay, by applying pre-tax dollars to necessary expenses.

I am certainly not a financial advisor, and while I have described the novated lease system, outlined the benefits and made suggestions based on my research, my article is not designed to be financial advice. If you are interested in learning more about financing your vehicle through a novated lease agreement, you would be advised to approach the preferred financiers for your state department or sector, or one of your own choosing, and have a plan tailored to suit you. [ST](#)

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter

Stopping the literacy and numeracy free-fall

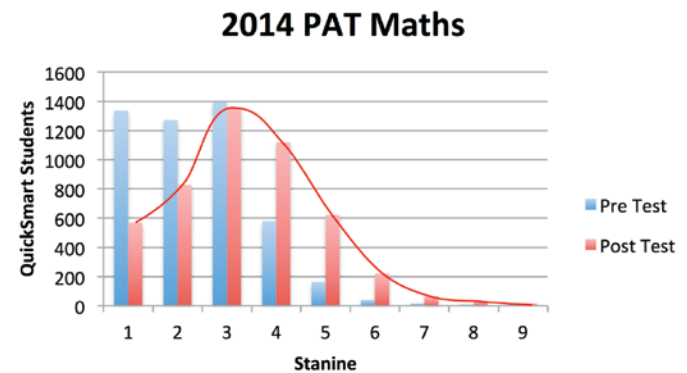
According to the preliminary results of the 2016 NAPLAN tests, 36.4 percent of all Australian children in year five are at risk, after returning results placing them in 'band four' or below the national minimum standard in reading.

By year nine, this has increased to a staggering 50.8 percent. In numeracy, 41.7 percent of children in year five return results indicating an at risk level or below, and in year nine the number considered at risk or below is 48.9 percent. Although the year nine results have shown a slight improvement since 2015, the year five results have experienced a significant drop.

The 2011-2012 International Assessment of Adult Competencies produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics states that 44 percent of adults are at a basic functioning literacy level or below, while the equivalent figure for numeracy is 55 percent. While these figures still earn Australia an above OECD average result, the figures still seem too high.

ACER's 2013 report 'PISA 2012: How Australia measures up' states that "some Australian students are not being equipped with the literacy skills they will need to participate fully in life beyond school". The demand for high literacy and numeracy levels is greater now than in the past. The Australian curriculum lists literacy and numeracy as two of the seven general capabilities. Literacy isn't just about reading and writing; it is about understanding what is read, questioning the content, and willingness to access information

from various sources. When a student struggles with decoding words and sounding out letters, it is impossible for them to find the deeper meaning of a text. This impacts their learning in every subject and in some cases it can also have a negative effect on engagement, confidence and behaviour. Limited literacy skills affect students' abilities to evaluate and analyse information, and can also restrict their ability to form their own opinions. It is also nearly impossible for a student who does not have basic numeracy skills to move on to more complex mathematical problems. Fractions and percentages seem a step too far for those who do not master the automatic recall of their times tables. Around 60 percent of students in the 2012 programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests admitted to feeling anxious about mathematics, fearing that the subject will be difficult for them in class. To add to the anxiety, 94 percent of children report that their parents believe mathematics to be important, and 37 percent admit to feelings of tension during



mathematics homework. In addition to academic anxiety, 43 percent of students reported noise and disorder in the classroom every lesson or most lessons.

So how do we stop our children falling further behind in each passing school year? How can we ensure that school-leavers are equipped with at least average numeracy and literacy skills? One possible approach is with the QuickSmart literacy and numeracy programs, which were developed at the University of New England. The programs aim to narrow the achievement gap, and to stop at-risk children from falling below the national minimal standards. It is targeted at middle-school students who have either fallen below the national minimal standards or are at risk of doing so. The goal of the programs is to bring students' literacy and numeracy skills up to a functioning average level, so as to allow them to participate in the

classroom as confident learners.

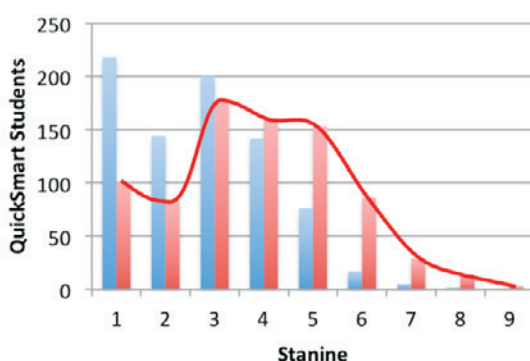
The students work in pairs outside the classroom environment with an instructor for 30 minutes, three times per week. The lessons are short, focused and structured, and both explicit teaching and deliberate practice play a key role in the lessons. Every lesson consists of six five-minute components. This ensures that the children don't become overwhelmed with one particular type of activity, and they are less likely to be bored or disengaged. By removing the students from the classroom, the distraction and noise factor is eliminated, allowing them to concentrate and give their maximum attention to the tasks at hand. Working in pairs and 'competing' against one another adds extra motivation. Providing the instructors with comprehensive training and ready-to-use resources ensures program success. For the more seasoned tutor, there are opportunities for creativity within the boundaries of the program framework. During the first year of instructing, the tutors are taught how to deliver each part of the lesson effectively, and with confidence and enthusiasm. Instructors work to develop students' automaticity in number facts or words, which gives them the chance to move on to higher order tasks. [S1](#)

By Sophie Westermarck,
operations officer, QuickSmart

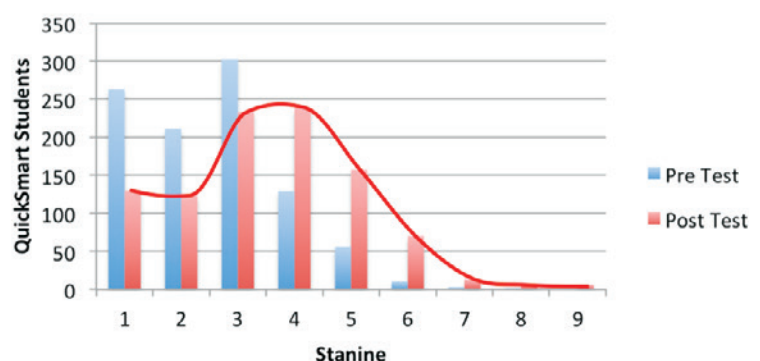
Quick facts

- To implement the program, a team of para-professionals work together with, and under the guidance of a QuickSmart coordinator.
- The QuickSmart coordinator is usually a qualified teacher and the para-professionals instruct the students.
- A QuickSmart lesson has one instructor working with a pair of students.
- For 12 students, the staff commitment is ten hours a week per instructor.

2014 Vocabulary PAT



2014 Comprehension PAT



Technology an ally for the interactive teacher

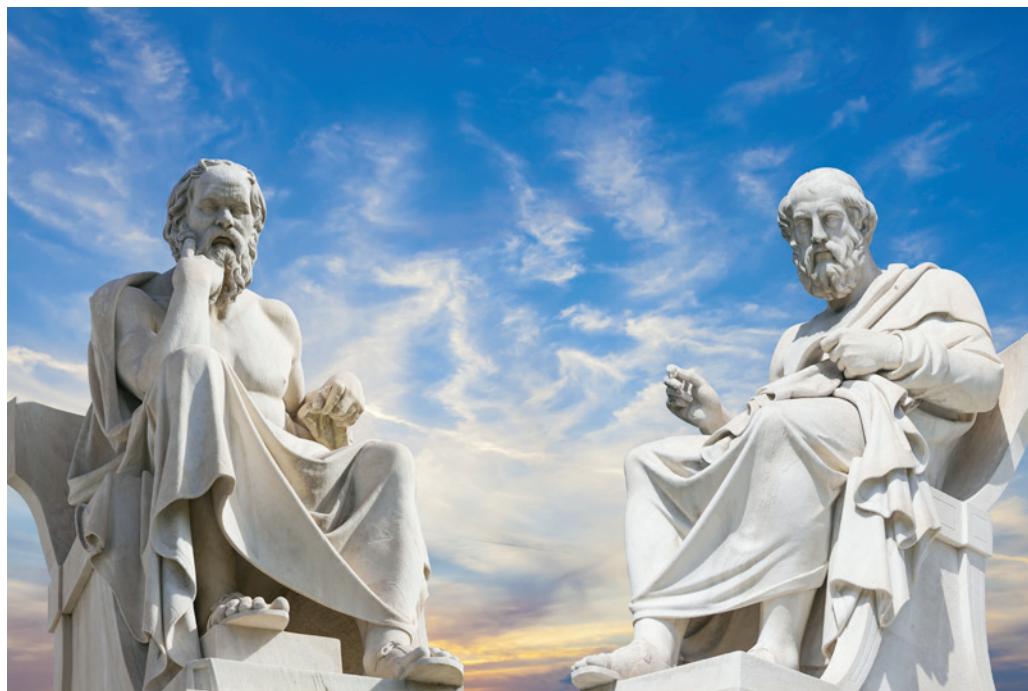
Albert Camus said, “some people talk in their sleep, lecturers talk while other people sleep.” If effective teaching is an interaction, what tools can help teachers engage new world students?

Research conducted into optimum learning conditions has only reinforced what many teachers have known for centuries: in order to engage students, they must participate in their learning.

Equipped with wax tablets and a bone stylus, Socrates had this understanding. The term ‘Socratic method’ is used to describe the mode of teaching that poses a series of probing questions to the learners, made famous by his pupil, Plato. The human brain has not changed much since Socrates had his students carve out their thoughts on wax tablets, but equipment and materials have. While ancient scholars often travelled to their mentors for learning, the modern teacher can dissolve distances that would have had Socrates and his brethren gasping in wonder. For those of us who grew up in a cloud of chalk dust, huddling close to the warmth of the overhead projector, many modern classrooms are unrecognisable.

A Sydney school made headlines earlier this year for banning laptops in the classroom. When most schools are running headlong towards a one-to-one ratio of screens to students, the decision puzzled many. Sydney Grammar principal, Dr John Vallance, called laptops a “scandalous waste of money” that distracts from learning and teaching. Technology, interactivity, connectivity, are they a blessing or a curse? A blessing, I think, if used wisely.

Industry journal, *Technology, Pedagogy and Education* published an article in 2014 called “Access Denied? Twenty-first century technology in



Interactive teaching dates back to Socrates and Plato



Today's students are digital natives

schools.” Researchers Trevor Male and Kevin Burden asserted that the trend represents “a fundamental change to learning; shifting from passive acquisition of someone else’s ideas to active learning experiences that empower people to inquire, critique, create, collaborate, problem-solve and create under-standing.” A Scottish head of department, who participated in the above study, said, “the teacher has to move from deliverer of content to the curator of a learning journey. If we do not move to this role we

are making ourselves redundant as teachers”. While Dr Vallance told the Sydney Morning Herald that technology interferes with the “inherently social activity” of teaching and learning, public opinion largely accepts technology as enhancing this social interaction. The argument echoes the split between those who see social media as a social aid, and those who are wary of its isolating force. So is the message to embrace technology, but let it not be your master? Probably.

What about when it doesn't work?

My high school aged daughter tells me that her teachers' computers malfunction most days, and time is wasted. My primary school aged son tells me that failure of the interactive whiteboard is one of the few stimuli that has elicited involuntary swearing from teachers. Are we at that stage where the technology is more advanced than the operators' skills? Teachers might be forgiven for throwing a sheet over the interactive screen and 'getting back to basics'.

Even if a teacher embraces the merits of technological aids with open arms, some people are just more technically switched than others. Training needs to be available for teachers, with adequate support for trouble shooting.

When purchasing new technology, always ascertain just how extensive and user friendly their support structure will be. Most providers are more than happy to provide after purchase support. ►



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Technology aids learning outcomes

The world is fast paced and our resources are stretched, and with an increased awareness of the benefits of 'flipped learning', where students watch video tutorials at home, freeing up class time for supported hands on practice, teachers are using technology to 'clone' themselves.

