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## Editor's Note

## Hello from our new editor

**David Gosnki has laid down a challenge to reform Australia's education system.**

This edition we look at one of the key recommendations in his latest review, dubbed *Gonski 2.0*, to scrap year-level based learning in favour of an individualised education.

There is no doubt teachers, experts and politicians agree that our education system needs an overhaul to arrest declining academic results.

**Let's just hope we see more action to go with all the talk.**

Also inside this edition check out Australia's first vertical public primary school in Victoria. The slick modern building has no fences in keeping with its open-door philosophy.

We offer ideas for library refurbishments, carparking safety, camps, excursions and more as well as important advice on choosing the right software systems for your school.



You might also enjoy reading about schools making a difference in third-world countries through the *SolarBuddy* program.

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# Education news from around Australia

## The Turnbull Government released its *Gonski 2.0* report into Australia's school system – Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools led by David Gonski AC.

Education and training minister Simon Birmingham said the review provided a national blueprint for every government, every teacher and every family to help tackle declining school performance in Australia.

"There's no doubt Australia has some of the world's best teachers and school leaders, and they work hard to help students achieve outcomes that are the envy of many other countries," Mr Birmingham said.

"But it is clear that while school funding has been growing year after year and is now, for the first time, truly needs-based – and will continue to grow under the Turnbull Government to new record levels over the next ten years – student outcomes aren't keeping pace.

"Australia must focus on creating an education system that gives each student the opportunity to excel and to be their individual best."

### The report identified 23 recommendations under five themes:

- Laying the foundations of learning before the school years and in the home environment
- Equipping every student to grow and succeed with the knowledge they need and a focus on growing each individuals' skills
- Creating, support and valuing a profession of expert educators including building on the Government's reforms to date in teacher education
- Empowering and supporting school leaders with

experience and autonomy

- Lifting aspirations with quality assurance, data and evidence-based research.

## Reactions to *Gonski 2.0*

The Australian Education Union (AEU) called on the PM Malcolm Turnbull to urgently address the "gaping resource shortages" facing public schools under the government's current school funding agenda.

"The time for talk is over – the Turnbull Government must resolve the funding shortfall for public schools to ensure that they are at 100 percent of the Schooling Resource Standard," said Correna Haythorpe, president of the Australian Education Union.

"While we support a number of the recommendations detailed in the review, we remain steadfast in our fight for achieving fair funding now for public schools. The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) said *Gonski 2.0* reflected its members' aspirations to ensure the development of "well-rounded, academically capable, resilient and society-ready students".

However the union warned the report's recommendations could only be achieved with adequate resourcing of the education sector combined with genuine and real collaboration of governments and employers with the teachers, school support staff and their unions.

"The voice of the profession must guide every step of any reform to ensure every Australian student is provided the quality education they deserve."

## ALP response

Federal Labor slammed the government for "wasting five years" on education.

"In that time, the Liberals have ripped \$17 billion from schools. And they junked the national plan to improve schools, that focused on getting better literacy and

numeracy results, and having more kids finishing Year 12.

"When the Liberals dumped the national plan back in 2013, the Liberals called the national plan 'red tape'," said shadow education spokesperson Tanya Plibersek.

"Most of the review's recommendations have been canvassed before. The Liberals are desperately playing catch up after five wasted years.

"And most of the recommendations can't be implemented without proper funding for our schools."

## Qld *Gonski* response

Qld education minister Grace Grace said the Palaszczuk Government was "certainly open to looking at other models because we want the best start and outcomes for all Queensland students".

"It should be noted that the federal government does not provide one classroom, one teacher or one school – state and territory governments are the majority funders of public schools," said Ms Grace.

"So, any genuine reform initiative will need to be supported with the appropriate federal funding arrangements."

Ms Grace said Queensland was already delivering a number of major educational reforms which aligned to the *Gonski Report*.

"We are introducing a new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system and are ensuring all schools are independently and externally reviewed by experienced principals every four years," she said.

"I also note the *Gonski Report* recommends improved career pathways for high quality teachers to remain in the classroom, which is something that the Palaszczuk Government is already exploring.

"Provision of universal education is staff-intensive and any reform in this area will have resourcing implications."

## New South Wales

### Absurd NAPLAN writing test

**A review of the NAPLAN writing test by leading education expert Dr Les Perelman claims it is "the most absurd and the least valid of any test that I've seen".**

The review into the testing regime was commissioned by the NSW Teachers Federation.

"This historic Perelman Report now provides overwhelming evidence that the existing NAPLAN testing regime is harming our students and harming our nation," said NSW Teachers Federation president Maurie Mulheron

Mr Mulheron said the report showed NAPLAN was a recipe for "mediocrity", reinforcing low-level student writing capacities at the expense of higher order performance skills.

"A monolithic NAPLAN test causes Australia to disregard the sophisticated and adaptive assessment examples of successful systems and nations.

"NAPLAN encourages teaching to emphasise low standard, formulaic student writing performance that harms student achievement across the spectrum."

## Teaching Indigenous language

Aboriginal languages will be taught in early childhood services in NSW.

Early childhood education and Aboriginal affairs minister Sarah Mitchell said the program, *Ninganah No More*, would provide an opportunity for Aboriginal culture and identity to be developed and nurtured in the earliest stage of formal education.

"Ninganah means 'be quiet', and the goal of *Ninganah No More*



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is to help ensure Aboriginal languages are no longer unheard voices in our community," she said.

"This program will be beneficial to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children alike. Evidence shows that learning a second language has long-term developmental benefits, including improving memory, pattern recognition, problem solving and language development."

For more information on *Ninganah No More*, contact the Aboriginal Services team at the Department of Education.

## South Australia

### Making music education better

**Consultation is underway in a bid to improve the delivery of public music education in early childhood services and schools across South Australia.**

This consultation process will invite feedback from students, teachers, parents, and music industry experts to get a clearer picture of what is needed to make high-quality music education accessible.

It will also identify opportunities for the government and industry experts to work together and identify higher education and career pathways for students to continue their quality music education beyond school.

Surveys are available for all South Australians to participate in and can be accessed through the Department for Education website.

### Literacy summit

**South Australia hosted its inaugural *Literacy Summit* with international and national experts providing advice about the latest research to lift**

### literacy results.

The *Literacy Summit* presented current research and evidence-based advice to support teachers.

The keynote address 'How the reading brain teaches us to teach, predict and intervene' was delivered by internationally acclaimed literacy expert Professor Maryanne Wolf.

Other leading academic speakers included Dr Sally Humphrey, Dr Christine Edwards-Groves, Dr John Munro and Dr Deslea Konza.

## Western Australia

### Indigenous STEM

**A school that teaches robotics in its local Aboriginal language and a primary school student who discovered an undescribed species of spider are among the winners of nationwide science awards.**

Two of WA's most remote public schools took out major titles in the *2017 National Indigenous STEM Awards*.

Hidden away near the desert in the mid-west with just over 70 students, Wiluna Remote Community School claimed the *STEM School Award* for working with the local community and Martu rangers to use traditional knowledge for teaching science.

In the Goldfields-Esperance at Leonora District High School, teacher Fifi Harris won the *STEM Champion Award*, and student-turned-spider-discoverer Boyden George won the *Student Science Award*.

Boyden found a unique spider and went to great lengths to take a photograph and submit it for verification by the Questagame biodiversity program, where an expert confirmed it was an undescribed species.

Fifi Harris, an Aboriginal and Islander education officer at the

school, received the award for her work encouraging Aboriginal students to get involved in STEM.

### Rebuilding Cambodian education

**WA public schools are joining forces to raise vital funds to rebuild schools in Cambodia and improve the quality of education.**

More than 25 WA schools are involved in the project, which is all about children helping children according to Angkor Project chair John Garnaut.

"In the 1970s the Cambodian education system was destroyed. Schools in our state are getting involved and doing what they can to help rebuild it," John said.

"Every single dollar our schools raise goes directly to ensuring their sister schools in Cambodia have enough classrooms, drinking water and toilets, electricity, teaching materials and trained teachers."

Joondalup Primary School was one of the first schools to support the project and principal Russell Hahn – who is also the project's executive officer – says it's a great initiative for students to be a part of.

"We've been involved in the Angkor Project since it launched in 2006 and there have been so many stories that show us we're making a difference," he says.

"I met a boy who used to attend our sister school and he told me that, if it wasn't for the money we raised to fund his English teacher, he wouldn't have been able to come out of poverty."

## Queensland

### Female STEM pioneers inspire schoolgirls

**Leading female founders and tech pioneers inspired Qld**

### school girls at a festival to boost female participation in STEM.

The Myriad High event at QUT, curated by QUT entrepreneurship professors, was a valuable inspiration for girls in Years 11 and 12.

"Myriad High, an event that runs alongside the Myriad innovation festival, is set to inspire the next generation of tech leaders and is another important step in boosting female participation in STEM," said Qld innovation minister Kate Jones.

"We know that more needs to be done to boost female participation in STEM.

"The 2017 *StartupAUS Crossroads* report found that only four per cent of startups have an all-female founding team and as few as 15 percent have at least one female founder.

"That's why we recently announced the start of the consultation program for the \$6.5 million *Advance Queensland Female Founders and Researchers Program* and why we are supporting events like Myriad High."

### Schools go green to cut power bills

**Queensland schools will have their power bills cut with a \$97 million energy-saving program that includes solar panels.**

"The ACES, or Advancing Clean Energy Schools program, will save our schools an estimated \$10.2 million a year," said premier Anastacia Palaszczuk.

"Our state schools are among the government's largest energy users, with an annual energy bill of more than \$50 million.

"By reducing costs and reinvesting savings into the program, we can ensure state schools across Queensland have more sustainable energy use into the future.



Supplier Profile | The THRASS Institute

## A paradigm shift in literacy teaching

The THRASS Institute (Australasia & Canada) is an Australian based company that has developed a Specific Pedagogical Practise (SPP) for the teaching of literacy, marketed as THRASS – an acronym for 'Teaching Handwriting, Reading And Spelling Skills'.



THRASS is a phonetics teaching-tool that has made a paradigm shift in the teaching of phonetics. It has a phonographic, multisensory focus, complemented by an analogous learning model that makes reading and spelling acquisition much simpler, faster and more sustainable than conventional 'phonic' approaches. As

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### Victoria

#### Helping principals "stay happy and healthy".

**A \$5.2million "support and wellbeing package" has been announced for Victorian principals and assistant principals.**

The Labor Government says its new *Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy* will support Victoria's 3000 government school principals and assistance principals to "stay healthy and happy at work" with a suite of new programs and resources.

It includes seven new pilot initiatives that will tackle head on the mental and physical challenges faced by principals across Victoria.

A new online *School Policy Templates Portal* will help reduce principal workload by streamlining the process of developing and implementing school-level policies on topics ranging from anaphylaxis to bullying and school uniforms.

Principals can also access additional departmental support to help them respond to complex school matters including students with challenging behaviours, while another pilot is giving school leaders the chance to participate in wellbeing supervision sessions with an experienced psychologist.

An early intervention program will allow principals to confidentially access health providers to manage their physical and mental health,

plus there will be a new mentoring program that will pair principals with their more experienced peers for advice and support.

#### Teacher registration overhaul

**The Andrews' Labor Government will overhaul Victoria's teacher registration system to ensure the Victorian Institute of Teaching considers child safety when assessing whether teachers are suitable to teach.**

An independent review into Victoria's teacher regulator, which examined the management, operations and governance of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), made 34 recommendations.

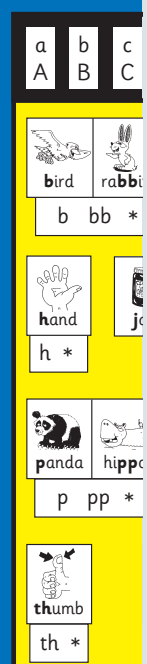
**The Labor Government will make legislative changes including:**

- Explicitly stating in the VIT's governing legislation that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people must be considered when performing its regulatory functions
- Reforming the VIT disciplinary system that deals with allegations of teacher misconduct or incompetence.
- Improving its registration processes including migrating to online registration and renewal processes
- Expanding its activities to include proactively educating teachers and the community about teacher quality
- Better information sharing and greater alignment between teacher registrations and the Working with Children Check. ■

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# School leader wellbeing – an authentic way forward

**Andrew Pierpont**

President, Australian Secondary Principals' Association



## Quality education is essential to national future growth.

"The quality of schooling in a country is a powerful predictor of the wealth that countries will produce in the long run." (Hanushek and Wössmann, 2015). Strongly supported school leadership is crucial to driving sustained improvement in educational outcomes and innovation for the future. High quality school leadership is essential to get the best from our teachers in order to maximise student learning (Nairn 2017).

Recently *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey 2017 Data* was released – this being the seventh year in a longitudinal study (Riley 2017).

### The report by Riley suggested several recommendations -

1. Since no single stakeholder group is responsible for the state of education in Australia, the power to effect change on the system must emerge from joined-up collaborative action from the various stakeholder groups.
2. Many issues impacting negatively on the education system are entrenched in the wider Australian culture
3. Taking a long-term, rather than short-term focus is essential for significant improvement in the system.
4. Taking a holistic inquiry approach to both the successes and failures in the Australian education system is also essential. We can learn a great deal from both if we do not limit our gaze or look for quick fixes.
5. De-politicising education at the macro and micro-political levels will promote equity, continuity and transparency. For example, the politicisation of the Gonski report (2011), universally agreed by educators to provide a sensible and equitable way forward in education, should

have set the conditions for a decade of educational development. Instead, it is suffering the fate of many educationally sensible reforms in Australia and its potential is being diminished. This becomes demotivating to educators. It is an example of the 'moral harassment' suffered by educators (Burens, 2015).

6. Australian education needs a change of mindset: moving beyond sectorised thinking. The problems and the solutions are very similar in all sectors so the differences between the sectors are more superficial than substantive. The variation in social capital inside schools demonstrates that simple resourcing, while important, is not going to fix intractable issues. A change of mindset is essential.

These recommendations are strongly supported by the Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA).

Riley (2017) went on to further comment, "This change of fundamentals in Australian education systems might be difficult, particularly point five, but together they hold the greatest chance of long-term success, and there is strong international evidence to support it."

Although all recommendations are important, recommendation

five has significant potential for meaningful impact. Over the last four to five years, ASPA has been a leader in the field of School Leader wellbeing; going from innovative to accepted practice. The practice of school leader wellbeing, however, remains differential across the educational jurisdictions within Australia.

It is the strongly held view of ASPA, that consistent philosophical, professionally supported and appropriately funded programs to enhance school leader wellbeing are central to increasing school leader effectiveness, student performance and for many of rural and remote schools, community stability. Riley (2017) went on to say – "a whole of government approach to education. This would mean the federal government, states and territories combining to oversee a single education budget in a managerial way. All school funding should be transparent so that anyone, at any level of the system can confidently know how much money they will have at their disposal, so budgeting can be long term. The role of government should be to fairly set the global amount, not specify the detail of how it is to be spent. That should be the role of specialist education bureaucrats working collaboratively across jurisdictions. The current mixed jurisdiction model is antiquated, complex, obscure and difficult to traverse. Australia needs bipartisan and

cross-jurisdictional agreement regarding school funding and a transparent mechanism that is simple to understand. This may be seen as a naïve recommendation, but the demolition of the Gonski funding model also had a significant symbolic as well as financial impact on schools. When everyone knows things will change significantly whenever governments do, it is demotivating for the educators. We need highly motivated educators, if we are to have the best school system possible"

The notion school leader wellbeing transcends the political cycle. All levels of government, must commit to a way forward and stay the course. ASPA very strongly calls for governments, at all levels, to focus on authentic collaboration, trust-based responsibility, professionalism and equity to build genuine engagement in finding solutions to the school leader wellbeing challenge we currently face (after Riley 2017). ■

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# Great leaders drive positive change



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# A new 'age' in learning



## David Gonski wants to replace Australia's year-level based education system with individualised learning. What does this mean and how will it work?

David Gonski uses a cricket analogy to explain the problem with Australia's "industrialised" education model which groups students by age rather than ability.

He says the current system means teachers are "bowling down the middle" and looking after the middle of the class "because the bright kids will look after themselves and those who aren't up to it, well, that's too difficult".

The observation that students – especially those at the top and bottom end of the learning spectrum – are not reaching their potential is one of the defining observations of Gonski's latest report.

The *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Schools* was released in May and calls for a shake-up of Australia's

education system which Gonski said is failing our students.

The report was commissioned by the Australian government to receive advice on how to improve student achievement and school performance following significant declines compared to other OECD nations.

The so-called Gonski 2.0 report made 23 recommendations but the topic that received greatest airplay and which has been embraced in theory by educators is the call to scrap age-based progression.

As stated in the report (edited):

"The current model for presenting the Australian Curriculum is for all students to receive the same fixed year-level diet of knowledge, skill and understanding. However, each year of school, and each class, contains students at different points in achievement. The lockstep delivery of the year-level based curriculum makes it difficult to develop teaching and learning programs for students who are above or below year-level expectations. This restricts the

ability to maximise the learning growth of every student every year."

Instead, David Gonski says the new "mantra" for education should be to provide one year of learning growth to every student, every year otherwise known as "differentiated learning" or "learning progressions."

Says the report: "Introducing learning progressions will support teachers to cater to the diverse levels of achievement in their classroom."

## What is wrong with our education system?

The need for a significant overhaul of education has been pinned on the claim that Australia's performances in literacy, numeracy and science have fallen dramatically since the turn of this century. In the year 2000, Australia ranked high on world tables when compared to other OECD nations. Our students were fourth in the world for reading (behind Singapore, Hong Kong and Canada), they were

eighth in the world for science and 11th for maths.

Ten years later, Aussie kids had slipped to the bottom of the ladder, especially in maths where Australia was ranked 25 out of 25 nations. The decline in education standards was across the board too – encompassing every socioeconomic group and education sector (public, Catholic and Independent schools).

Gonski's report summarised that the "extent of the decline is widespread and equivalent to a generation of Australian school children falling short of their full learning potential".

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull didn't hold back when he said "we have to recognise we have been falling behind other nations".

"On any measure, whether it is reading, whether it's science, whether it's mathematics, we are falling down relative to other countries.

"So we have got to do better. We've got to do better for our kids."



The review makes some tentative suggestions as to why Australia's schoolchildren have gone backwards, including the current variations in early childhood learning which mean students are starting school at different levels of ability and those gaps only increase over time.

Socioeconomic status was touched on but the report noted the education decline has been across all socioeconomic groups and is in fact most noticeable among higher socioeconomic students.

The education "slippage", says Gonski, is a much broader problem that demands the evolution of a completely new and adaptive education blueprint for Australia.

## Progressive learning - what is it?

Within a classroom, the disparity between student learning can be as much as five to six years apart. Students at the lower end are often left behind while the higher achievers are not stimulated to their potential.

Meanwhile teachers are forced to assess students against year-level achievement standards (using A to E reporting) which do not show the extent of a pupil's growth.

"This can lead to a situation where a student who receives a 'D' year after year is perceived as making no progress at all when, in reality, the student might be making as much annual improvement as a student who consistently receives an A," the Gonski review says.

The answer, says Gonski, is for a remodelling of the education system to focus on delivering at least one year's learning growth for every student, every year.

This personalised learning and teaching model would be based on each child's needs.

The review notes that there is "compelling evidence" in Australia and internationally that differentiated teaching based on ongoing formative assessment

### The Gonski 2.0 review panel believes there are six fundamental requirements for the development and introduction of learning progressions:

- The reform be developed for implementation in stages over the next five years
- Learning progressions be developed for each of the general capabilities and learning areas in the Australian Curriculum
- Each progression be comprised of increasingly challenging levels of proficiency independent of age or year level
- Each attainment level in the progression be defined by criterion-referenced descriptions of the knowledge, skills and understandings typical of that level
- The number and type of criteria defining each level should enable teachers to make valid and reliable assessments of student attainment, and should not be adopted before this has been proven by extensive trial
- The learning progressions be national, and described and applied consistently across states and schools

of a student's learning progress significantly boosts student achievement".

Education minister Simon Birmingham says progressive learning based on ability means children will be "extended and stretched" as much as possible, leading to more high achievers and better overall performance.

"Differentiated teaching practices in a classroom is not something new or unheard of at present," says the minister.

"It is quite commonplace for teachers to have different students at different levels in terms of the reading progress they're undertaking or the maths skills they've got." The theory has been around since the 70s, and Australian Government Primary Principals Association president Ian Anderson says many teachers already group their students into similar levels of ability in the classroom.

Ian explains that many schools are

already teaching students from the same general content but "pitching" the material differently to match the child's level of understanding.

He says this so-called individualised learning can be time consuming and resource hungry but educators are all for it, depending on how the new education model is shaped.

## Progressive learning - how would it work?

What does the abolition of year-level based learning mean in practical terms? Does it mean high-achieving 8-year-olds could be sharing a classroom with 12-year-olds, or in the shameful reverse, a 12-year-old is demoted to a younger classroom?

While the detail the new teaching model is yet to be workshopped and refined, Education minister Simon Birmingham says students would generally remain grouped with their age peers.

"The expectation is that you would still keep broadly age cohorts together and indeed the evidence shows that having a spectrum of learning across classrooms is not necessarily a bad thing," he says.