First year teacher, Grace Wong (in *Revolution School*, a series aired recently on ABC) addressed an ability gap of six years, using a perennial mathematics resource. Her students could access Grace's own explanations at the click of a mouse.

Essentially, Grace was teaching different content to multiple students, at different levels



The teacher has to move from deliverer of content to the curator of a learning journey"

simultaneously. She commented that the resource, while time consuming to create, would pay dividends in years to come.

Interactive technology engages learners

Learning outcomes are inextricably linked to student engagement and in a technologically charged world, we may just need to speak their language.

Today's students are 'digital natives', they are interested in technology and motivated by it. The use of interactive technology is culturally appropriate for school students, and its use can serve as effective scaffolding to learning outcomes. When you have them power up their laptops, or whip out the school iPads and fire up an app, you are speaking to them in their own language, and kids like that.

This also allows teachers

to employ internal 'flipped classroom' techniques during class time.

So what's out there?

Touchscreens and multi-touch displays, interactive white boards and projectors, technology to connect distance education students separated by thousands of kilometres, video linking to experts, and virtual tours are just a handful of ways that interactive teaching objectives are enhanced through the use of technology.

The industry catalogue is well populated by gadgets, and interfaces that allow tools such as interactive maps and anatomy visuals.

Technology can allow 30 students on personal laptops to complete a 3D model of the earth's crust in real time, guided

Interactive teaching solutions

A Brighter Image Pty Ltd (ABI) has been providing high quality audio visual solutions to businesses, government and education sectors Australia wide for over 16 years.

ABI has extensive knowledge of the range of audiovisual and presentation equipment suitable for any application. ABI can advise on hardware and arrange installation in any size school, boardroom or office setup.

ABI's aim is to enhance the learning process, and facilitate high levels of engagement and interaction through the use of the most advanced technology on the market. ABI is also the importer and distributor of the AstralVision range of large format interactive touchscreens, featuring crisp, clear visual display with auto calibrating touch point accuracy and all the latest touchscreen features.



The touchscreens accept and display input from laptops, PCs and Macs, but are also smart devices with a built in operating system. The operating system is wi-fi enabled, with user friendly interface, and immediate access to built in features and presentation tools, including Virtual Whiteboard Mode, On-Screen Annotation and Web Browser for quick and

simple class presentations. ABI is also the Australian distributor for the award winning Snowflake MultiTeach, which is a fun, edutainment suite of touchscreen apps for use in primary class rooms.

Snowflake MultiTeach addresses the shorter attention spans of children, by making education more fun, engaging

and memorable. The result is an exciting interactive classroom experience, with improved learning outcomes.

Busy teachers can easily and quickly create curriculum specific touchscreen lessons with custom content, using the Lessons app, or select from more than 25 off the shelf apps with pre-set content. [SN](#)

by the teacher's own laptop projected onto an interactive white board.

There is just too much scope to include in one article, so below are a few of the most common features of an interactive classroom.

- A multi-touch tablet PC is a mobile computer that consists of a digitizer screen that allows stylus or finger input, enabling a very natural way of writing and drawing.
- Interactive white boards are not so new, but later models have greater functionality without many of the bugs of the older models. They encompass the functions of the old whiteboard, but with projection capabilities and interactivity that allows you to complete digital work in real time.
- Giant flat panels (like giant touchscreens) bring interactive and child friendly touchscreen capabilities to the presentation phase of lesson time. The touch screen allows pre-pen holders to draw or select items on the shared screen without grappling with the pen. Wheel-mounted units allow schools to share resources, and many have HDMI plug ins for BYOD connectivity.
- 3LCD Touch-enabled interactive projectors with touch and pen based interactivity make it easy to draw and collaborate, using any wall and familiar, intuitive gestures. With certain models, teachers can use software to simultaneously share students' work from multiple devices. Check with your provider prior to purchase, as not all models have wireless networking capabilities.
- Multi-touch tables and teaching stations are touch screen computers that can be used as an interactive display board or as an activity centre for small groups. They are usually mounted on wheels, with adjustable height, making the units suitable for all ages, as well as students who use wheelchairs. Many versions have several tilt settings for easier access. [SII](#)

*By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter*








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The primary goal of an agile learning environment

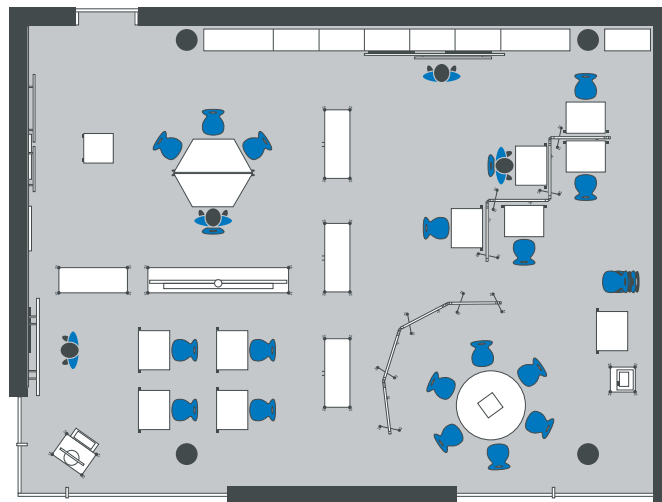
Differentiated learning awareness is promoting a movement towards adjustment and adaptation of, content, process, product and the learning environment. Patrick Byrne explains 'agile learning environments', and how technology supports them.

An agile learning environment is an educational playground that is intentionally designed to be adjustable, exchangeable and moveable. The learning space is designed to support idea generation, collaboration and experimentation. agile learning environments ultimately showcase how the design of a physical space, as well as the implementation of technology within that space, can shift how people communicate with one another.

The primary goal of an agile learning environment is flexibility. The furniture in the space, and the technology used within it, are flexible so that it can be configured and re-configured to suit different approaches to learning and teaching. An agile learning environment has the ability to turn a static or 'dead' space into a dynamic space. It can also include the re-purposing and use of non-traditional spaces such as hallways and communal zones as impromptu learning spaces.

The open-air Maekong Markets outside Bangkok are a great example to show how a space can be transformed from one purpose to another in the matter of seconds. The markets lie on an active train track. Vendor tents flank the route and wares lie inches from the track. Whenever a train approaches, the awnings and shop fronts are moved back from the rails. Once the train passes, shopping resumes almost immediately. This happens about eight times a day. Although it is a consumer space rather than a learning space, The Maekong Markets are a good example of how flexible learning spaces might work.

Like the railway markets, agile



Bird's eye view of an agile classroom

classrooms are ones that can be easily altered and rearranged to provide a diversity of didactic opportunities. The furniture should be flexible, mobile and easy to reconfigure so that both students and teachers can carry out the adaptations and new configurations by themselves within the space of minutes. The chairs and tables should also fit the size of the pupils; and ideally be easily height adjustable.

The learning environment must be highly flexible not only in terms of spatial configuration but also in relation to structure. Rather than disciplines being taught within designated time slots, in a fixed sequence, the school day flows through changing phases in which the learning space transforms to reflect each new subject and approach. Students may alternate learning in large or small groups, project and team work, practice and repetition. Flexibility means having a choice of learning area possibilities, depending on the learning scenario, or converting a space to the appropriate learning environment without too much effort; preferably the space should be capable of ad hoc configuration.

Technology plays a vital role in an agile learning environment as it offers a range of new teaching and learning possibilities. The premise that technology improves

the quality of teaching and learning has been demonstrated where technology has supported active learning, in a way that was not possible in the traditional lecture-style classroom. It's therefore important that technology is not used to replicate the traditional schooling practices of old, but rather harnessed as part of a modern pedagogy to provide new learning experiences. Essentially, we should use the new tools to do different things, not just to do old things differently.

Below are some examples of how technology can be used to create, complement and enhance an agile learning environment.

- Instead of installing a flat panel or interactive display on a wall in the classroom, it can be mounted on a trolley. This mobility enables a more dynamic use of the technology - allowing the device to transition between teacher-led sessions and student collaboration with ease.
- Wireless display solutions eliminate the need for cables, allow greater freedom of movement within the learning space and increase the ease at which one can share content from their device.
- Video conferencing expands learning beyond the confines

of the classroom walls. Not only does this provide a learning platform for those in rural and remote communities, but it can also allow connections with experts and other classrooms across the world.

- Virtual reality enables truly immersive learning experiences. Whether it's a virtual field trip, space exploration, navigating the human body or travelling back through time – there's no limit to potential of virtual environments.
- The ever increasing combination of power and mobility in computers and smart devices make them invaluable within an agile learning environment. Whether it's researching, collaborating or creating, they have embedded themselves as an integral part of learning.

Although furniture, spatial design and technology can contribute to an agile learning environment, it's important to emphasise that one of the most important elements of any learning environment is the teacher. agile learning environments are not a substitute for quality teaching, but rather a way of supporting it. Teachers have an important, and evolving role in teaching in agile environments. The take-up of the opportunities provided by technology in these spaces relies on teachers identifying and using this potential.

Ongoing training and support is also essential to maximise the use of any technology used in an agile learning environment. As educational futurist, David Thornburg says, "if you bring in these technologies and don't think ahead to how they'll be used to promote learning and the acquisition of skills, then the only thing that will change in the school is the electric bill". [SN](#)

By Patrick Byrne, Videopro

Wonderful reads for children and teens

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child - Parts I and II

Harry Potter Series: Book 8

By J. K. Rowling, Jack Thorne, John Tiffany



One for the Drama club!

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child is the first official Harry Potter story to be presented on stage.

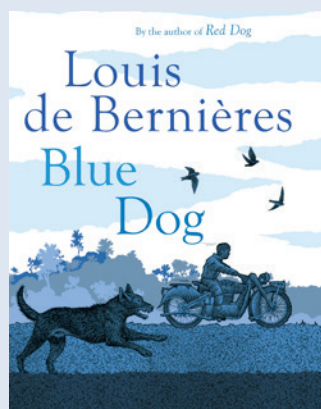
Harry Potter is 19 years older, and an overworked employee of the Ministry of Magic, a husband, and father of three school-age children.

While Harry grapples with a past that refuses to stay where it belongs, his youngest son Albus must struggle with the weight of a family legacy he never wanted.

Hachette Publishing
For readers 8 and up

Blue Dog

by Louis De Bernières



From the author of Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Blue Dog is the enthralling story of a young boy and his dog adventuring through the Australian outback.

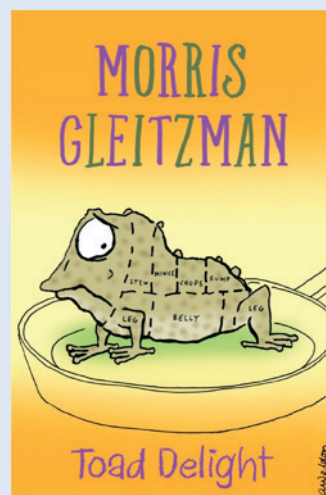
When a family tragedy means Mick is sent to the outback to live with his Grandpa, it looks as if he has a lonely life ahead of him. However, after a cyclone hits, things change for Mick. He finds a lost and half-drowned puppy, and the two become inseparable as they tackle their lonely worlds together.

Blue Dog is the prequel to the bestselling Red Dog and, although intended for adults, will be enjoyed by advanced young readers.

Knopf
Penguin Random House
For readers 12 and up

Toad Delight

By Morris Gleitzman

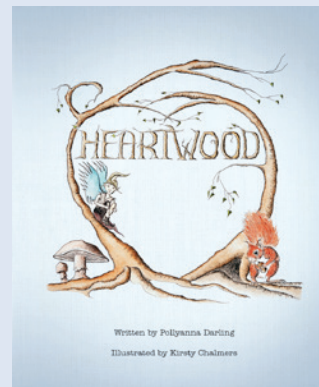


Limpy, is back in another wart-tingling escapade for upper primary school readers. Even more desperate to save his family from ending up on his stack of squashed relatives, Limpy takes his quest to the airwaves. When a TV cooking show kidnaps Goliath to be their main ingredient, Limpy sets out to rescue him and ends up on camera himself. A saga of bravery, sacrifice and warts-and-all adventure.