The changes would instead be implemented through the Curriculum and modified for each student. For progressive learning to work, the Gonski report says the curriculum must contain levels of increasing proficiency against which teachers can assess students.

Learning progressions will have to be developed for key curriculum areas. Students advance incrementally through these levels by demonstrating their proficiency. Teachers can then diagnose the stage of student learning and plan the next challenging but achievable step to progress their learning.

"Across the learning progressions there will be varying numbers of proficiency levels, depending on the nature of each learning area or general capability," the report says.

Determining the number of levels, their design and presentation will require further work with input from the states and territories and drawing on expertise.

AGPPA's Ian Anderson says Gonski has "laid down a challenge" to reform education and the discussion that will ensue will help shape the detail.

Mr Anderson said it was unlikely that teachers would be required to develop individualised plans for every student in the class.

Alternative methods could include grouping students within age-level classes, grouping some year levels together or allocating teachers to one particular class for a number of years.

"We don't know what it will look like but I think Gonski is putting the challenge out so we can determine what will provide the best opportunities for our kids," he says. ►

# Flicking the solar switch to tackle energy poverty

**A new program explains how children around the world are living in darkness and what Aussie kids can do to help.**

When Simon Doble talks to students in Australian schools, he tells a story of what happens after sunset in poorer countries of this world. As soon as the sun dips below the horizon in places like Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Cambodia, homes are plunged into darkness without electricity.

Unable to see, children cannot read, complete homework or study. Worse still, families that rely on fires and kerosene lamps inside their homes can become ill or die from smoke or kerosene inhalation or burns. "There are 1.9 billion people who do not have access to electricity. Every night that's their situation," explains Simon.

"4.8 million die each year from energy poverty, mostly from burns and smoke inhalation."

Simon founded the charity, SolarBuddy, 18 months ago specifically to educate students about the effects of "energy poverty" around the world.

SolarBuddy's schools program connects Australian students who want to make a difference with other children who live in energy poverty, combining learning and education with assistance and aid.

Students fundraise to purchase and build SolarBuddy solar lights in class while also learning about the positive impact of renewable energy on communities living in energy poverty.

The students then send the assembled solar lights to children in need, along with a personal letter to which they sometimes



receive replies and small gifts from grateful recipients.

As well as its focus on empowering students to make a difference and become active global citizens, SolarBuddy's

school program educates more broadly on issues such as climate change, 'good' and 'bad' energy, the fundamentals of how a solar lights work and how to assemble them.

◀ The education minister says focusing on each child means students will no longer be flying under the radar and "coasting or cruising" through their education.

"Australia must focus on an education system that gives each student the opportunity to excel and to be their individual best."

## Sounds great - but what now?

Gonski's latest review and all 23 recommendations have been supported "in principle" by the federal government as the accepted "blueprint" for the future.

Recommendations also have the general support of educators, many of whom lodged submissions to the review calling for individualised learning.

But implementation will always come down to funding and resources and getting the

**“ This is a long-term project, however if we stay the course, with strong, sustained bipartisan support, we will look back in a decade to a transformed school education system.”**

support of the states which administer education.

Education minister Birmingham says he would like to see some of the Gonski 2.0 reforms "really starting to hit the road in the next couple of years".

"Ultimately, if the whole program is implemented over the course of the next few years we will start to see some of those changes," says minister Birmingham.

"But I think we will see them

quite gradually...it would be unlikely that existing students would see radical change.

"They're far more likely to just see graduated changes in the way that teachers and schools adapt to these sorts of practices.

"But what we would hope is that over a course of a number of years if you compare today with a number of years' time that we would have a much richer basis of data to follow the individual progress of each student."

The government, Gonski and educators agree that Australia's education system does need an overhaul to ensure students graduate with the ability to navigate the modern world.

Ian Anderson believes the debate will continue for some time and a key consideration will be ensuring any new system does not overburden teachers.

Despite the gloomy analysis of Australia's current education standards, David Gonski says Australia has excellent teachers working very hard for their pupils.

"I want to make it absolutely clear, we did not conclude that those working in the system, nor those indeed who have contributed over time, be they federal or state, have failed," says Gonski.

"The fact is, we can do better." ■

**By Kat Donaghey, Editor**



So far it has been taught in 389 schools but Simon says he would love to see the program rolled out across thousands of schools in Australia and the world, with legions of students giving the gift of light to others.

So far more than 36,000 lights have been donated to 19 countries (although the program now focuses on six countries; Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Cambodia, Myanmar, India and Tanzania) making SolarBuddy the world's second largest donor of solar lights

Simon says it "blows students' minds" when they discover that children in other countries are dying or being held back in life because they don't have access to power - something we take for granted in Australia.

"We say to the students: 'What would you miss if you had no electricity?'," explains Simon.

"The kids say they would want to be able to play their PlayStation or charge their iPad. They look at you like you're mental because they can't grasp what it would be like not having a light."

The impact of energy poverty on a child's life can dramatically shape their future, explains Simon.

"The difference a light can make is that firstly it means they can do their homework," he says.

"In developing countries, education is highly valued and they know if they apply themselves to work they can get a slightly better job.

"So they will sit under street lamps in groups of 20 to do their homework and when you show that to the students here they can't believe it.

"Giving them a light is giving someone a future opportunity.

"A light is also safety. It means

they can walk 100m to the toilet and be safe and we have designed the light to hang around their neck so they can wash their hands.

"The kids here literally fall off their chairs when we talk about the difference a light can make."

Simon says he was spurred into action about eight years ago after reading an article about people dying in refugee camps from burns and smoke inhalation.

He invented a tent pole with inbuilt lighting which was taken up by such agencies as the United Nations, Red Cross and World Vision and distributed around the world.

Building from there, Simon founded SolarBuddy to educate students but, more than that, to motivate them to make a difference.

The SolarBuddy schools program meets the objectives

of the Australian curriculum's sustainability focus which encourages students to "act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living".

The curriculum policy states: "Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action."

Simon says that armed with knowledge and inspired to make a difference, today's young people will be tomorrow's 'gamechangers'.

"We want to teach people to be part of the solution," he says.

"It's about raising the consciousness of young people. Something so simple as a light. One solar light can literally change a kid's life." ▲



# Beaconhills College is a 'shining light' in education



Beaconhills College students travelled to East Timor to share the gift of light.



Beaconhills College students undertake the SolarBuddy program at school.

## Students at Beaconhills College, Victoria, are flicking a switch to help make the world a better place.

The college has signed up to SolarBuddy's schools program for the second year, with students assembling and donating solar lights to children in poorer countries.

By sharing the gift of light, they are helping change the course of young people's lives by offering the chance of a brighter future.

Beaconhills Head of Citizenship and Service Clare Tuohy says the program educates students on many levels – from the experiences of life in poorer countries to showing that everyone can make a positive difference.

"The kids love the program for a number of reasons but what I love most about it is they see they are making a huge difference to somebody's life doing this small act of kindness – donating a \$25 light," says Clare.

The lights not only prevent people who don't have electricity from dying from burns and smoke inhalation but the night lights enable students to complete their homework and study for a better education.

"I often say we live in a bubble of privilege and this is an eyeopener for them," says Clare.

"Our kids are blown away. They just take for granted that everyone else in the world lives the way we do."

Clare initiated the program at the college because it was compatible

with their philosophies of Learning, Values and Character, Environment, Citizenship and Service, Our World and other Cultures and Wellbeing.

It was rolled out last year with Year 8 students building and sending the lights to PNG and Uganda.

"As well as making the globes which they loved, the bit they loved even more was writing letters to the children," says Clare.

"The letters they wrote were beautifully written and heartfelt. They made me weep because they came from the heart."

The program was also taken up by Year 10 students who travelled to East Timor and hand delivered the life-changing gifts.

Eight students worked hand-in-hand with students from

Australia's poorer northern neighbour, showing them how to build 60 lights.

"It's pretty powerful stuff the way they could interact with each other," says Clare.

"The students explained the need to look after the lights and how to power them up from the sun and showed them how to strap them to their backs so they could power them up while walking to school."

Clare says she hopes to expand the program even further next year by getting the community on board.

"What I want them to learn is how, as a school community, what a huge difference we can make in the world. Our college can have a huge impact." ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*





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# Calls for an Australia-wide plan to tackle bullying

**A spate of tragic teen suicide deaths has placed the problem of bullying on the national political agenda.**

As long as there have been schools and students, there have been bullies.

But with the advent of cyberbullying and its fatal consequences, governments and society are realising it is no longer up to schools to battle the scourge alone.

Following the devastating death of 14-year-old schoolgirl Amy "Dolly" Everett, state premiers and the Prime Minister have joined forces in an attempt to tackle bullying.

The issue was elevated to the national political discussion at the most recent COAG (Council of Australian Governments) meeting in February where eSafety commissioner Julie Inman Grant updated political leaders on initiatives to combat cyber bullying.

COAG also agreed to establish a working group to consider existing and future antibullying initiative and establish a work program to be led by the Education Council. Our political leaders acknowledged that bullying on any medium has no place in Australia.



It's the same message that has long been taught in schools, with students urged to say 'no' to bullying and not to act as bystanders.

But with the prevalence of cyberbullying in which victims now face attack through social media 24 hours a day, the message is clear that schools need an elevated level of backing from authorities and the community in order to create a next-level solution. Cyberbullying

is something that didn't exist for previous generations, and it all adds up to paint a nasty picture. One that we should recognise adults cannot fully relate to: schoolchildren now face types of humiliation online that did not exist five, 10 or 20 years ago. The internet has created a whole new genre of bullying, so how can schools get to the root of the issue and help students avoid becoming a statistic?

Some measures have already been introduced at a national level to specifically deal with cyberbullying including a complaints service for young people through the office of the eSafety commissioner but such initiatives often don't trickle down to the child in the playground.

The launch of public campaigns certainly galvanises the community, while hosting antibullying days at schools acts a cyclic reminder. ►

## Bully Zero wants a future without bullying

**Bully Zero Australia Foundation delivers evidence-based antibullying programs to schools nationally as it aims for zero tolerance of bullying in Australia.**

The not-for-profit charity was launched by Prime Minister Julia Gillard in 2013 and founded in response to suicides from bullying.

Its commitment includes raising awareness of bullying and empowering Australians to prevent it from happening.

"We say bullying is a behaviour that is learnt – you're not born a bully – and you can unlearn it," says Bully Zero chief operating officer Michelle Murray.



**Bully Zero programs are delivered Australia-wide**

"We stand united in our quest to create a tomorrow where our children and adolescents live fulfilling lives free from all forms of bullying."