Puffin
Penguin Random House
For readers 10 and up

Heartwood

By Pollyanna Darling



"Quarrelling erupted. The faeries bickered amongst themselves. The magpies and squirrels tossed spiteful comments at each other across the clearing... the Smashbasher crept closer, gobbling up the forest..."

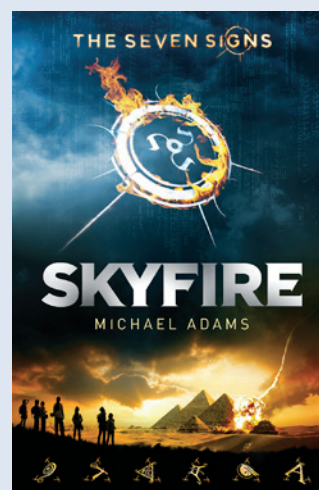
A magical story set in an ancient forest, Heartwood is a beautiful introduction to reading independently.

The book also provides a useful stimulus for teachers and schools as part of a curriculum on environmental issues. Heartwood also explores conflict resolution, creating together and resilience.

Imaginaria Publishing
ISBN 9780987116444
For readers 4 and up

SkyFire

By Michael Adams



Across seven thrilling instalments, seven young heroes must race across seven continents to decode The Seven Signs and stop a catastrophic cyberattack that will unleash World War III.

Sam aged 10, said "SkyFire is a vibrant read with blood pumping thrilling action, even at the very start."

Scholastic
For readers 10 and up

Teresa: A New Australian



By Deborah Abela

After surviving WWII in Malta, Teresa's parents seek a better life in Australia.

After the long voyage to Sydney, Teresa must grapple with Australian ways, in a 'White-Australia-Policy environment'.

Despite bullies and academic challenges, she is determined to make her family and her nanna back in Malta proud of her.

Freya, aged 12 said, "Teresa is a dramatic tale of a girl's life during WW2, her voyage, and her adjustment to Australian society."

I was really interested in how well a young girl dealt with the many challenges she met along the way."

Scholastic
For readers 8 to 12 [SN](#)

A new wave of drinking water options in schools

Dehydration is a leading cause of fatigue and poor mental function, and the impact of dehydration on cognition and mood is particularly relevant for children, who have poor fluid regulation.

In a large proportion of mainland Australia, summers are long and hot. Even in southern Queensland, winters are short, and in locations like Darwin and Cairns, they struggle to earn the title of winter with their few weeks of sweater weather.

Government supported initiatives like Crunch and Sip, where state school students have some fruit and water in the classroom between breaks help to encourage healthy eating and hydration. When a child is pounding that playground playing tiggy or climbing on play equipment, water is just about the last thing on their mind. This is especially true if they have to line up for ten minutes for lukewarm water, or 'walk safely along concrete paths' back to the classroom for their water bottle. Australian students need water, and they need it to be clean, cool and readily available.

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines are administered by a federal body: National Health and Medical Research Council. These minimum requirements determine the quality of drinking water in populated areas, with reticulated supplies (also called town water) supplying schools and public places. For some regional schools, and all rural schools, a private water supply is required. This supply is regulated by local council and is usually filtered rainwater. Filtration system guidelines are constantly being upgraded, and water is regularly tested for microbial activity that could cause illness, especially when dealing with large numbers of immature immune systems at close quarters.

How the water is dispensed to the students is the domain of the school administration, and



Kempsey High School students love their new Aquafil water filling station

often influenced by the P&C. The classic bubblers that I remember from childhood, with that slow warm trickle from a spout easily hampered by a well-placed stone or piece of gum, are still present

in some playgrounds. However, most have been replaced by their modern counterparts, bubblers or water fountains with more 'tomfoolery proof' fittings, and a consistent flow of cold

water, either through thoughtful placement of pipes, or a water cooler.

I'm not sure if we were all chronically dehydrated, or just less fussy, but the fact remains, most children are not drinking enough at school. Making the experience a little more satisfying may go a long way to avoiding those cranky dehydrated students every afternoon.

Children are at greater risk of dehydration due to their higher surface to mass ratio, that is, they have a more surface per kilo of body weight to lose water through, and they have different thirst sensitivities; they often need reminding.

Children also differ from adults in total body water content, but it is not only primary school aged children whose hydration we need worry about. Research in young adults shows that mild dehydration (corresponding to only one percent to two percent of body weight in lost fluid) can lead to significant impairment in cognitive function. Studies have shown that dehydration in children may produce decrements in cognitive performance, so it is important to teach them to be good little water drinkers as well as the three 'R's.

So what is on offer for schools?

With new understanding about the importance hydration for concentration, schools are addressing concerns about clean, easily accessible drinking water for students. Solutions range from bottled water stocked in tuckshops, to bubblers and water coolers integrated into school water systems. Local councils responsible for regulating private water supplies are encouraging the installation of UV filtration systems in public water supplies to ensure bacterial contamination is kept to an absolute minimum. Waterlogic Australia supplies integrated solutions for water provision in offices, public places and schools.



Waterlogic's 3 step filtration process



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◀ Spokesperson, Michelle Keays explained the rationale behind the advanced technologies in their water dispensers. “We offer a range of technologies exclusive to the Australian drinking water market, combining both BioCote, an anti-microbial protection on the surface of our dispensers, with our inbuilt UV Firewall. UV light purifies the water, destroying bacteria like E. coli, Salmonella and hepatitis, to name a few. With Firewall, the UV lamp is positioned at the point of dispense, proven to destroy 99.9999% of germs”.

With growing awareness about the impact of plastic bottles, and a commitment from government and non-government schools towards sustainability, bottleless solutions are being implemented. In an initiative welcomed by industry professionals, the ACT has initiated a policy encouraging

students to choose tap water. The program will provide two refilling stations for each school, as well as refillable water bottles for each student.



The objective of government bodies and school communities is a combination of access, palatability and sustainability. The first of this three-part objective can be achieved through installing ample dispensers for the school's student population. Who doesn't remember giving up on the bubbler line and sticking their head under the tap in the toilets? I shudder to think what microbes were collected on those sweltering days.

Palatability may include an inbuilt cooler for warmer climates. Most schools are also interested in providing a solution in line with the sustainability policies most schools are working towards.






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“With a focus on preserving our planet and looking after it, a bottleless solution aligns with schools’ messages regarding preservation and recycling”, Michelle advised.

Perhaps we are seeing an education revolution about the importance of hydration, and its relationship to mood and cognitive behaviour. Schools are creating partnerships with suppliers to communicate the vital role of water in our bodies, and change the culture around health and hydration.

Implementation and education in schools

Aquafil supplies water refill stations and drinking fountains to schools, sporting facilities, universities, and councils. Full graphics are available on the units, either for branding, or in the following case study, as an educational tool.

Aquafil worked with Kempsey High School, a NSW coastal school with a long summer and surfing weather most of

the year, and now, an excellent culture of hydration. Like any great educators, the teachers at Kempsey High School have turned the school's acquisition of a new bottle refill station and bubbler into a learning opportunity.

Teacher Mark Baxter reported that his students have “flocked to the new filtered water bubbler” saying how much better the water tasted. “They want another one of the other side of the school” he added. Mr Baxter also reported fewer “temper tantrums and headaches”.

Kempsey's HSC science teacher didn't let the occasion pass, and took the opportunity to conduct and experiment. “She took samples from the old bubblers, which revealed five beautifully coloured bacteria growing after some days incubating. This was compared with samples from the new filtered water bubbler; zero reading on the petri dish!” Mr Baxter announced. S11

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter

Optimum nutrition for the school day

Photo courtesy of Cancer Council Queensland



Kids going bananas!

Wriggling kids with poor concentration are a common feature of a contemporary classroom. Community awareness is on the up, and schools, parents, and society at large, are all ready for a solution.

Opinion is split on the causes; some say too much screen time, some say diet, while some point to an indoor culture and over-structured play. It seems likely that the culprit is the combination of all of these factors. Naturopaths have long touted the benefits of a healthy diet for mood and concentration, but increasingly, the problem is being addressed by government bodies and independent schools' associations. Parents scour supermarkets for healthier ways to pack lunches, governments move towards healthier canteens, and teachers are calling for proper nutrition on school mornings. There is consensus on one thing:

food matters. While educators and school leaders cannot control what a child eats at home, what they eat at school can be influenced by a canteen that promotes a positive relationship with food, and healthy dietary choices.

Governments have responded with programs, underpinned by the National Health School Canteen (NHSC). These programs provide frameworks, within which canteen coordinators can develop menus that are more balanced than the chicken nuggets and pies and sauce from my childhood.

Even when the school does agree to implement the NHSC system, limitations are apparent, with critics wondering why a sugar laden strawberry milk is an appropriate inclusion in the 'green light' everyday food category, while little attention is paid to preservatives and additives. Psychologists specialising in behaviour management have identified

preservatives, colours and additives as detrimental to concentration and cooperative behaviour, and many are concerned that conditions such as ADHD and hyperactivity can be exacerbated by consuming products containing these additives. There has been cautionary advice, and considerable research into the link between artificial colours and flavours dating back to Dr Ben F. Feingold's five-part study, anecdotal evidence from parents has supported this theory ever since, and the list of allowed additives is disturbingly dynamic. Perhaps nobody really knows what damage these cosmetic food additives cause, and the concern warrants a move towards natural, or real food.

With autoimmune disease at an all-time high, new research coming out of Israel and Germany, provides many nutritionists and dieticians the indications they have been expecting.

Dr Aaron Lerner, of the Technion's Faculty of Medicine, and Dr. Torsten Matthias of Aesku-Kipp Institute, Germany have published findings on the damage to health caused by processed food. The new research has linked the rise in consumption of additives and processed food with the rise of auto-immune disease, and the implications may change the way we feed our children.

Despite obvious limitations, the mere existence of healthy canteen initiatives indicates a move towards change. For models, we can look to countries such as France; a country with half the obesity rate of Australia's.

Nutritionist, Natalie Harms specialises in childhood nutrition. After researching the role of government in canteen guidelines, internationally, she feels Australia could wield far greater influence in schools. ►

◀ “In Australia, it depends on the principal and school P&C as to how strictly the NHSC guidelines are even incorporated. School lunch programs are a very serious aspect of school in France”.

Ms Harms would like to see food culture improved in Australian schools. The French ideas of food quality, eating as part of the social fabric, (which means they need time to eat) all inform the way food is eaten by French students.

French children have 45 minutes just to eat, but France is not the only country to place emphasis on taking time to eat; Brazilian children also enjoy a protracted eating time.

In Italy, many students go home for lunch, but wherever food culture is positive, children have more than ten to fifteen minutes to gobble down a sandwich so they still have time to play. A Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health study, published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, found that children with less than 20 minutes to eat school lunch consume significantly less of their main food, milk and vegetables than those who aren't rushed.



Freshwater Bay Primary School students love their healthy lunches

So what is a school to do?

Stephanie Alexander Garden Program

For a grass roots change in nutrition awareness, education is required to alter the way children even think about food.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program promotes a connection between food and its origin for children. The practical experience of producing raw ingredients, and then combining them into a meal to share together

establishes pathways for good eating habits.

The program can also provide access to nutrition that may not be a part of some children's everyday life. Gardening and cooking programs can also act as an anchor activity, improving engagement, and in some cases, even attendance.

For more information on the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, visit: www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au

Nutrition in the curriculum

Katie Booth is an accredited practising dietician and health promotion officer of Healthy Kids Australia, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting and influencing healthy food choices for children.