Bully Zero provides tailored programs to schools nationally, with separate programs for students, teachers and

parents delivered by university-qualified teachers. Bully Zero is also a certified provider of a cyber safety program endorsed by the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner and is one of the only organisations in Australia that continues to deliver the cyber safety prevention program nationally. ●





# Antibullying program celebrates the wacky and wonderful

**Ripleys Believe It or Not! has launched an antibullying program to educate and inspire young people about diversity.**

The Gold Coast-based attraction has an interactive collection of 400 unique and bizarre artefacts from around the world and highlights incredible characters who really lived such as the world's tallest man.

The new *Odd Is In* educational school visit includes a tour of the museum plus free downloadable antibullying lessons and activities to help children accept and celebrate people from all walks of life.

Ripleys Believe It or Not! general manager Lisa Tucker explains that the founder, Robert Ripley (1890 to 1949), spent 35 years searching the world for unbelievable stories.

"Robert Ripley celebrated the fact that everyone is different and he was so curious rather than shocked," she says.

**"Our entire company is founded on the principle that all people are created equal and deserve to be treated as such."**



The *Odd is In* school lesson plans and activities examine types of bullying such as physical, verbal and cyberbullying and how to deal with bullying.

The program also celebrates unique people such as Robert Wadlow, the tallest man in history (2.72m) and Ching Foo who was born with a blue face. Discounted entry fee is \$13.50 for ages 5 to 12 (teachers are free).

For information or to make a booking, visit [ripleys.com/surfersparadise](http://ripleys.com/surfersparadise). ●



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◀ The federal government's *Bully. No way!* website is a good starting point for schools and provides resources for educators, parents, students, the community and school leaders on all aspects of bullying, including lesson plans, research, advice and information on services.

However, when it comes to all aspects of government and society working together, there is "no single universal anti-bullying approach", leaving decisions largely up to each individual school on what initiatives to employ.

Talking is critical as a way to help children speak out about and against bullying, as well as understand what it looks like, where it comes from and learn how they can deal with the emotions involved. Talking, in general, is also a good way to build bonds amongst students. Lunchtimes can be scary for children with social anxiety or fears about bullying but if schools work on creating opportunities

<p><b>Antibullying strategies that have been proven to work include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a universal whole-school approach over a long duration that takes a multi-faceted approach</li> <li>• an increased awareness of bullying in the school community through assemblies, focus days and student-owned plans and activities</li> <li>• a whole-school detailed policy that addresses bullying</li> <li>• effective classroom management and classroom rules</li> <li>• the promotion of a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and student wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistent, non-hostile and non-punitive behaviour management methods.</li> <li>• Encouraging students to respond negatively to bullying behaviour and support students who are bullied.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategies that have been proven less effective include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'get tough' suspensions and exclusions</li> <li>• rigid control of student behaviour</li> <li>• belief that students must receive punitive and negative consequences in all cases</li> <li>• increased security measures</li> <li>• unfair and inconsistent use of discipline</li> <li>• punishment without support.</li> </ul>
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for socialisation amongst small groups of children during the day or outside school-hours this might be a way to help build a strong peer-group bond.

Most schools do have antibullying policies and procedures in place, with clear steps for teachers to

follow if bullying does happen. But it can be difficult to spot in the early stages and know when to step in. Badly managed bullying behaviour impacts the whole school community and can have detrimental effects on health, wellbeing, and

learning. Remember, both the target and initiator of bullying are at increased risk of tragic consequences and not all kids are vocal about the level of bullying they experience. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

# Leasing a car: we bust the myths holding you back



## Novated leasing is one of the most cost-effective ways to buy a car.

Smartleasing customers not only save thousands of dollars in purchase costs and running expenses, but they also tap into a raft of tax-free benefits. Sound too good to be true? It's not. Here are the top four myths of novated leasing - busted!

### Myth #1: I won't own my car

Yes, you will. The term 'leasing' scares off many car buyers, who've lumped it in the same category as renting a house versus owning your home. In reality, novated leasing is just a form of finance that enables you to buy and run your car cheaper and with less impact on your personal finances, while also reducing your tax liability. Your car is registered in your name, and you don't have to hand it back at the end of the lease. You can refinance and extend the lease period, pay out the amount owing or upgrade to a new car. The ownership arrangements are no different than if you took out a personal loan to purchase the car independently.

**“ The tax rules have changed. Now you can tap into handsome tax savings on the purchase of a car, regardless of how many kilometres you drive per annum. ”**

Either way, the financier still has a title on the vehicle.

### Myth #2: I can only lease new cars

Novated leasing is not reserved exclusively for those buying a shiny new set of wheels, fresh off the showroom floor. You can take out a novated lease on a used car bought from a dealership or private seller, and even enter a leasing arrangement with your current car under a 'sale and lease back' agreement. Let's say you have a two-year-old car with \$20,000 in finance owing. Smartleasing will pay you the market value of your car and take over the maintenance, running and financing costs on your behalf. If your car is worth \$22,000, that's a \$2,000 windfall for you. If it's

worth slightly less, you pay down the difference but still reap the ongoing tax benefits and savings.

### Myth #3: I don't earn enough money to make leasing worthwhile

You will make big savings, regardless of how much money you earn. Novated leasing enables employees of any wage bracket to unlock tax-free savings and benefits. The savings kick in straightaway with the discounted purchase price of your car, thanks to the power of third-party volume buying. Let's say this purchasing power saves you \$3,000 on a \$30,000 car, then you add in an additional \$3,000 in GST - that's \$6,000 in savings before you even get behind the wheel. Next, factor in

running and maintenance expenses, including registration, fuel, servicing and roadside assistance. All these costs are GST-free and taken out of your pre-tax salary as part of your monthly leasing fee. The net effect is that you pay less for your vehicle while at the same time reducing your taxable income. Win-win!

### Myth #4: I don't clock up enough kilometres to benefit

Until recently, the more kilometres you travelled, the greater the tax benefit you reaped from novated leasing. But not anymore. The tax rules have changed. Now you can tap into handsome tax savings on the purchase of a car, regardless of how many kilometres you drive per annum. Under salary packaging arrangements, 20% of the vehicle's FBT base value (which is the car's drive away price minus on-road costs) must be paid with post-tax dollars, while the balance of the annual lease package is tax-free. And because your leasing costs are calculated, in part, according to how much you drive, you only pay for what you use. ▲

**By SmartLeasing**



# Top eight novated lease questions answered

**As a teacher, you deserve to hold on to every cent of your pay. One way of holding on to more of your hard-earned money is through salary packaging a Novated Lease.**

A Novated Lease allows you to pay for a new or used car from your pre-tax salary. This means that you retain more of your pay. Your employer pays for your car and its running expenses before you receive your pay, so that you get the car you want, while reducing the amount of tax you're paying.

Novated Leases can be confusing, so the novated experts at Fleetcare have provided answers to their top eight frequently asked Novated Lease questions.

## 1. How does a Novated Lease save me money?

- Pay less tax by paying for your new car and related expenses from your pre-tax income

- You'll receive fleet discount pricing on the vehicle cost, accessories and ongoing expenses
- Some Novated Lease providers offer great discounts on fuel as part of their bulk purchasing power
- You pay no GST on the purchase price, or ongoing expenses like fuel and servicing – that's a 10% saving right there!
- Smooth your expenses and never have to worry about finding the money for new tyres again - it's all included in your fortnightly or monthly payment.

## 2. How do I know if I'm eligible for a Novated Lease?

If you're a salaried employee who has completed your probation

period at work and your employer is happy to enter into the agreement, you're eligible!

## 3. Can I only take out a Novated Lease agreement through my employer?

Yes. It's a salary sacrifice arrangement, so your employer must be involved. It doesn't cost your employer anything and is very simple to set up.

Your Novated Lease provider will be able to help them through the entire process.

## 4. Do I have to buy a new vehicle to enter into a Novated Lease agreement?

No. As long as your vehicle is less than eight years old by the end of the lease, you can salary sacrifice a second hand vehicle.

We'll even help you source one that matches your specification and then

work to get you the best possible discount on the purchase price. Most Novated Lease providers will also let you trade in a vehicle as part of your Novated Lease, however the trade in funds cannot be used to reduce the lease principle.

## 5. What's included in a Novated Lease?

- The vehicle purchase price plus any accessories, stamp duty and other on-road costs
- Comprehensive insurance
- Registration & CTP
- Fuel
- Roadside assistance
- Servicing
- Tyres and maintenance

Some Novated Lease providers will also include accident management and Guaranteed Asset Protection Insurance as standard, so be sure to shop around and compare providers.

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## 6. Can I set my vehicle residual lower than recommended?

The vehicle residual is determined by the term of the lease and the total vehicle purchase price at a statutory rate prescribed by ATO guidelines and cannot be amended.

## 7. What happens at the end of my Novated Lease?

When you come to the end of your lease you have three options:

1. Purchase the vehicle outright by paying off the residual value.
2. Extend the lease and refinance the residual value.
3. Start a new lease by trading in your vehicle or selling it privately. If you're leaving your employer, you can always transfer the lease to your new employer or set up a straight finance loan.

## 8. How much can I save on a Novated Lease compared to a car loan?

The largest savings you receive from a Novated Lease are the tax savings. A portion of Novated Lease running costs are taken from your gross salary before tax and before the Medicare levy, which makes a big difference to your take home pay.

You also benefit from GST savings and fleet discounts on the initial purchase price, accessories and ongoing expenses.

The best way to find out how much you can save is to speak to a Novated Lease consultant who will give you a customised break down of your expenses and savings to help you find out whether salary sacrificing a car will leave you with more money in your pocket. ▲

**By Fleetcare**



## The easy road to your new car

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# Five ways to reduce teacher workload

**Donna Machado**

*Head of Sales and Marketing, Edval*



**Recently, Australian LNP MP Andrew Laming infuriated teachers across Australia by suggesting that "teaching needs to operate like other jobs, with the same hours, days and weeks as the rest of the economy, rather than cluttered school hours where there is little beyond the face-to-face time".**

Mr Laming has clearly never been a teacher and one wonders if he has even spent any time with them?

If so, he would know that teachers regularly work far more hours than most people realise, with many of those hours done at home, on weekends, late at night or during their 'holidays'.

Teachers are finding they need to work these hours to stay atop of a demanding workload. Increasing the formal working hours of teachers is not going to solve the problem of workload. However, attention to how that workload is determined and directed may help.

The school timetable ultimately determines what 'work' is allocated to teachers. It directs teachers on which classes they teach, when they should be in class, when they should take breaks, when they should meet and who they teach. While some view teaching work as being allocated by their faculty head, the timetable is the ultimate determiner of how that workload is implemented.

**Here are five ways to dramatically reduce teacher workload with smarter timetables:**

## **Allocate teachers two or more classes of a subject in a given year.**

This way, teachers will only need to lesson plan once, for multiple classes. For example, having two English classes in a given year may be a lot less work than one in Year 7 and one in Year 8. Furthermore, working with others teaching the same subject and



year level means that the planning workload can be divided and shared.