“Nutrition education, and teaching practical food preparation skills, helps students to make informed food choices in an environment saturated with fast food advertising that encourages high energy and low nutrient foods.” Ms Booth advocated.

Some success has been achieved through implementation of Healthy Kids' education resources, as well as department inclusions in Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum.

Healthy Kids promotes the Crunch and Sip Campaign, operating in

Western Australia. Versions of this practice have been adopted by many schools Australia wide.

With the objective of hydrating students, and improving nutrition, the program invites teachers to allow eating and drinking in class during morning session. “Not only does Healthy Kids provide classroom nutrition education resources linked to curriculum outcomes, it also encourages a whole-of-school approach.” Ms Booth explained.

Healthy Kids has generated free teaching resources linked to curriculum. For more information, and grade specific curriculum resources: www.healthykids.com.au/teachers.

Brain food in the lunchbox

The unfortunate reality is that we do not have the French, or Italian system, and governments are not likely to bring back school dinners any time soon.

While the blight on most parents' school morning prep is packing a lunchbox, many school tuckshops do not offer foods that support learning, energy and immunity, and in smaller schools, only operate one or two days per week.

For many, the lunchbox rigmarole continues, though some schools are getting creative with food provisioning, revamping tuckshop menus, or even ordering in



Healthy lunches keep Arlo happy and alert

School canteens rely heavily on parental assistance, and due to growing awareness about diet, an interesting trend is occurring. Parents are taking on school canteens with gusto, and pushing for access to fresh and delicious food throughout the school day.

Many parents balance an increasingly frenetic schedule with an undeniable increase in nutritional awareness, by planning ahead and batch cooking – but no parent has a perfect lunch packed every day.

A growing understanding of the downside of processed convenience food has left parents looking for a solution other than the choices offered on a traditional canteen menu. Healthy eating advocates frequently express frustration with the quality of food served to children at school.

Jamie Oliver's overhaul of the school lunch in the UK attracted media attention worldwide, and effected considerable change in the diets of many school children. Alas, Australia is not a school lunch country; it's a lunchbox and canteen country.

So how to transform school lunches?

School Lunch Online was created by a frustrated school mum, with a degree in nutritional biochemistry, and a background in IT. Kate Cowley decided to use her IT skills to launch an online food portal to give everyone a break. "I knew the online platform was in place, but I wanted to open up the ordering to include local providers if that's what school communities wanted".

School Lunch Online also offers the IT solutions to solve the scrabble for coins and paper bags on lunch order morning, and for some schools, there is a combination of both ordering in and the school canteen.

The system enables children and parents to order school lunches, any time from school approved suppliers. "Many schools are operating their own canteens and we are enabling these schools to streamline, and bring the ordering

process online." It's about better access to nutrition, but also about making life easier for schools and parents.

Freshwater Bay Primary School Principal Stephen Ivey said "I need my teachers to focus on teaching, not running around counting change, collecting brown paper bags and trying to juggle ad hoc lunch delivery."

Freshwater Bay Primary had Kate design their menu with nutrition and taste in mind. Schools can be as involved as they like, or they can just let Kate use her background in nutrition to take care of it, like Stephen Ivey has. "It has all been so simple with little input by us, School Lunch Online has taken care of it all".

Lunch options for office workers are considerably healthier, and tastier than a few decades ago.

Sushi Train, noodle bars, margarine free sandwich bars and freshly cut salads are all available 'brain food' for adults. Children, whose brains arguably need nutrition the most, are still eating pies and sausage rolls from the pre-health-revolution era.

Some schools might be reluctant to let go of the old favourites, and menus can be tailored for the school.

"We've sourced some excellent providers who do the comfort foods that kids love, but without the nasties, like preservatives, or vegetable oils that turn to trans fats". Online ordering systems

have the advantage of tapping into existing local businesses, or accessing healthy options like Byron Bay Pies or Noshu Donuts, which are made with coconut oil, are sugar free and reportedly "just like the real thing".

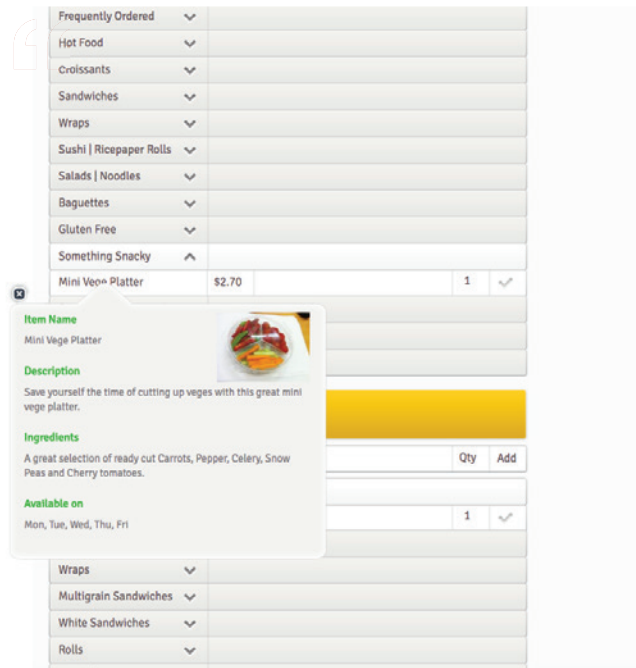
New Victorian school, Sandridge

School has registered with School Lunch Online with their chosen supplier, the café across the road. General Food Co. provides their full lunch menu in a staff only section, and a special menu for the kids with an array of freshly cut sandwiches, winter warming soup, and hummus with cut veggies, to name a few.

At an average price of \$2.50 to \$5 for a full meal item, the cost of these nutritious items compares with your average tuckshop menu.

With the growing obesity epidemic and associated health problems in our society, coupled with adverse effects of children eating foods laden with additives and preservatives, this is another 'baby step' in the right direction for a healthier future. [S11](#)

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter



The School Lunch Online menu interface

Efficient schools, happy parents, healthy kids

School Lunch Online, an easy to use lunch ordering service that's passionate about bringing schools and local suppliers together to give our kids healthy and tasty lunches every day.

A lunch service that lets your teachers focus on teaching.



No more lunch dramas at school ever again. Call for assistance to set up and customise your account or visit the website for more details.

To register call: 1300 787 939 schoollunchonline.com.au

Extraordinary learning in ordinary places

As a child, the most exciting visitor we ever received was a dentist. He showed us some pearly whites in a very large pair of pink gums. He exercised his secret dream of ventriloquism, as the pink gums reminded us to always brush our teeth.

These days, schools across Australia are opening their halls, classrooms and sports fields to visiting experts, mobile entertainers, and even travelling circus acts. Educational benefits of school events are plentiful, but an exciting visit on their 'home' turf also creates a sense of shared experience that students will remember.

The students are in their familiar environment, which, especially for younger children, can help them adhere to their usual standards of behaviour and concentration, and teachers can focus their attention on creating opportunities for learning around the visit.

Some experiences just can't be brought to school, and excursions have their place, but they require planning, coordination and contingencies, that preclude them from happening too often. Hosting learning experiences, sometimes called 'incursions', can allow teachers and staff to avoid the inevitable stress of excursions, without sacrificing learning outcomes.

Interestingly, educators can get more out of an incursion,



Lyndon Davis gives River School students a different perspective of their school creek

by choreographing the event themselves. "It's much harder to take kids out and get an experience. If you bring someone in, you actually have the resource right there, and you're not at the whim of the place you're visiting. You can actually tailor it to what your needs are", year four teacher from Ananda Marga River School, Kerrie Kirwan told *School News*.

Kerrie described how Indigenous educator and Kabi Kabi man, Lyndon Davis, came to the school and worked with all years in completely different ways. Her year four students are studying *My Place*, a piece of curriculum material that explores a place a child called home, but at different times through history. "With Lyndon they talked about this

place [their school] and what it was like before white people arrived." With the younger students, he conducted a dance workshop in their own environment. "So in this way, it also represents value for money".

Teachers spend their lives presenting and interpreting the world for their students. They find, select and present content, themes and ideas to their students on a daily basis. Through multimedia, students access an enormous amount of information, but sometimes, you just can't beat the real thing.

Humans have always learnt best by doing and emulating, and while education has changed, we haven't so much. As Benjamin Franklin famously said: "Tell me

and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn".

Incursions can tie into the curriculum of any subject, be it science based, history, geometry or performing arts. Types of incursions include, but are certainly not limited to, a visiting palaeontologist excavating your school, a theatre workshop, a colourful African drumming session, creating a worm farm at school, cooking workshops, endangered wildlife presentation, or an Indigenous education program. The possibilities are endless, and all add to the real life context of your curriculum, brightening up your school for the day, with excitement and engagement for all year groups. [SN](#)

By **Suzy Barry**, Industry Reporter

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Lyndon Davis showing River School students some special equipment

Australia Playhouse

Australia Playhouse brings a hilarious theatrical experience directly into the lives of your students, with a blend of drama, song and dance that is extremely entertaining theatre. Performing to over 700 schools across Australia and New Zealand, Playhouse makes it easy for you, while providing your students with the best.

This popular and engaging company have incursions to suit all ages. In 2017, they will delight primary school audiences, and their teachers, with *Puss in Boots: Pet Detective*. Goldilocks is accused of the crime of the century – but did she do it? High school students will enjoy a laugh-a-minute re-telling of *The Great Gatsby*, featuring beautiful people, riches and the decadence of the 1920s jazz era in *Great Scott Fitzgerald! Gatsby Unleashed*.

Australia Playhouse provides outstanding incursions that are simple to book and has schools



inviting them back for more. "Relevant, interactive, engaging, a wonderful performance to have at any school" (TAS).

The scripts are of the highest calibre, carefully crafted to maximise engagement from school audiences, with humour that appeals to children and hard-to-please teens. The plays are high energy, interactive and wickedly witty. "The students left the room buzzing and wanting

to see it again. The humour was fantastic and had students and teachers laughing out loud for the whole hour. Can't wait for the next show!" (VIC).

A stand-out theatrical experience that will inspire your students long after they've gone. The actors' performances are inspirational and motivating, spilling over into the classroom and playground. The magic that happens on stage transports

them for one hour, but students will talk about it for months. "This was a brilliantly scripted, amazingly performed piece of theatre magic!! Thank you for entertaining and educating us at the same time... We'll definitely see you next year!" (NSW).

For some students these performances might be the only taste of theatre they get – so let's make it great for them. [SIN](#)

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The evolution of out of school hours care

With the evolving changes to family dynamics, more parents are needing out of school hours care, more schools are providing it onsite and the regulatory and staffing challenges continue to get more complex. But where has it evolved from and what is the future of before and after care in primary schools across Australia?

If you were living in the 70s, then you were listening to Skyhooks on the radio and you knew it was also a long way to the shop to buy a Chiko Roll (even if AC/DC had the words a little different). Societal norms at that time saw children making their own way to school, and they were free to roam anywhere in the neighbourhood so long as they were home for dinner. Out of school hours care programs didn't really exist as there wasn't a need.

Fast forward a generation or two to today and our streets are a very different place. Society now deems them a much more dangerous place for young children to be, and children finding their own way home from school is no longer considered the norm. With the rate of families in which both parents work continuing to rise (currently three in five), the demand for out of school hours care is stronger than ever (see Table 1) and, in many cases, is a non-negotiable requirement for parents when choosing schools.

Previously unregulated and flexible

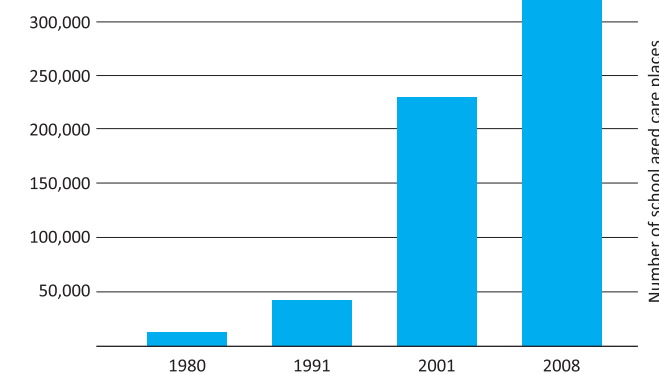


Table 1: National increase in number of out of school care places

“ Previously unregulated and flexible in their approach, out of school hours care programs have come a long way in the past 30 years

in their approach, out of school hours care programs have come a long way in the past 30 years. What was once an easy program to run in-house, thanks to the lack of licensing, regulation, legislation, and reporting requirements, is now a veritable labyrinth of laws, compliance requirements, compulsory staffing ratios and records management expectations.

The introduction of the National Quality Framework (NQF) in 2012, by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, brought a renewed level of safety and quality to what had

become a significant industry and provided benchmarks and targets that programs must abide by in order to gain and retain accreditation.

The government further endorsed the NQF by announcing a range of child care rebate schemes but only to parents utilising licensed out of school care services. These rebate schemes are now not only a fundamental benefit for families and parents but are also regularly featured, and hotly debated, in Federal elections.

The staffing landscape has also changed considerably since the

early inception of out of school hours care.

Initially, run and staffed by mums and dads, school committees, volunteers and members of parent-teacher associations, before and after school care programs are now required by law to be staffed with childcare trained and qualified professionals with current first aid certificates and anaphylaxis training. Ensuring the right mix of team members to adequately cover compliance requirements can prove troublesome for small providers.

While the past three decades have seen significant advancements and changes to the out of school hours care industry, the journey is not over yet. As society continues to evolve so too do the needs of working families. This evolution in turn shapes and drives before and after care services.

What does the future hold?

The future holds many opportunities for out of school care, yet it also poses many challenges. With the NQF now a defining feature of the industry, schools and after care providers must be on constant alert for changes, updates and revisions in the governing guidelines to ensure their programs are compliant with current legislation.

Noncompliance in some circumstances can lead to restriction or even closure of the program, so keeping abreast of NQF requirements is a must for all



Children share write and draw with a Camp Australia educator



Outdoor fun for Camp Australia children

out of school care services. As the NQF shifts from its foundational phase into a growth and refinement phase, we will no doubt see less of the major, easy to identify, changes to guidelines and significantly more minor changes, tweaks and modifications to tighten safety and increase the quality of licensed services. It will be imperative that all after care providers, whether schools or specialist providers, remain vigilant and attentive to the ever-changing NQF landscape.

Staffing programs with fully-qualified team members could also prove to be more of a challenge in the coming years.

With staff to child ratios now firmly embedded in services, the focus is shifting more to the qualifications of individual team members as well as the blend of qualifications amongst the team in order to meet the ever-changing compliance requirements.

Smaller providers and in-house operators that don't have a pool of staff to call upon may struggle to achieve compliance across their team.

Technological and digital advancements are changing the way we interact and do business on a daily basis and after care services are no exception to that. In what is becoming an instant download world, parents and families expect to be able to interact with service providers wherever and whenever they choose to.

Gone are the days of nine to five customer service via the telephone, instead, more and more families are wanting to register, book, manage, cancel and pay for services at their own convenience.

The explosion in the number of websites, apps and social media

channels dedicated to out of school hours care is a testament to the fact that parents are demanding more online interaction.

With no end in sight for the information age we are experiencing, it's safe to assume that these basic technological demands will soon evolve into more customised, individual solutions for parents.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to challenges and opportunities for out of school care. Who knows what the future could hold?

As work life becomes more fluid for parents we may see a demand for evening, night time or weekend care.

Or, as schedules get busier and family time more precious we may see a demand for inclusion of structured language lessons, music

lessons or sporting lessons during before and after care. It's anybody's guess what is to come. One thing we know for certain though is that times are changing and only those who change with it will succeed. **SM**

By Adam Pease, CEO,
Camp Australia

Adam Pease is an experienced education, technology, administration and communications professional. A passionate industry advocate, Adam has worked in the education and early childhood care sector for 15 years and is focused on bringing out the best in kids. Adam, like all members of the Camp Australia team, takes great pride in leading the industry in best practice, working with all levels of government and education to ensure children get the care they need and deserve.



We make Out of School Hours Care an extension of your school and community.

We believe in genuine partnerships and adopt your curriculum, values and strategic plan.
It just makes sense – our kids are your kids.



Contact us to find out more about how we make kids smile
www.campastralia.com.au/myschool or call 1300 792 668

Quality care for kids before and after school

While companies in Sweden trial a six-hour work day, Australian parents are spending more time working and commuting, and out of school hours care needs to bridge the gap.

A 2011 National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) report registered an overall increase in the average hour amount that constitutes full-time work between 1985 and 2011. In 1985, men working full-time averaged around 39.5 hours - today it's 42.3 hours, and for women, an increase from 36.4 in 1985 to 38.6 in 2011. The school day still runs from around nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, but Australian parents chew up a further 53 minutes a day on commuting, in addition to a full-time workload.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) released data in 2013, indicating "considerable growth in maternal employment." The data shows the proportion of mothers who were employed increased from 55 percent in 1991, 63 percent in 2006 to 65 percent in 2011, with a further increase expect from the 2016 census results. Consequently, a significant supervision gap exists between school hours and work hours, not to mention school holidays.

Meanwhile, more stringent supervision trends are apparent with examples such as the recent charges against parents by Queensland Police, for allowing

a child to walk to school alone. Combine that with an economic climate frequently warranting a double income, and families have a problem. Schools often extend the day with staff supervision before and after school, and government funded Active After-School Communities have created incidental care for an hour a week, but a reliable solution is needed.

Fortunately, services can partner with schools to provide seamless care for their students. Inviting an approved provider to operate programs before and after school hours can alleviate pressure for parents, and reduce stress for your students. While many schools are simply too small to support an after school care arrangement, small school partnerships can be a great way to share resources.

A 'homework club' atmosphere for children can provide supported revision, which allows the family to relax and just re-connect after a long day. Schools would be advised to ask potential providers what sort of healthy snack they will serve, and how they can facilitate a space for students to relax and unwind. Holiday programs are also available, and usually include supervised local outings, and activities, such as art and crafts, sports, swimming, roller-skating, and activity-rich picnic days. Recreational programs can be focussed on a single activity, for example, basketball, music or drama 'camp', while others will be more general, and operate an



Camp Australia educator and child sharing a story

array of activities reminiscent of an American summer camp movie from the 80s. In Australia, holiday programs are usually just 'day camp', but some specific camps are residential.

National Quality Framework (NQF)

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) states, "the NQF was the result of an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children".

In 2012, the NQF introduced "a new quality standard to improve education and care". The National Quality Standard (NQS) must be met by all approved care providers. The NQF includes the national law and national regulations, and comprises the Education and Care Services National Law, as well as the National Regulations. All approved services are also required to base their educational programs on an approved learning framework.

For all approved care providers, National Quality Standard

benchmarks must be reached in the areas of, educational program and practice; children's health and safety; the physical environment in which care occurs, staffing ratios and training; guidelines for relationships with children; collaborative partnerships with families and communities, and leadership and service management requirements. Further information is available at www.acecqa.gov.au.

Schools and parents can appraise their potential provider by searching within the national registers available at www.acecqa.gov.au/national-registers.

While these regulations have meant increased work and training for care providers, the outcomes for children in care are expected to be greatly improved. Busy parents often select schools based on the quality and convenience of their out of school hours care programs. Engaging quality care not only provides a soft and supported day's end, for children with busy parents, it can be crucial to maintaining thriving enrolment numbers. [ST](#)

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter

Camp Australia making kids smile

For more than 28 years, Camp Australia has delivered high quality and affordable out of school hours care, with programs that both nurture, and support children's development.

With time for homework, relaxation, educational activities, and a healthy snack for primary-aged children after school, care is aligned with the values of the school. A Camp Australia spokesperson said, "the difference is that our educators' primary focus is on the children in their care.



This is because we are the only after school care provider that has designed their organisation around this single principle". The national provider reports having "invested in dedicated support systems and teams to

make sure that children get all the attention they need, because we know that this is the best way to make them smile".

Educators are not tasked with administrative tasks or difficult conversations with parents, a Camp Australia spokesperson said, "this all aids in retaining great team members".

The approach, according to Camp Australia, enables the recruitment, training and development of people whose career focus is working with children.

"These are exactly the people you want caring for the children at your school". [ST](#)



Soccer pitches generally have rubber granules as their in-fill

Synthetic surfaces for multi-sport schools

The environmental impact of the water usage involved in the upkeep of grass playing fields is considerable. As awareness increases, schools are embracing synthetic surfaces as an alternative.

Many schools struggle with a shortage of suitable water provision, both in quantity and quality, to establish and maintain natural turf to a useable level over time. Especially for schools with private water supplies, where the full yield of a water harvesting system is required to services the school's basic water requirements, watering the hockey pitch all through summer can seem like a luxury.

The fact remains however, that kids need their sports. Sports organisations across the nation are attempting to cajole sedentary youths back to the sometimes mud-splattering joys of field games, but some say children are a little less hardy than they once were, and a springy, brilliant green,

shock absorbing surface seems well placed to entice players back into the ranks. Even the lengths to which organisers will go for ground optimisation, are testament to the shifting expectations we place on sports grounds. Grass fields used for professional sports are minutely managed with drainage technology and horticultural management, with the objective of neutralising variables such as weather conditions.

A synthetic surface is often able to achieve a more level playing field than natural turf fields, and stays softer than natural turf when compacting has occurred due to water scarcity. Natural turf is more often characterized by undulations, which increases the risks of injury to fledgling athletic dynamos. While there are some historical incidents of chronic injuries resulting from first and second generation synthetic turf systems; those early products were not designed with consideration to impact minimisation.

A report released by the Victorian government called 'Artificial grass for sport guide', reveals that due to climate change and ongoing drought conditions in Australia, sports associations governing both Australian rules football and cricket are investigating synthetic surfaces to replace natural turf.

In 2008, the University of Ballarat conducted a research and development exercise to produce a perfect synthetic ground for the two sports. According to the report, key issues for these sports include "specific play characteristics, critical fall height, abrasion, hardness, rotational traction, ball rebound and roll, player impact forces, and also more generic issues such as cost, heat retention or heat reflection, injury rates, water collection and product durability."

With increasing demand on sports grounds, as school physical education departments vary the physical education activities they offer, facilities

are increasingly required to be resilient, but also versatile. Tennis courts often need to transform into netball courts in winter, and share facilities with basketball during tennis season. There are variables at every level of construction that determine suitability for specific sports.

Synthetic turf layers

Synthetic turf consists of an upper layer, a layer of infill and a base layer. A significant zone of variability in the upper layer is the quality of the yarn. There will be an opportunity to inspect a sample of all synthetic floor surfaces on offer, and the quality varies in density, stitch rate and even how 'dexterous' the yarn is. The yarn also determines how hot the turf will be underfoot, so ensuring that the yarn has been UV tested is vital.

What lies directly below the turf will vary according to the sport being played. This mid-layer will comprise an infill substance and, on some occasions, a shock pad. ►

◀ For example, the Victorian government guide indicated that while there were several common factors between Australian rules and soccer turf requirements, “soccer pitches generally have rubber granules, while the Australian rules football specification prefers just the shock-pad”. While this may not impact schools who are playing various sports at a recreational and educational level, if the school has a strong culture of a certain sport, the field will need to be tailored to its requirements.

Similarly, multi-functional surfaces for hockey, netball and basketball can run into conflict. While hockey preferences inclusion of a shock-pad to reduce ball bounce, netball requires a high level of bounce to facilitate the characteristics of the game. The sporting habits of the school community will greatly influence how the facility will be designed and installed.