## **Schedule planning meetings during school time.**

Traditionally, meetings are scheduled as an afterthought which means that it becomes harder to find a period in common where the required teachers are available.

This results in meetings being held after hours. By timetabling the meetings as classes during timetable construction, the probability that a period in common can be found is increased.

Smarter timetabling facilitates this as a priority and makes it considerably easier too, which reduces workload and stress not only for the teachers, but the timetabler as well.

## **Create balanced days with free periods spread evenly across the timetable.**

Fewer full-period teaching days aids lesson preparation, fosters punctuality and reduces staff

absenteeism. Smarter timetabling ensures that the quality of teachers' timetables is considered when classes are allocated to times.

Better quality timetables for teachers reduces stress and workload, by providing better balance.

## **Use sets of teachers to achieve better assignment of teacher loads.**

Typically, the faculty head directs which classes will be given to staff in their faculty. This reduces timetabling flexibility, makes the management of staff loads more difficult and often results in more split classes. While the need to have specific teachers on classes at the senior level is valid, for the most part, junior classes can be more freely allocated. Automated staffing algorithms draw from sets of teachers to achieve a better overall staffing balance of load and class assignments. These auto staffing algorithms can also be applied to duty rosters, study rosters and on-call rosters. This ensures equity in allocation of duties and placement to less busy

days thereby reducing workload and stress.

## **Minimise the need to take covers and identify potential cover periods on teachers' timetables.**

For a teacher, nothing is more frustrating than having that free period you set aside for lesson planning disappear due to a class you are allocated to cover. While covering classes is 'part of the job', they can increase stress and workload when unexpected.

Timetabling periods on a teacher's timetable where they are considered 'on-call' for a cover means that they are less likely to schedule a meeting during that period, as they know they 'might' be given a cover.

When combined with a daily administration system that can actively identify and prompt users to merge appropriate classes resulting in one class to cover instead of two, the number of teachers required to cover classes is reduced. These opportunities may be otherwise missed if not 'guided' by the technology. ▲



# A banquet of ideas at the FutureSchools national conference

**With the current debate on Australia's declining school system, the National FutureSchools Expo & Conference was a chance for educators to get immersed in positive possibilities for the future.**

More than 3400 people attended the event from March 20 to 22 in Melbourne to learn and gain motivation from leading thinkers and education revolutionaries.

It included five conferences, an expo of 82 suppliers showcasing technologies and products, six masterclass workshops and a sold-out gala dinner.

Headlining the *FutureSchools* conference was *New York Times* bestselling author Sir Ken Robinson, an internationally recognised authority on creativity and innovation in schools.

He was one of more than 100 speakers to inform and inspire educators.

Sir Ken's opening keynote address was a highlight of the three-day conference and was followed by a Q&A panel in the main expo hall.

A testament to his forward-thinking appeal with educators, his book-signing event went overtime by an hour.

Sir Ken said the *FutureSchools* conference was about bringing likeminded people together to help create a better education system for students.

"*FutureSchools* is about creating new sorts of learning environment based on ancient principles of growth and development that we should really make available to all of our children in the way we educate them," he says.

"It does bring together people with interests across the whole of education; and in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and particularly on how new technology is not only disrupting education but helping facilitate new ones."

Sir Ken affirmed his philosophy to conference attendees that the education system is not currently designed to foster a child's innate love of learning.

"The fact is, kids love to learn, they are learning organisms, they are voraciously curious, and highly creative," he said.

"Education is a more formal approach to learning; it's an organised approach to learning which is more deliberate."

His ideas reached out to teachers who firmly agreed with his comments that many kids "don't get on with education" and the problem was not the children but the schools.

Another popular speaker was Australia's own young-gun maths teacher Eddie Woo who films his classroom lessons and posts them to *YouTube*.

Eddie's enthusiasm for inspiring a love and understanding of maths



has turned him into an online sensation, with his maths lessons viewed more than 8 million times all around the world.

Dan Haessler, dubbed Australia's own Sir Ken Robinson, the Future Schools Alliance's Peter Hutton and Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's Lisa Rodgers rounded out the popular Q&A session.

The *FutureSchools* conference was also an opportunity for teachers to undertake professional development at one of the five parallel conferences.

These conferences covered a range of forward-thinking subjects including:

**\*Future Leaders Conference:** The latest global trends and developments in education – what can be achieved and how to do it, including changes to the schooling system; society; behaviour; pedagogy; curriculum; technology; professional learning; and learning spaces.

**\*ClassTECH:** Using technology to enrich and deepen learning experiences without blowing the budget. Using emerging tech such as 3D printers, laser cutters, drones, robotics, games-based learning platforms wearable technologies and augmented reality.

**\*Inclusive education:** Models/frameworks that help create a 'school for all'. Ideas to integrate and support children with learning difficulties and disabilities such as autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, Asperger's, auditory processing disorder, behavioural issues, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, gifted children and a variety of others.

**\*Young learners:** Harnessing young people's love of technology to improve teaching and learning and prepare students for a life-time of learning in a tech-savvy world.

**\*Teaching code:** The challenges faced by teachers in delivering technology subjects such as code and robotics. How to overcome these educational challenges.

The six masterclasses included *Teaching Kids To Code; Making, Coding and Engineering; How to Teach the Craft of Writing, Best Practice in EdTECH for Learning; Understanding Student Engagement; The Neuroscience of Learning and Leading*.

The *National FutureSchools Expo & Conference* will be held again next year March 19-21, 2019, at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*



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# Finding the perfect match



## Recruiting new teachers takes skill and expertise...

Schools want to employ the best teachers to nurture and educate their students and align with the culture, but how do they find the perfect match?

Sifting through resumes may offer insight into a candidate's background and experience but what about their personality, the culture fit and rapport with students?

Face-to-face interviews may give a feel for a person's demeanour and communication style but what about their classroom skills?

Finding the perfect fit for your school can be a time-consuming endeavour which can often detract hours from other important work.

Someone on staff has to post the advertisements, shortlist the candidates, arrange interviews and scrutinise candidates' references and backgrounds.

Then there's always the concern of how long the new teacher's tenure will last, with schools reluctant to continually replace departing staff.

Government figures show the most popular method for sourcing prospective employees is through jobs boards followed by word of mouth.

Recruitment agencies are the next favoured option alongside

newspaper advertisements and company websites.

## Comments from the industry

Frontline Education agency owner Graham Howard says the search for the best teacher recruits is becoming increasingly competitive for schools and universities; and the issue is exacerbated at different times of year and even more so when recruiting for regional positions.

The recruitment challenges faced by clients in the education sector - such as tapping into a rich pool of candidates, finding committed recruits, getting the right culture fit, filling vacancies in a speedy manner and spending time and money on the process - are becoming even greater with fewer graduates in education and an ageing population.

"Recruitment agencies can take the headache and work away from schools by undertaking the entire process on behalf of clients," he says. Graham explains there are a number of benefits to using a specialist education recruitment agency:

## Experience and expertise

Specialist agencies are ideally placed to understand the vagaries of the education industry. A specialist agency can also be

a useful resource if you need permanent, short-term or casual talent at short notice, as they know where to source strong candidates quickly.

## Cost effective solutions

Agencies are well positioned to identify, screen and shortlist ideal candidates in a systematic and streamlined way to save you time and money. Significant savings arise from reduced time to hire, ensuring you only interview candidates who meet specific requirements - greatly reducing the burden on in-house staff.

## Wider reach

Finding someone who fits your company culture is just as important as identifying the right skills and experience. A specialist agency will get to know who you are and what your school or university is trying to achieve before finding candidates who are a great fit for your team. Specialists also have access to a broad pool of talent. Candidate relationships built up over years ensure agencies have extensive networks to call on.

## Knowing your brand

Today's job seekers are discerning, and actively seek out schools with a strong, ethical, contemporary culture.

Agencies can help promote your brand to reach the right candidates.

"However, choosing the right recruitment agency may seem just as daunting a task as employing a new teacher," says Graham.

"With so many agencies competing for business and offering different services, schools have to undertake research when deciding not only whether to hire a recruitment agency but which one to select."

Graham advises to do your homework before selecting an agency.

## General or specialist

Find a specialist agency with in-depth knowledge of the education industry. Such agencies have built up a bank of knowledge regarding industry requirements as well as the skills and temperament needed for candidates to succeed.

## Value for money

Cost isn't the only factor, but it's important to know that your chosen agency can deliver affordable, cost-effective workforce solutions. Quality agencies can tailor-make a recruitment package to suit your school's needs. Don't be tempted by 'quick and cheap' options which cut corners and may ultimately fail to deliver.





### Experience counts

Choose an agency with an established presence and national reach. This allows the agency to access available talent in different cities and states.

Agencies with experience and hard-won expertise have extensive networks capable of sourcing top candidates with premium skills.

### What they undertake

When engaging a recruitment agency, it's important to know exactly what tasks they will be undertaking for you. Finally Graham explains that teacher

recruitment is not just about ticking the boxes with regard to skills and qualifications.

Finding that "perfect match" is just as much about choosing the candidate who shares the values, goals and work ethic of your school. "Know what your school needs and what the candidate must demonstrate," he says.

"Carefully frame your interview questions so you can determine if they are the right cultural fit.

"And show the candidates around your school, introduce them to staff and watch their body language. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

## One-stop shop for teachers



**Tes started out in print more than 100 years ago as *The Times Educational Supplement*. Fast forward to today and it has grown in partnership with teachers around the world to become one of the largest, professional digital communities, connecting and supporting more than 8 million educators in 197 countries.**

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## Education reaches new heights

**Australia's first purpose-built vertical public primary school is the "guinea pig" for a high-rise education.**

Principal Noel Creece offers a pithy description of the new-school-on-the-block in inner city Melbourne.

"It's not big – it just goes up," he says of South Melbourne Primary School in the densely populated suburb of Southbank.

"There was no way the kids could have a large sprawling space in the middle of the city on such a small footprint so we had to build up instead of out."

South Melbourne opened its classrooms this year to much anticipation, with parents and students either excitedly embracing the new concept or warily standing back to observe.

The ground-breaking school rises through five storeys (six levels including the ground floor), with students hiking up and down flights of stairs to reach their classrooms.

From the outside, Noel says the school with its sharp lines, minimalist design and neutral tones looks like a corporate building similar to the modern



architecture that adorns Melbourne's CBD.

The gleaming structure sits neatly on a 5000 sqm block which is tiny in comparison to traditional schools that sprawl over vast grounds complete with ovals, pools and fields. (Noel estimates South Melbourne's land is about one-tenth the size of the average school's.)

Although South Melbourne does not have a broad outdoor playground, that does not mean its city-dwelling students are missing out on lunchtime games and physical activity.

Kids can play in the forecourt on

the ground floor or stage a few matches on the indoor basketball/netball court on the ground floor or outdoor basketball/netball court on level two.