The selection of materials and the construction of the infill can make or break the synthetic turf, and possibly, if not done correctly, your ankle. The infill usually consists of either sand, rubber granules, or a combination of both, and its function is to support the upper layer. The infill layer will be varied to suit the sports

as mentioned above. School sporting, however, involves lots of sports, and not always played expertly, so while Netball Australia must necessarily spurn the shock-pad, the slowing down of the game that results will be of no consequence to young players developing ball skills. For schools, suppliers will often recommend one of the many multi-functional turfs are available.

Your base layer is the foundation of your project and the dangers of inexpert construction can leach into your entire set-up. Despite all methods requiring engineering as such, a base bound by bitumen being called ‘engineered’ and an unbound base is referred to as ‘dynamic’. The bound base is harder than

the dynamic base, but it is static, or bound by the bitumen, and will not move in the long-term. An unbound base is made up of loose rocks and sand, and may need to be rolled or regraded at the time of carpet replacement.

Ultraviolet resistance in turf

Various sports do require different specifications, so it’s vital to make clear projections about current and future use of facilities. UV resistance is vital to the health and safety of young sportspeople in a country with Australia’s climate. New yarns have been coming out of Europe claiming to reduce surface temperatures by up to 35 percent, through technology that dissipates heat

into the atmosphere, instead of absorbing it into the yarn.

Now supplied by Australian manufacturers, UV reflective surfaces can reduce discomfort to players, but also more serious impacts like heat exhaustion and rapid dehydration.

Research and development

There is continued research into sports applications, with Australian researchers testing such developments as hybrid unfilled water-free hockey carpets, also in response to drought conditions, as well as increased water awareness.

Other developments include horizontal drainage via a void space beneath the shock-pad; sand variation in shape, colour and treatment to improve drainage and heat equalisation; sophisticated water storage and harvesting systems; and organic infill, which packs a double punch with a smaller environmental footprint, and the reported ability to maintain a lower median temperature than with rubber infill.

With attention from elite sports associations growing, it is little wonder that more schools are looking to synthetic sports fields, courts and pitches to address sporting needs in an economical, environmentally conscious and rewarding manner. [S11](#)

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter



In synthetic fields designed for hockey, a shock-pad reduces ball bounce

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Quality service



Jordin Sports has been the leader in the installation and construction of prestige courts and sporting fields using artificial turf and other natural and synthetic surfaces in Queensland and New South Wales for nearly 30 years.

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Ipswich Boys Grammar School - 8 Tennis Courts
- Cushioned Acrylic

"These courts were inundated in January 2011 – covered by 1 to 2m floodwater. The Fire Brigade washed the silt off the courts. The courts went back into service with little time lost."

Coach – David Glinster



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Government plan to get more kids active and into sport

Australians have always been associated with an active lifestyle and our nation is highly regarded for our success on the global sporting arena.

However, almost two-thirds of Australians are overweight, including one in four children.

This is a shocking statistic, but unsurprising, when only one third of kids under 13 are getting the recommended one hour of physical activity per day.

That number nearly triples when these children hit their teenage years.

The current government is committed to promoting better health choices to tackle this growing problem, and has announced a further commitment of \$60 million into the Sporting Schools program.

The program will now include years seven and eight, to combat the significant 'drop out' in

Why is being physically active good for kids?

Physical activity helps kids to be fit and healthy in all sorts of ways, such as:

- maintaining a healthy weight
- having strong bones and muscles
- helps to improve balance and flexibility
- helps to improve posture
- having a healthy heart and blood vessels
- preventing disease later in life
- helping you relax
- improve students' self-esteem
- developing social skills and making friends.

physical activity levels, during an often difficult and stressful time for children transitioning from primary to high school.

The program extension will encourage more participation from young women in particular, as part of our ground-breaking #girlsmakeyourmove campaign, as well as targeting schools

where there is evidence of disadvantage. The program aims to support Australian schools to deliver formal, structured sporting activities for children before, during, or after school.

The program is achieving its aims, with more than 5,000 schools, and approximately 850,000 primary school children,

already taking part in Sporting Schools, since its official launch in July 2015. In addition to getting kids physically active, the Sporting Schools program allows children to try a number of different sports to find the one they love the most, and then link up with a local club.

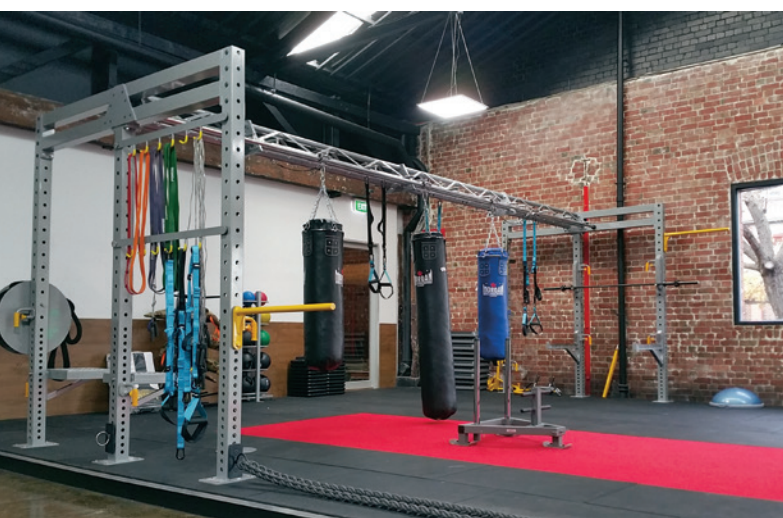
This is helping save parents' time and money, by ensuring they're investing in a sport their child actually wants to play.

Our kids don't need to become the next sporting superstar - but the government wants to ensure they have every opportunity to be active and play sport, which builds important skills for life.

Sport and physical activity are central to the government's preventative health policies. By investing in children's health now, and getting them physically active and enjoying sport, we are building a healthy community for Australia's future. [ST](#)



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Sunsmart schools: protecting from harmful UV rays

A few generations ago, sunburn was seen as a normal by-product of childhood fun, just like skinned knees and bumps on the head. As skin cancers plague the adulthood of those burnt babes, childhood sunburn has loomed as a serious health risk to Australians.

Australia's sun is harsh, and when children are at school, daily Ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are at their peak. This brings responsibility to schools, as well as a wonderful opportunity to engender sun smart behaviour as second nature.

The National SunSmart Schools Program was launched in 1998, and is offered in all primary schools nationwide. In Western Australia, where temperatures regularly reach 40 degrees Celsius in the summer, the program is gaining popularity in secondary schools. The Cancer Council provides support and tailored educational resources to schools, for improving the sun smart behaviour of their students.

Age appropriate lesson plans are available for download from www.cancer.org.au, complete with instructions and resources. The Cancer Council Australia website lists melanoma skin cancer as the fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia in 2012, and estimated that it will remain so in 2016. For



Images: Cancer Council Queensland

more information on current and past statistics, please visit: www.melanoma.canceraustralia.gov.au

Childhood is the ideal time to change the culture of 'tanned is beautiful', and to promote a healthy approach to absorbing the sun's rays in a responsible manner. While Vitamin D, which is absorbed through the skin from the sun, is vital for synthesising other vitamins and minerals, levels can be sufficiently obtained during the safer times of the day; early in the morning and later in the afternoon.

The difficulty, as stated on the Cancer Council's website, is that the sun's rays are the major cause of skin cancer and the best natural source of vitamin D, which is needed for strong bones and overall health.

Bearing in mind that Australia is a large land mass with diverse climates and conditions, a policy that may suit schools in Broome will have little relevance in the chilly Tasmanian hills. Knowing the importance of Vitamin D for mood, energy levels and immunity, the Cancer Council recommends a balanced UV approach in order to reduce

the risk of skin cancer, while ensuring some sun exposure for vitamin D. How this looks in the playground will vary from location to location, and schools will need to consider their own climates when developing policies.

The general guidelines across all states are the common goals of preventative care. The enduring campaign: Slip, Slop, Slap can be supported through measures such as, school uniform design, including wide brimmed hats, replacing athletics singlets with short-sleeved shirts and making a sunhat like a second skin during high UV months.



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SunSmart schools also make a commitment to minimising exposure by increasing shade in outdoor playing areas, through shade sails, tree planting and playground design measures.

SunSmart school support in WA

For much of the school year, Western Australian students are playing, doing sport and learning in high UV periods of the day. Schools need not go it alone when creating a sun smart policy.

While all states have access to sun smart policy and recommendations, The Cancer Council WA has these particular encouragements for SunSmart Schools membership.

From Cancer Council WA

If your school becomes a SunSmart School, Cancer Council WA provides you with the following free resources:

- a SunSmart sign
- a curriculum resource book
- advice on health promotion strategies including policy development
- access to educational resources
- SunSmart lesson guides and activities
- SunSmart talks to parents, staff and students.



Benefits of becoming a SunSmart school member include:

- Peace of mind - Cancer Council endorsement of your policy and procedures lets you know you have it right.
- Comprehensiveness - have you thought of everything? There is much more to sun protection than a 'no hat no play' rule.

- Access to accurate, current information on sun protection issues such as sunscreen allergies, nanoparticles, vitamin D, occupational safety and health and duty of care.
- Support - you get information about how other schools have dealt with particular problems, free teaching resources, access to competitions and discounts on sun protection items at the Cancer Council shop.
- Advocacy - Cancer Council speakers can talk to parents and staff about the risk of skin cancer and the value of good sun protection policies and procedures.
- Critical mass - formally joining the program

allows Cancer Council to count your school in the program membership. In turn, higher participation rates add weight to our representations to government departments to help convince other schools to join the program and demonstrates your commitment to reducing the burden of skin cancer in the community.

State specific SunSmart guidelines

For information regarding SunSmart policy and support available in your state, visit <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/sunsmart-schools/>. [ST](#)

*By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter*



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The hidden costs of classroom air conditioning

John Clifford

managing director,
Aircon Off Pty Ltd



One of the most significant overheads for any school is the cost of electricity, and for most schools across Australia, more than 50 percent of the total power bill can be attributed to providing heating and cooling. So, what are the common, but often hidden, costs of air conditioning in your school?

Energy wastage

In a school environment, it can be very difficult to police air conditioner usage. Exactly how much power is being used is normally completely unknown.

Poor energy conservation habits like leaving the air conditioning on in empty rooms, and inconsistent filter cleaning and maintenance, all contribute to significantly increased running costs.

Most schools make a serious effort to be as environmentally friendly as possible, with more and more emphasis placed on responsible consumption. The reality is however, that when it comes to practising good energy-conservation behaviour, many teachers and staff make very poor choices about the use of heating and cooling in classrooms and offices.

Poor temperature management

The first thing many teachers do when they get into a classroom is ramp up the air conditioning to a maximum setting. This is because a lot of us believe that turning the air conditioning to the lowest (or highest) temperature available will cool or heat the room faster. That's not the case, and as a result, air conditioning is often set at higher level than actually required to maintain comfort for teachers and students. The net result is much higher power consumption.

A one-degree change in the temperature of air conditioning affects energy usage by five to ten percent. Therefore, poor temperature management will have a very significant impact,



and can increase overall power consumption by up to 35 percent.

Air conditioning running unnecessarily in empty rooms

Heating and cooling being left on in unoccupied rooms is another major problem experienced in all schools. The age old rule of 'last one out, turn off the lights and air conditioning' rarely works in practice, and the result is air conditioners left on overnight, over weekends and even over school holidays. With an average school air conditioner costing perhaps 50 cents to \$1 per hour to operate this is often the most significant (and the most expensive) form of power wastage in the entire school.

Hardware maintenance and breakdowns

If your air conditioners are operated for extended periods at uneconomic temperatures, you can expect them to require more frequent service, repair and replacement than you would with more controlled

usage. This wear and tear is compounded if you don't have a regular cleaning routine. As well as pumping mould spores and bacteria over your staff and students, an air conditioner with dirty and blocked filters can use 15 percent more power than a clean unit.