Noel says it was necessary for South Melbourne to be built upwards because of the extremely high cost and premium availability of land in the inner city.

It was also necessary to cater to the rapidly growing population housed in towering highrise apartments mushrooming in the neighbourhood which is one of Australia's most densely populated areas.

(The Fisherman's Bend Urban

Renewal Area where the school is located is welcoming about 3000 new residents each year.)

"There was actually a bit of a groundswell from parents lobbying the State Government to open two new schools in the area," explains Noel.

"We were the first and there is another school opening near us in 2019."

South Melbourne's classrooms are positioned on levels two, three and four, with the kindergarten and Prep students housed on the top floor which is level five.

"It's a novelty for the younger kids to be overseeing the city from the fifth floor," jokes Noel.

"It takes them about 11 minutes to get from the top to the ground floor because they don't use the elevators.

"You should see their little legs as they come down the stairs holding the bannister."

Level 1 is set aside as a shared community space where community groups can undertake activities such as yoga or host functions and events while the ground floor contains a gymnasium.





The 'co-mingling' of school and community is one of the innovative features of South Melbourne which Noel is excited to promote.

Although the building is owned by the Victorian Education Department it is designed to deliver community infrastructure – such as a maternal and child health centre, multi-purpose community rooms, indoor and outdoor sports courts – to fully integrate the school with the public.

"It's taking a while to commission but the vision is that it will be 'all of life' - you can bring your child in here at age zero and have them weighed and their percentiles measured at the maternal health centre and they could still be coming here when they are 21 and using the gymnasium for a sports competition," says Noel.

"At the moment the gymnasium is used exclusively by the school between 8.30am and 4.30pm but before and after school it is open to the city to use."

In keeping with the seamless integration of school and community, South Melbourne school also has no fences bordering its grounds.

Noel says it was a deliberate philosophical decision to promote openness but also to educate students to "have your wits about



you but don't be scared witless" when it comes to stranger danger.

"We are in the inner city so it's important for kids to be aware but also understand that not all adults have to be feared," says Noel.

## Culture

As the principal of an inner-city school within the city limits, Noel has to manage the extremes of poverty, wealth and culture of his school community.

"It's quite unbelievable. Some kids are homeless and others might have just flown back from three weeks holidaying in Brazil," says Noel.

"We have kids who live in high-rises and others that come from housing commission.

"We are also very diverse multiculturally because of the

nature of industry in the CBD. People from all countries are coming here and working in fields such as IT.

"For example we have Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese. The diversity of people you would see if you went for a walk along Southbank is akin to our school.

"As a school we connect culture and community."

The inner-city location means unlike suburban and regional schools that have to plan big days out or excursions, the South Melbourne kids can pop down the road to places like the aquarium and arts centre.

Their students also can literally walk out the front door and jump on a tram.

"The tram was relocated to be just outside our doorstep so kids can

jump on a tram to their inner city apartment and not have to clog the road with cars," says Noel.

## Teaching

South Melbourne School is considered a 'catalyst' school for its many experiments and innovations.

But Noel explains that "you can have the best building in the universe but if you don't have teachers who can teach well then you're wasting your time".

To ensure he had the right people on board, applicants were put through a rigorous and exhausting process which he jokingly compares to the reality TV program Survivor.

The teachers underwent a number of rounds of tests and trials, multiple interviews and teaching demonstrations before Noel was satisfied he had gathered together an "exceptional group of people".

"We are really intent on making sure we set the school up properly and build it up over the next few years and get the foundations done right," he says.

"Our philosophy is to raise students who are literate, numerate, curious and caring. That is fundamental. If we can't achieve that we would have failed the children." ■

By Kat Donaghey, Editor

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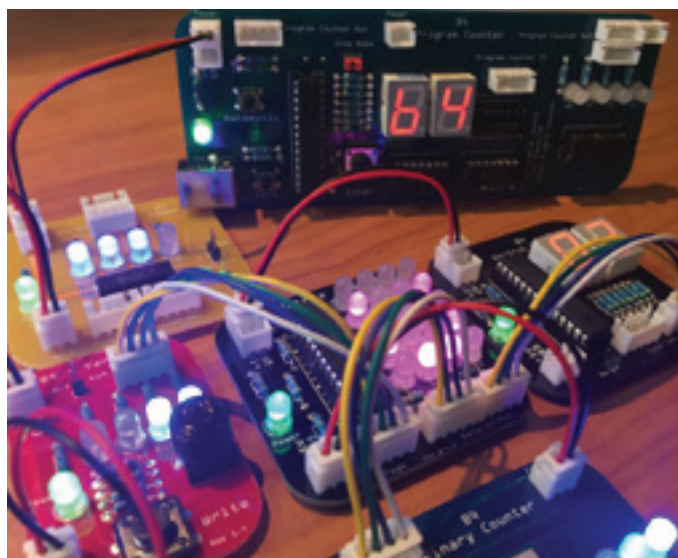
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# There's no maths problem quite like student engagement, so let's try and solve it



## Perhaps more than ever before, mathematics is an interdisciplinary subject.

We are seeing digital evolution manifest across all industries and with that, maths education also needs to evolve. Senior research fellow Max Planck, from the Institute for the History of Science, penned an essay for *The Conversation* in March explaining how the study of history is being "revolutionised" by mathematics in the form of something he calls "the digital humanities". Compiling, visualising and analysing different forms of data has become a critical part of the job for many people, across all sectors, in 2018. Using Planck's focus on the humanities as an example, he noted: "Historians now have to get their heads around mathematics, too. While a database is never much more than an expression of arithmetic or linear algebra, the increasing amount of available data is calling for a more sophisticated approach."

Whether today's students enter tomorrow's workforce in retail, media, academia, medicine, the arts, business, or a trade, they will need solid mathematical skills.

Yet, according to the latest PISA results, mathematics performance in Australian 15-year-olds declined between 2006 and 2015. If maths is going to continue its trending rise in relevancy, this is a worrying result. For teachers, it presents the task at hand: how to increase maths performance and engage students in mathematics who may favour other subjects.

'When am I ever going to use this in real life?' is a question teachers may commonly receive from students who 'don't like maths'. However, this question no longer makes sense in our social media-centred, data-driven society.

To brainstorm some solutions to this critical issue, *School News* spoke to some of the minds behind maths programs taught here in Australia.

## Industry insights

*The Education Shop creator Robin Philbrick told School News about the three 'elephants' he believes influence a maths teacher's effectiveness...*

**Elephant one:** Any maths curriculum, in any school, has become a testing ground for

several educational trends. Just now, one such trend seems to be STEM but surely the emphasis needs to be on mastery of the basics in primary school, which allows STEM learning to flourish in the later years.

Another current trend is the 'open-ended' maths tasks and questions. Interesting but their implementation can be incredibly time-consuming for teachers. While thoroughly enjoyed by students switched on in maths, open-ended questions can become a nightmare for struggling students.

**Elephant two:** Ask any parent, shopkeeper, or businessperson and they will all agree that rote learning is an essential ingredient in a maths program. Not easy or trendy, and opposed by many academics, but, in the fast-moving world of 2018, essential. How is it that many teachers feel guilty teaching times-tables?

What's needed is the courage, at both academic and classroom levels, to return to an acceptance of the value of teaching times-tables, reciting daily, helping equip children for the fast-moving,

fast-calculating world of tomorrow. But are teachers who adopt this approach deemed 'old-fashioned' and scorned in the staffroom? Please consider.

**Elephant three:** Technology is wonderful. We all appreciate and use it in our teaching, but the introduction of technology into education without the appropriate professional development and training to maximise its effectiveness can lead to teachers feeling frustrated and inadequate. Technology can be a wonderful aid but, so often, technology can become an unnecessary burden. We have all felt, at times, that our students are more in-command of technology than are we teachers. Huge funding is allocated to the latest technological equipment, but at what cost in terms of improving teaching standards? Professional development of teachers *must* include equipping them with the skills demanded of modern technology. If such training is unavailable, many of today's teachers will continue to find themselves trying to get the *Windows 10* software to communicate with the overhead projector. Time lost. Opportunity

lost. Negativity creeps in, and a positive maths lesson goes out the window.

No matter what curriculum approach is being taken within any school, there's *always* room to inject some genuine fun and relevance into a maths lesson. A maths anecdote about the latest *Star Wars* movie; a discussion about the recently-released *427th Storey Treehouse* book; the cricket ball-tampering catastrophe; they *all* have a maths aspect that can bring real interest to any maths topic. Just a couple of engaging minutes at the beginning of any maths lesson can do the trick. Maths really is relevant to today's primary students!

*Maths Australia's national program manager Esther White told School News how she believes teachers can combat a student's 'I don't like math' attitude in the classroom...*

When maths is taught in the way students can truly understand, it builds the student's self-confidence and therefore their tendency to want to engage in maths.

Mathematics mastery can be taught to students by applying evidence-based practices, such as the CRA methodology. This takes maths from a multi-sensory, hands-on, application to an abstract, written, application that eliminates a traditional textbook or didactic approach to maths education! But that's not all.

Teaching maths with a hands on application alone will not fully eliminate Australia's declining numeracy performance. Study after study recommends the effectiveness of explicit instruction, essential for maths mastery. Explicit instruction, systematic progress, cumulative review, hands on manipulatives, assessment,

early focus on whole numbers, strong verbalisation, word problem solving and fact fluency are all crucial.

Students struggling in maths will show signs of discomfort and lack of interest when they are feeling overwhelmed. Students will show signs of confidence, engagement and enthusiasm when they are being taught in the way they learn.


The positive impact of having classrooms teach using all of the recommended methods cited by research as essential for teaching students in the way they learn, means that students are able to do the following:

- Develop a deep and secure knowledge of maths concepts, including solid recognition about how maths is applicable in everyday life.

- Demonstrate their understanding by teaching it back.
- Develop a positive attitude towards maths and become more likely to elect for maths education in university or industry-specific careers.