Power cost increases

Increasing power costs are inevitable and are often hidden within the bill as fees and charges; often there isn't much that can be done about them. The best way to make savings on the power bill is to focus on initiatives that reduce peak demand, and lower your overall energy consumption, with a special emphasis on eliminating power wastage wherever possible.

Carbon emissions

Another hidden cost of air conditioning is the impact on the environment. According to Sustainability Victoria, an average 2.5-kilowatt air conditioning unit produces carbon emissions of approximately 1.5kg per hour.

So when air conditioning is overused, the environment bears an unnecessary burden.

So what's the solution?

One solution is to manage ingrained bad habits via the implementation of smart technology.

By installing simple control devices that automatically control air conditioning temperature setpoints, and turn off air conditioning when there's nobody in the room, you can remove the human error that leads to the wastage and inefficiencies.

You can also introduce a scheduled approach to air conditioning cleaning and maintenance that will reduce breakdowns, increase energy efficiency and extend asset life.

SN

John Clifford is the managing director of Aircon Off, developers of a range of products that help schools optimise air conditioning usage to eliminate wastage, save money and conserve energy.

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Classroom air quality a growing health concern

Indoor air quality is a growing problem in our schools, and students, staff and visitors are being exposed unnecessarily.

It is a well-known fact that most people spend 90 percent of their days indoors.

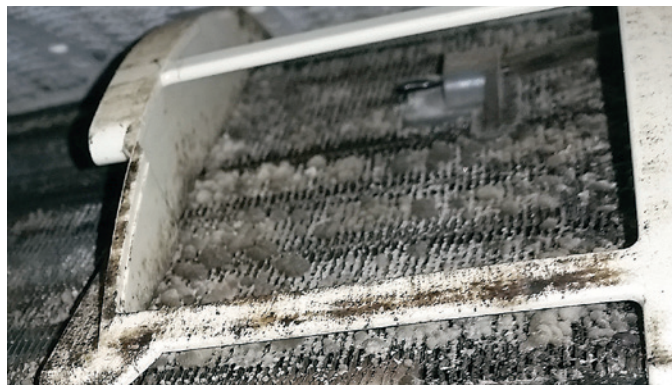
A study of human exposure to indoor air pollutants by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has indicated that indoor pollution levels may be between two and five times, and sometimes 100 times, higher than outdoor levels.

Indoor air pollution has long been implicated as a cause of absenteeism, hospitalisation and reduced quality of life due to respiratory problems. According to Asthma Australia, growing numbers of people are suffering, with one in ten Australians suffer from asthma and associated respiratory distress.

What are the consequences of indoor air problems at school?

Failure to prevent indoor air problems, or failure to act promptly, can have consequences such as:

- increasing the chances that the health of students and staff may be affected
- impacting the students' learning environment, comfort, and attendance
- reducing productivity of teachers and staff due to discomfort, sickness, or absenteeism
- faster deterioration and reduced efficiency of the school's plant and equipment
- straining relationships between school administration, parents and staff



Good indoor air quality contributes to a favourable learning environment for students, productivity for teachers and staff, and a sense of comfort, health, and well-being for school occupants.

One piece of equipment used widely in our classrooms to deliver comfort and enhance the learning experience is air conditioning. Unfortunately, the biological health of many air conditioning systems is nothing short of appalling, with many harbouring more bacteria than your average wheelie bin or garbage can. Incorrectly and poorly maintained air conditioners are exposing our teachers and children to serious health issues. Untreated, these breeding grounds for pathogens have the potential to trigger respiratory distress.

Mould, bacteria, dirt, mites, bio-films, mice, cockroaches, geckos, pest faeces and human DNA are typical contaminants found deep within air conditioning systems in our schools.

Healthy air conditioning is all about controlling contaminants, and establishing a biologically balanced environment deep within air conditioning components. Ensuring heat exchange coils, blowers, air wells, primary filters, condensate pans and drains are kept clean and sanitised.

So why are so many school air conditioners so contaminated that removal is advised?

The correct professional cleaning of key components is critical to establishing a healthy environment deep within an air conditioner. Professional cleaning and sanitising not only ensures your air conditioning is able to deliver a comfortable environment for teachers and students, but also a much healthier one.

Most air conditioning contractors focus on the mechanical

maintenance of air conditioning but lack the correct equipment, products and patience to remediate air conditioners to the Australian Standard 3666. Professional air conditioning cleaning is a specialised field with dedicated technicians, who are highly trained in air conditioning remediation, and in the restoration of healthy environments.

The benefits of specialised air conditioning cleaning

- Improvement to indoor air quality and healthier environments
- Up to 30 percent reduction in energy usage
- Quieter system operation
- Odour removal
- Increased plant and equipment life
- Reduction of symptoms associated with poor indoor air quality, such as itchy eyes, runny noses and sneezing
- Reduction of respiratory distress, such as asthma attacks.

Many professional air conditioning contractors now employ the services of companies like Sanitair Australia to professionally clean air conditioners on their behalf, acknowledging the level of expertise that such companies demonstrate, and the ongoing benefits they deliver for their customers.

Your school should also consider the services of a specialised air conditioning cleaning company to minimise your risk, and improve the overall indoor air quality in your classrooms and offices. Many professional air conditioning cleaning companies will conduct obligation free health checks and risk assessments. [SN](#)

By Craig Jefferies, Sanitair

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Designing a playground that captures the imagination

'Playground artist' Günter Beltzig is 75 years old and probably still swinging from the monkey bars he designs. He has written books on playground design, and created play spaces all around Europe, working with Richter Spielgeräte GmbH, who designed play areas at Sydney's Darling Harbour and Royal Park in Melbourne.

To Günter Beltzig, play means "activities that individuals undertake to adapt to their environment", in other words, play is the opportunity to try out all possibilities, to test the limits, gather experience and learn. If Mr Beltzig is right, and I suspect that he is, then planning a school playground has a much higher purpose, and more complexity to it than the uninitiated might realise.

Mr Beltzig works by some principles of play space design, and in 2012, he shared his wisdom with The



Adventure abounds with perceived risk elements in this Willplay structure

Guardian, in an article named 'How to design the perfect playground'.

The playground should "have an atmosphere that invites people to linger". The playground should

"give room for exploration", this means leaving some aspect of the playground open to interpretation. The playground should "offer visible, manageable risks, as

playing is all about testing and transcending one's limits", but also allow "an alternative route" so the child can retreat without losing face. A successful playground has to cater for different abilities, moods, personalities and modes of play, so should not be one central structure. There should also be spaces for "hanging out" for older kids and supervising adults.

To understand more about developing playgrounds designed specifically for schools, I spoke with Nathan Lee from Australian playground manufacturer Willplay. Mr Lee cited an approach that mirrored Günter Beltzig's.

A school playground will usually need to service the recreational needs of several school grades of children, and these age groups are also characterised by different 'modes of play'.



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Photo: Miracle Recreation Equipment

Natural elements and adventure play combined

◀ “The age bracket will determine how we balance heights, physical abilities, and perceived risks”, Mr Lee explained.

Deck heights and slide lengths will vary, and themed play elements, such as shop fronts for role playing, are more appropriate for younger children. “A play area designed for older primary will have more adventurous elements, and elements with a bit of perceived risk.”

Perceived risk is an interesting concept, which relates to Günter Beltzig’s concept of “visible, manageable risks”. Equipment with elements of perceived risk keep children present and engaged. “The kids have to think about their next move, so they’re not on automatic pilot.” Mr Lee recommended installing equipment that requires them to calculate their next move,

and make decisions about hand and foot placement.

Mr Lee also said providers wanted to encourage schools to install “more adventurous” play equipment. With so much outdoor play relegated to the past, and children’s lives becoming more structured and supervised, there’s a need to create that adventure and physical challenge within modern childhood. “We want schools to take responsibility and put in equipment that’s more challenging”.

To meet this need, designers are moving away from the “old post and deck, with a bit of a slide and monkey bars, towards large climbing structures that really challenge kids”, Mr Lee added. If you were wondering where all the monkey bars have gone, Nathan Lee said that while people had “become a bit scared of them

for a while”, he was glad people had come to an understand their importance for physical development.

Tess Arnoldi, of Australian playground supplier Miracle Recreation Equipment agreed that the ‘perceived risk’ factor was vital to child engagement, and she reported that climbing nets are so popular with schools because they allow children to challenge themselves in a safe setting. “Single mast or igloo nets can hold 20 to 93 children over the age of three, keeping more energetic bodies busy at a time.” The heights of these climbing structures range from 3.5m to 7.5m, and the design allows children to climb to their individual skill and comfort level.

Climbing nets can offer a range of fun features, children of all ages, “especially when you add things like slides and bridges coming off the sides”, added Miss Arnoldi. Some climbing structures are even mounted on spinning bases. “Kids really like that”. Miss Arnoldi told me, a little wistfully, that she ‘wished they’d been around when she was a kid’.

Climbing nets can be very high off the ground, and are designed in a way that promotes safe play that is never boring. In fact, according to Miss Arnoldi, Australian safety standards are tougher than in Europe. “They can install monkey bars that are a lot higher than we can, for example”.

The school playground needs to facilitate multiple functions of play. Childhood play is vital in the development of gross motor skills and coordination, such as climbing,

balancing and judging distances. Other outcomes of equipment-aided play include upper body strength, and for those bat-like children in every school, abdominal and leg strength.

Playtime lessons also include learning about social roles, exercising assertiveness in groups, turn-taking and consideration. While a play space can facilitate practice in these areas, if poorly designed, it can lead to frustration and aggressive behaviour. Willplay’s Nathan Lee emphasised the importance of a play system with multiple entry and exit points, to maintain the flow of play. “Make sure you have no bottle-necks or dead-ends”.

Thoughtful attention is required to the placement of moving equipment, such as swings and spinners.

Extensive planning occurs to ensure there is ample space around these elements, to avoid collision and injury. Installers will survey the intended site, with special attention paid to the placement of any existing hazards.

Hazards such as nearby roads and waterways are considered when placing gates. Australian playground designers and installers will attempt to equalise the harsh Australian sun, by using any natural shade elements, and planning for the direction of the sun at high use times of day.

What about nature play?

With a greater focus on the natural world within the curriculum, and as a result of a popular movement



Photo: Willplay

Themed elements suit younger players.



Photo: Miracle Recreation Equipment

GS Web Single mast climber holding most of Mukinbudin District High School's students

'back to nature', nature play was included when the new national safety standards came out in 2014. Now covered by the national standards, we should see an increase in nature based elements from most play designers and installers.

According to Mr Lee, "nature play still has a way to go", but he conceded that natural features can add an extra element to a conventional play area. "Done right it is great, get it wrong and it offers limited play value".

Tess Arnoldi of Miracle Recreation Equipment, emphasised that 'nature inspired play' comes in many forms. Pure nature play elements will mimic the paths through the bush that many of us hopped, skipped and jumped along on the way home from school.

Miss Arnoldi described the wide range of applications that simple features can provide. "Elements of nature play can be as simple as a log placed strategically to provide a nature-based balance beam, or a log chopped into pieces to create a stepper with varied heights".

Adventure play, on the other hand is less like the idle scamper home through the woods, and is more structured, with exciting and challenging elements.

Natural materials can be used to add atmosphere to the adventure, with things like bush poles and mulch. "It's the best of both worlds really, adventure play, in a natural setting" Miss Arnoldi commented.

Rope is also used for various applications such as ladders and suspended bridges. "You can do anything with ropes, as far as your

imagination can take you".

The natural elements, now governed by the safety standards, must comply with general safety standards. A forked tree within the play space will need to meet the same minimum width as conventional equipment, in order to prevent head entrapment.

To ensure that the fork doesn't shift over time, only old wood is used, as all the expansion and contraction has already occurred. "Even if it's natural, all of those safety elements must be in place", cautioned Nathan Lee.