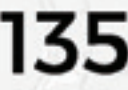
Conclusively, we see that recommendations from research are simple to implement when each component is considered and when we teach maths with a focus on the concrete. It is our responsibility to ensure that we implement this research and follow evidence-based recommendations to give every student the opportunity to master, and enjoy maths at an early age; to ensure they have the foundations and confidence for their later years of education. ■

*By Rosie Clarke, Industry Reporter*



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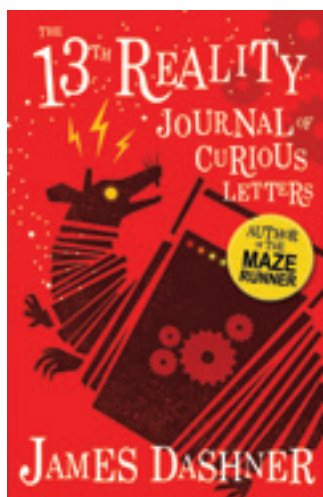
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## NEW TO THE BOOKSHELF



### ***The 13th Reality: Journal of Curious Letters***

By James Dashner  
Scholastic Australia  
Age 12 +

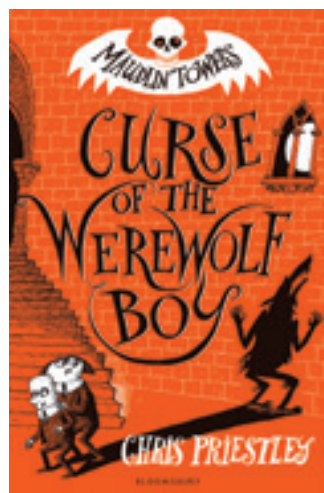
Chloe Lukasiak is a big believer that things happen for a reason. She knows that life would be easier without disappointments, bullying, and medical issues-but sometimes it takes challenges to inspire you to achieve big things. From her status as fan favourite on the hit reality television show *Dance Moms* through her life as a social media star with millions of fans, Chloe has found that self-acceptance and kindness are the key to getting over the rough spots in life and realizing your passions. This full-colour, heavily designed book featuring never-before-seen photos, inspirational quotes, and Chloe's own doodles and poetry offers exclusive insight into Chloe's world as well as a message that will inspire all readers to be their very best selves.



### ***Fantastically Great Women Who Made History***

By Kate Pankhurst  
Bloomsbury Education  
Age 5-7

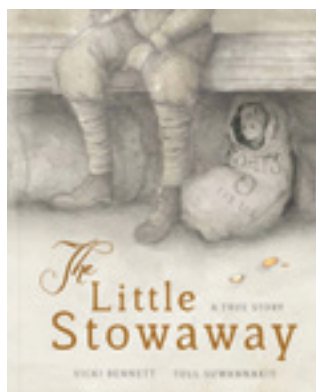
Travel through the Underground Railroad with the brave and courageous Harriet Tubman, turn the pages of *Frankenstein* with the incredibly talented author Mary Shelley and soar into space with adventure-seeking Valentina Tereshkova. This book celebrates some of the inspirational women who put their mark on the world.



### ***Curse of the Werewolf Boy***

By Chris Priestley  
Bloomsbury Education  
Ages 8-11

A funny, creepy and action-packed new series. Mildew and Sponge don't think much of Maudlin Towers, the blackened, gloom-laden, gargoyle-infested monstrosity that is their school. But when somebody steals the School Spoon and the teachers threaten to cancel the Christmas holidays until the culprit is found, our heroes must spring into action and solve the crime. But what starts out as a classic bit of detective work quickly becomes weirder than they could have imagined.



### ***The Little Stowaway***

By Vicki Bennett and Tull Suwannakit  
Scholastic Australia

A true story about a WW1 French war orphan who wandered into the Australian Flying Corps base in Germany on Christmas day 1918. Honoré was smuggled in an oat bag to England and then a basket marked 'Sporting Goods' to Australia. The simple act of securing a better life for Honoré created a sense of cohesion and purpose which Squadron Number 4 still endeavours to uphold to this day.



### ***The Incredible Freedom Machines***

By Kirli Saunders & Matt Ottley  
Scholastic Press  
Age 4+

Written by debut Indigenous author Kirli Saunders, with images from multi-award-winning illustrator Matt Ottley. This children's book explores the themes of breaking boundaries, bravery, imagination, freedom and hope. A young girl uncovers her very own freedom machine - a vehicle that carries her to all kinds of wondrous places. Author Kirli is a proud Yuin woman, poet, teacher and children's author. Matt is a multi-award-winning picture book creator and musician.



### ***Lady Mary***

By Lucy Worsley  
Bloomsbury Education  
Ages 9-11

An historic novel, Mary Tudor's world is turned upside-down when her father, Henry the Eighth, declares his marriage to her mother is over and that Mary isn't really his child. Banished from court, separated from her beloved mother and alone for the first time in her life, Mary must fight for what is rightfully hers. This is the third novel by historian Lucy Worsley, publishing alongside new editions of *Eliza Rose* and *My Name is Victoria*.



### ***The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things***

By Carolyn Mackler  
Bloomsbury Education  
Ages 12 +

Fifteen-year-old Virginia Shreves feels like a fat, awkward outsider in her perfect family, especially next to her golden-boy big brother Byron. To survive, she decides to follow the 'Fat Girl Code of Conduct' to make herself acceptable - unnoticed, invisible. But then something unthinkable happens and Virginia's flawless family begins to fall apart. As her world spins out of orbit, Virginia realises that breaking the Fat Girl Code might be the only way to get back.

# Furry tails and fairy tales as students read to dogs



Pacific Paradise student Sunny, 7, with Story Dogs facilitator Janelle Lockhart and her dog Kara.



## A reading support program encourages kids who lack confidence to tell stories to pooches.

When Petra Westphal adopted a greyhound named Holly, she knew the dog was destined to be more than a house pet.

In Holly's past, she had spent three months as a blood donor before being surrendered to Friends of the Hound.

"I thought she was special and I wanted to do something with her," explains Petra.

"She was one of those calm, placid dogs who loves people, loves life and gets on with everyone.

"She enjoys socialising and being around people."

Holly is now an accredited 'Story Dog' and visits schools to sit (or lie down) and listen to children as they read books.

The Story Dogs reading support program is not-for-profit and operated entirely by volunteers. Each week across Australia, more than 1700 students who lack confidence with reading settle down next to their Story Dog and read to the pooch.

Story Dogs' mission is to "make reading fun" so children become lifelong readers. It operates on the philosophy that dogs offer a non-judgemental setting that enables children to have more focus and confidence.

"The accepting, loving nature of dogs gives this program its magic



Rescued greyhound Holly has a new lease on life as a Story Dog.

and helps children relax, open up, try harder and have fun while reading to a friendly, calm dog," the Story Dogs website says. Petra, who is the volunteer Story Dogs co-ordinator for Sunshine Coast North, says students learn to let go of their fears and get immersed in the story, rather than stress about the act of reading out loud.

"It's about having fun with books; it's about the story and not worrying about the words but what's happening in the story and looking at the pictures and it being fun and enjoyable," she says.

"And the dogs get a lot of pats and cuddles."

On a Thursday morning at Pacific Paradise State School on the Sunshine Coast, retiree Janelle Lockhart is walking to school in the rain with her 11-year-old black Labrador Kara. Janelle became a volunteer after reading an article in her local community newspaper. She is a self-confessed dog lover who wanted to contribute in her retirement.

(Story Dogs' growth happens through more people signing up as volunteers.)



Janelle deliberately arrives just after students have settled into classrooms so she can walk through the grounds without drawing too much attention to Kara.

"What I didn't realise is that Kara would get so much enjoyment out of it," says Janelle.

"She gets excited when she knows we're coming here."

On this particularly rainy Thursday Janelle has decided to read in the library. She pours Kara a small dish of water and the pair walk together to collect the first student of the morning, seven-year-old Sunny.

Sunny flips through the book selection and begins reading while Kara stretches out on her side and falls sleep on the rug.

The old black dog perks up when the book is finished and she knows it's time for a game in which Sunny hides a dog treat in the room and Kara sniffs it out.

Pacific Paradise principal Margie Burrell says Story Dogs "has been the best thing imaginable for our kids."

"We just love our Story Dogs and we absolutely have seen benefits to

the kids," says Margie.

"Every kid in school would love to participate but we aim for kids who lack confidence in reading, usually around grade 2 so they have some maturity.

"They might lack confidence or don't like others to listen to them read."

Margie says students learn to relax when reading to a Story Dog but they also develop a good relationship with the animal's handler.

"The dogs don't care if you stumble over a word. A dog has no criticism, no judgement. They just love listening to the sound of your voice," she says.

"The kids can learn and pat the dogs and the dogs look at them as if they are terrific."

Story Dogs relies on volunteers offering their time. Handlers and pets undergo training and accreditation and must meet certain requirements before they can begin reading with students.

The program is free to schools however Story Dogs relies on dog sponsorships, fundraising and donations to pay for overheads such as public liability insurance.

The program is free but it costs Story Dogs about \$500 a year to put a Dog Team into a primary school.

To become a volunteer or find out about Story Dogs for your school, visit [storydogs.org.au](http://storydogs.org.au). ■

By Kat Donaghey, Editor



# Creating a big bang in the classroom

**A free online syllabus about humanity's history could be the 'missing link' in education.**

Author and historian David Christian has a "utopian" vision for education.

From an early age, when students are learning their ABCs and 123s he believes they should also be taught what he calls humanity's "Origin Story".

The *Origin Story* starts at the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago and tells the "history of everything", weaving a fascinating tale of star formations to the creation of planets, the dinosaur wipe out and the evolution of man from monkey.

The story would be taught differently to all age groups – basic for the young and increasingly detailed as it is retold in the senior years to blend with sciences and maths.

"Five hundred years ago, elders would have told you your origin story and kids would have understood their place in the cosmos," explains David.

"But the modern secular education does not do that and students leave school without any understanding of their place in the cosmos.

"There actually is an Origin Story that's global and needs to be taught to everyone and every student."

David is the co-founder, along with Bill Gates, of the Big History Project, a free online education resource which was created to be taught in the senior years of high school. It was developed in Australia and has been taken up all over the world, with more than 1000 teachers using the "pioneering" resource.

The *Big History Project* provides teaching materials to educate senior students on the universe and mankind, not exclusively as science or maths but in a historical narrative which gives context to life.

This "history of everything" also gives context to core maths and

science subjects which students often have difficulty making sense of as stand-alone subjects.

However, the *Big History Project* is not part of the Australian curriculum so it is only taught by high school teachers or schools that have chosen to sign up for the resources.

David says it is a "mistake" to view the *Big History Project* as an "optional extra". In fact he is so certain of its importance in preparing students for an uncertain future that the team is now expanding the program to include all grades.

"Not knowing our Origin Story is not knowing who you are and how you fit in the universe."

## Expanding the Big History Project to all ages

In 1989, David began teaching what he labelled "Big History" to university students. This overarching subject was the basis from which he then launched the *Big History Project* in 2011 with Bill Gates as a teaching resource for students aged 15 to 16.

In July this year the Big History team, which is based at Macquarie University's Big History Institute will launch the next phase of the project – Big History School.

Big History School is a reimagining and recreation of the "history of everything" and is being developed as a teaching resource for Kindergarten right through to Grade 12.

It will be a comprehensive K-12 resource, tailored to the ages and stages of students and comprising three offerings – *Big History School Junior*, *Big History School Core*, and *Big History School Senior*.