A school playground is the epicentre of undirected play-based learning. The lessons learnt at lunchtime are a vital element to the school day.

Children develop physical strength and agility through swinging, climbing, reaching, crawling, jumping, and hanging from their feet. Social roles are negotiated and practised, and the playground subculture provides valuable lessons in assertiveness, compassion and justice. Such a multi-purpose learning space requires careful thought and expert planning.

Günter Beltzig recommends you begin with the purpose of the space, and ask yourself what sorts of things you want children to do there? With those questions answered, your provider will have plenty of innovative combinations, and will help you develop a playscape that suits your school community. [S1](#)

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter

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Schools and solar power - a perfect pair

Enormous power bills are the norm for schools, operating multiple rooms simultaneously with lights, climate control, audiovisual equipment, and computer labs.

From 2011 to June 2013 the federal government rolled out the National Solar Schools Program (NSSP). The NSSP boasted an impressive level of achievement. Communications from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science indicated that over \$217 million was provided to 5,310 schools to install renewable energy systems. The solar power systems installed produce enough electricity to power the equivalent of 4600 average households every day.

The funding helped to educate students about renewable energy and energy efficiency, and that everyday actions can prevent the production of millions of tonnes of carbon pollution. While the government grants are no longer available, the uptake in the industry has made solar energy more affordable.

Why should schools 'go solar'?

The benefits of solar power for our earth's future are obvious, however, there are specific reasons why schools are particularly suitable candidates for solar.

- Large school buildings provide the perfect roof-scape for solar panels, which work best on large surfaces, close to mains power and north facing.
- School communities are full of young inquiring minds; minds who will one day run the world. Education at this

level is vital for engendering an awareness and sense of responsibility about energy expenditure.

- Schools require electricity during daylight hours, which is when solar power is generated.
- The long summer break in is an advantage, as, ironically, solar power is not at its peak during summer (see next section). While the school is empty, the solar panels feed electricity into the grid and reduce the school's next electricity bill.

Solar power production

People are becoming more aware of the application, benefits and certain peculiarities of how solar energy works. While sunshine is the core of a solar energy production, the hottest months of the year do not actually produce the most energy.

Solar panels absorb sunlight and convert it into energy, through a chemical reaction. The next step is for the inverter to convert this 'force' into the sort of electricity that can power air conditioners, night basketball flood-lights and the hall public address (PA) system.

While a fair assumption might be to expect a double dose of energy on a boiling hot day, excessive heat does not actually result in a productive day for solar panels. This is because the solar panel converts the sunlight and not the heat of the sun into solar power. The panels actually lose efficiency in excessive heat, as the temperature passes outside of its optimal functioning range. With bright and cool winter days perfect for solar

energy production, the systems are well-suited to the Australian school calendar.

Numerous factors will be considered when establishing solar systems.

Suppliers will survey variable factors that will affect what sort of system will be suit the school. The determining factors will be related to location and weather.

Australia is a wide land with vast disparities in weather systems and patterns, and some locations just get more sunshine.

Other factors will be the size of the roofs on which the school wishes to install the panels, their direction; and other climatic features, such as humidity and wind chill. With much to consider, careful planning is undertaken by teams of energy experts to maximise the productivity of the system, as well as energy savings for the school.

Large systems can be installed with an incorporated solar energy battery. A solar energy system generates solar power, whether the energy is being consumed or not. Storing that excess energy in a battery allows the school to draw on those supplies at high usage times.

Solar energy has travelled light years since Russell Ohl invented the solar cell in 1941, and the first solar battery was used to power a toy Ferris wheel in 1954. Like anything new, early versions can have a prototypical feel about them, and pioneer solar energy users may have felt a bit like they were trialling a 'beta' version, but that has shifted. Following decades of steady incremental improvement, solar energy is now reliable, efficient and can be tailored to usage patterns

with surprising flexibility.

Schools can now benefit from this background work in research and development, and adopt solar power solutions that deliver financial, as well as educational benefits to their school communities.

Solar systems maintenance

Once the installation is complete, certain maintenance activities will keep solar panels operating at optimum productivity levels. Like any technology, panels and associated battery systems will need a service now and then. Providers will indicate appropriate intervals for this to occur.

Suppliers also recommend that panels are kept clean and free of excess dust and not being shaded by overgrowth. Being mindful of any changes in the environment, such as a dust storm, or excessive wind resulting in fallen branches and leaves, will ensure panels are not underperforming due to reduced access to light.

Finally, monitor the output of the panels. Certain rare faults can occur in solar panels, such as potential induced degradation (PID), or 'stray currents'; and earth leakage, which is caused by moisture in rooftop circuit breakers. While these faults are rare, they do happen, and they can drastically reduce the energy yield of your system. Through monitoring however, they can be easily identified and rectified by your provider. [SI](#)

By Suzy Barry,
Industry Reporter



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Bundaberg Christian College goes solar



L-R BCC students Jacob McKim and Erin McCracken

With 700 students, more than 30 classrooms, multipurpose hall, several computer labs, woodwork and metalwork equipment, an early learning centre and a commercial kitchen, Bundaberg Christian College (BCC) can chew through some power.

Searching for a way to power the school more economically and with less of an environmental footprint, college business manager, Evan Keune has made headlines this year for commissioning Australia's largest hybrid solar installation and the first of its type in a school. The system was completed and switched on in March this year and has a 194kW solar system with 250kWh of battery storage.

The school's commitment to renewable energy is reflected in the surrounding community. BCC is located in Australia's top solar postcode; the postcode generates more solar power than



The GEM Energy team pose for a photo after a successful installation

any other postcode in Australia.

Consumer focussed publication One Step Off the Grid cites BCC's 194kW solar system as "possibly the only school-based system to be paired with battery storage; or to be built in conjunction with – and without

hampering – a rooftop water harvesting system".

Motivated by their commitment to their faith, and stewardship of the earth, the school is already a water efficient school. Their entire water supply is harvested off BCC's expansive roofs

and stored in tanks. Water is then processed to be used as drinking water, and other white water applications, and any surplus water is used on maintaining the grounds. "We aim to be good stewards of the resources we have available, and when a viable option was presented to us by GEM Energy to lessen our environmental footprint we jumped at the opportunity", Mr Keune explained.

Research and Groundwork

BCC called upon GEM Energy and Melbourne-based inverter maker and energy management specialist Selectronic, to develop a big enough system to significantly reduce the college's dependence of the grid by up to 80%. The projected saving from the 740 panels and batteries is expected to come close to \$100,000 a year and Evan Keune reports that things are on track.



"Currently the hybrid system is reducing the electricity we are drawing from the grid by 81 percent plus we project to earn approximately 300 renewable energy certificates (LGC) per annum that will be sold in the renewable energy market for about \$20,000pa. One LGC represents one megawatt hour (MWh) of net renewable energy generated by the accredited power station."

Power-saving measures were adopted following an energy audit conducted by GEM Energy prior to installation. Computers now go on standby each night, and pre-set timers switch off staff room water heaters and water coolers after hours. "We reduced the cost of lighting the school, and fluorescent lighting was replaced with LED globes. In keeping with the school's ethos of service to the community, those lights did not go to waste, but were donated to a school in Vanuatu that had suffered damage due to Cyclone Pam", Mr Keune told *School News*.

Prior to installation, GEM investigated how much power the college was using, and produced forecasted solar production figures, based on 20 years of Bureau of Meteorology weather data. BCC was presented with a comprehensive report detailing just how considerably the system would reduce grid dependency, reducing both cost to the school, and cost to the earth.

According to Mr Keune cash flow need not suffer, with

energy savings offsetting loan repayments and, he added, "the system pays for itself in seven years". The advice from BCC was "to go with a reputable solar provider who has experience in large solar systems".

Learning an added bonus

Educational outcomes were an added bonus for the school community.

"Teacher and student tours were conducted to explain the interaction between the solar panels and the batteries", Mr Keune said, and "students have access to our solar log online

and on a monitor, which is always on display".

The solar log reveals details like yield for the day, month or year; current consumption; surplus charging batteries; how many tonnes of CO2 saved; how many barrels of oil saved; and even number of trees saved". The educational gains to students seem considerable and a purpose-built monitor gives students constant access to the solar data of their school.

Mr Keune said the school's media students have completed a website project about the solar system, and science classes

in primary and secondary are planning environmental studies on the solar power system.

"We are continually discovering the many opportunities contained within the Australian curriculum to integrate various aspects of our solar system."

The installation has been a scorching success, and while Mr Keune warned they would need a full 12-month cycle to confirm that it's all been worth it, he's quietly confident, encouraged by the knowledge that the system is currently meeting projections. [SN](#)

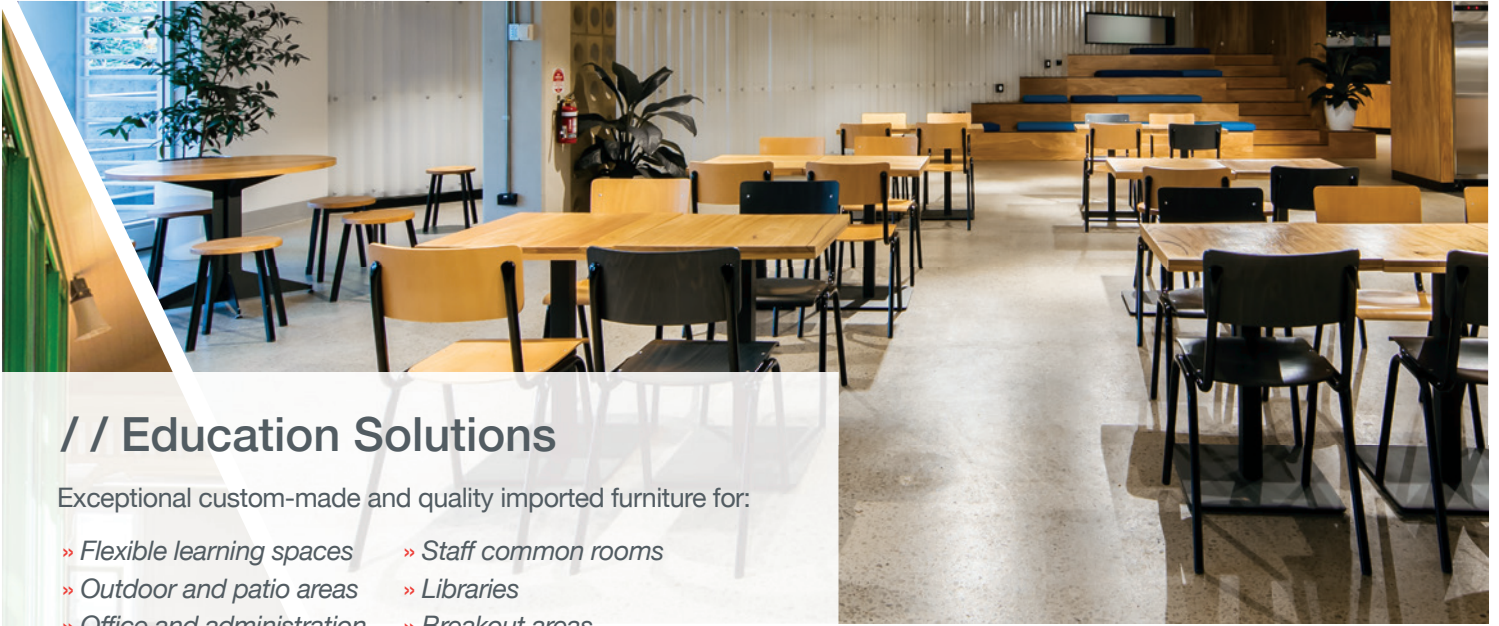
By Suzy Barry, Industry Reporter



BCC students Erin McCracken and Jacob McKim with the 250kWh of battery storage

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