*Big History School Junior* is targeted at Grade 3 and 4 and will introduce key concepts, with 20 to 40 hours' teaching. It has been trialled in primary schools in Sydney, Putney Public and West Auburn Public.

*Big History School Core* is targeted at Grades 7 to 9 and will be offered in both 200 hour and 100 hour



Author and historian David Christian

course versions, teaching across the disciplines and preparing students for high school.

*Big History School Senior* is for Grades 10 to 12 and will be a 30 to 60 hour course preparing students for university.

The courses will be tailored to the Australian context so that students can identify and feel ownership of the story.

David says he would like to see Big History School incorporated in the Australian school Curriculum, describing an "urgency" about ensuring today's children have a deep understanding of their place in the universe.

"We live at a turning point in the history of Planet Earth. For the first time in four billion years, once single species has so much power that will shape the future of the biosphere?," he says.

"It is important that the people who will be running Planet Earth in 20 years understand the history of Planet Earth and the place of Humans in the History of Planet Earth."

Big History School would not replace but complement and thread seamlessly through traditional subjects, overlapping a number of disciplines and providing all-important context to subjects that are often traditionally taught in isolation.

Davis sees the learnings of the *Big History School* as an antidote to the problem of the declining interest and ability in STEM subjects because it could inspire a desire to learn more and assist struggling students to "make sense of things".

"A lot of students struggle with education because they find it hard to see the links between the different areas," says David.

"The *Big History Project* is the



'missing link.' "It will not displace existing subjects but if students encounter the story they will form an attitude towards education in general.

"They will see maths as not just maths but part of something larger."

## Origin Story - the book

Humanity's *Origin Story* is now the subject of David Christian's recently released book of the same name. *Origin Story* is a narrative on the "epic story" of the universe and humankind's place in it.

The book is aimed at the general public with the same desire to inspire interest in the story of humanity.

A quote from Microsoft founder and *Big History Project* cofounder Bill Gates is being used to promote the book.

Bill gates says he has "long been a fan of David Christian".

"In *Origin Story* he elegantly weaves evidence and insights from many scientific and historical disciplines into a single, accessible historical narrative."

David hopes teachers will also be drawn to the book and motivated to teach the Big History Schools to students. "I would love to think teachers would get into Big Histories through this book," he says.

*Origin Story: A Big History of Everything* is published by Penguin Random House Australia.

For more information on *Big History School*, visit [mq.edu.au/bighistory](http://mq.edu.au/bighistory). To sign up to the Big History Project (ages 15 and 16) visit [bighistoryproject.com/bhplive](http://bighistoryproject.com/bhplive). ■

By Kat Donaghey, Editor

# Book in your library for a makeover

**A new school library can lead to an upswing in book borrowing and become a social hub.**

Schools that have invested in redesigning and refurbishing their library spaces are reporting a growth in reading and the sudden popularity of the library as a social hub.

The trend supports the *Softlink Australian School Library Survey 2012*, which highlighted a positive relationship between a well-resourced library and higher student literacy.

Of course, a well-resourced library also requires a dedicated librarian or teacher-librarian, with Australian findings showing that schools that invested in more teacher-librarians per student had higher scores for reading and literacy on NAPLAN.

As Queensland academic Dr Hillary Hughes points out, teacher-librarians enable students and teachers to use the library's resources and spaces to their fullest potential. Although many school libraries remain under-resourced, there has been a trend towards transforming old libraries that is producing startling results.

Daggy school libraries that were once almost empty, cramped and with outdated fittings are undergoing makeovers and welcoming scores – if not hundreds – of students during the lunch break.

## Industry viewpoints

*Quantum Libraries sales manager Colin Matthews has been involved in library fit outs and furnishings for 31 years, and says the modern décor and new culture of school libraries is appealing to young people.*

He described the libraries of the past as similar to tombstones, with a hushed and reverent culture and heavy clunky shelving to match. "Today we have more of a soft approach to libraries," he says.

"It used to be that there were big tall rows of shelving and it used to be a museum-type attitude. But now library spaces are opening up, shelving is being lowered in height and there is a lot more curved shelving and furniture.

"The furnishings are softer and they are comfortable spaces for kids to go and snuggle down in the corner and read a book.

"It's more open to learning. There's flexibility of furniture – there's more on wheels – which means the client can change libraries around on a regular basis and create more collaborative spaces to work out what appeals to their students."

One of the company's clients, St Clare's Catholic College,

Townsville, recently fitted out and furnished a newly built and architecturally designed library and is experiencing a surge in the uptake of books.

St Clare's teacher librarian Mary Hosking says more students are now borrowing reading material independently of class visits and parents are borrowing books after school.

On top of that, every class in the K-6 school visits the library weekly and students can take home up to four books each.

"We wanted to attract more students. More kids are borrowing during the lunchbreak. There's a positive feel to reading and it's getting that love of reading happening," she says.

## Shelves and more shelves

*Resource Furniture has 40 years in the industry and is also part of the library revolution. The company's senior product designer Michael Merlino says the key changes have been in shelf design and the use of space.*

"Generally the old libraries have the dated steel shelves with the big centre post and feet on either side," he explains. ►







◀ “What we have done is really work on the shelf design. So basically with one shelf you can create a display shelf, a CD and DVD shelf, a flat shelf and a picture book shelf – all by simply spinning the shelf or adding clear acrylic inserts.

“Schools also want more open space, more multi-functional spaces. We design furniture that works well together. Ottomans can integrate with library units and tables nest together to form interesting and functional spaces, yet also pull apart to support individual work.”

Michael says libraries have undergone a gradual evolution in the last 10 years but there has been a significant transformation in the past five years which has boosted their popularity.

He says modern libraries are having a positive effect on the uptake of reading and part of the reason may be the improved methods of displaying books to make them more appealing.

“With our shelving you can place a lot more face-out books and everything is presented better,” he says.

“The shelves are a good height, visually it’s more appealing and the result is we find that book loan rates are much higher which is great.

“That’s the whole purpose of the library is for kids is to read, so staff love it.”



### Face-out books

*Fry Library and School Supplies director Darrin Batty says one of the best trends in library displays is shelving that enables books to sit face out so students are drawn to the covers.*

Not only does that style of shelving make books look more appealing and easy to navigate for students, it also protects books from being jammed into tight spaces, he describes.

“In my experience everyone wants to see the face of the book, not the spine,” says Darrin.

“Kids are not going to stand there looking at spines and choosing which book to read.”

He says schools can improve the reading rates of students by making a few key investments in their libraries.

“Kids are not going to go into a library because the shelving is pretty. The big winner that kids want to see is the cover of the books and the illustrations,” he says.

### Creating community

*VE Furniture’s marketing spokesperson Kellie Griffith agrees*

*that the new vibe and energy of libraries has made reading more appealing to students.*

“Open spaces with use of natural light, low shelving, comfortable seating and modern colours bring students together, encourage discussion and collaboration and provide a positive space that motivates students to become more involved in their learning,” says Kellie.

“The upgrading of school libraries creates a positive setting that not only encourages reading but also inspires digital information search, research and collaboration with peers that provides a more complete approach to learning than previous library environments that simply encouraged the referencing of books.”

Kellie says libraries are also more than just a ‘hub’ of learning and socialising but a way to ‘showcase’ the school.

“A refurbished library changes the school culture by providing a sense of community and connection,” she says.

“Physical space affects our psychological well-being and a positive environment, that is both enjoyable and inspiring, creates a sense of pride that leads to greater engagement which results in improved learning outcomes.” ■

**By Kat Donaghey, Editor**



# A 'loungey' new library is school's social hub

**The new library at Adelaide's Cabra Dominican College is more than just a space to house books and study quietly.**

Since enclosing the outdoor walkway between two opposite classrooms to create a high-ceiling glass atrium, the spacious and bright new library has become the school's meeting place.

"Students use it as a social hub. Some are doing homework, some are playing games – *Monopoly*, *Scrabble*, *Twister*, lots of card games," says teacher librarian Sandra Ciccarello.

"We have some doing quiet reading in the window seat, some on computers. It can also be a bit of a thoroughfare because it links to the school and students stop and talk and walk on."

By rearranging the furniture, the modern atrium can host concerts, events, assemblies and cater to numerous classes simultaneously.

Sandra praises the furniture design and functionality of fit-outs such as shelving for enabling a flexible and interesting library space.

Resource Furniture, a furniture and shelving supplier of more than 30 years, fitted out Cabra Dominican College's modern architecturally designed library.

The company's purpose-built shelving lines the walls to house some of the school's collection of 40,000 books. Low bookcases on wheels enable a line of sight across the entire space in keeping with the open design and can be shifted to suit need – a vast improvement on the old heavy immovable shelving of the past.

"The fact that they're flexible



Cabra Dominican College library, Adelaide

means we can change the spaces as we need to. Just last week we had parent and teacher interviews and we pushed all the shelving back and put tables and chairs in the middle so we could use the space as a hall."

Sandra had the pleasure of selecting the furniture and bought such items as a "campfire" modular suite which arranges in a semi-circle facing a TV screen.

She describes the library as 'loungey' and recently counted 250 students hanging out there during a lunch break.

"We can't get the kids out of here some days," she says.

With such flexibility of fittings and furnishings, Sandra says the library can be changed up whenever the desire arises.

"It's beautiful and also it's not boring because we can move things around," she says.

"We've already moved the furniture twice from the first arrangement we came up with. Every two months we will make a change and the kids like it." ●

**“ Sandra had the pleasure of selecting the furniture and bought such items as a “campfire” modular suite which arranges in a semi-circle facing a TV screen.**





# Fresh and spacious library offers ambient study space

**Melbourne Girls' College's updated library has been transformed from 'placid' to 'fresh' after undergoing an extension and refurbishment.**

A functional deck and extra rooms were added, modern new furniture purchased and plenty of thought put into the best choice of book shelving.

"The old library was really placid and a bit stale and it needed a revision and what we have now is quite fresh," explains Sylvan Dorney, the school's library leader.

"The girls love the new library, they love the space."

From morning until afternoon when Sylvan closes the doors, the popular library is active with girls studying, reading, socialising or having quiet time.

While the library has always been a well-used space at the college (enrolment 1450), Sylvan says the students have more enthusiasm for the space.

"When you have a more spacious library it is a better place to study," he says.

"When it's more spacious, you can fit more people in. We have created an ambient study space and the girls use it right up until close.



"The library has always been a hub but now they love it even more."

Sylvan worked with VE Furniture to select the modern furniture and appropriate colours to bring life to the larger library.

The room is decorated with black shelving and a black carpet dotted with blue, pink and grey coloured tiles to complement – but not match – the school's colours.

He says the uniquely shaped angular desks have been well

received. The library also has a lounge area with comfortable seating that can be easily slid to different locations, a large island in the middle of the study area as well as sturdy furniture which he jokes is "prison-riot worthy" but necessary for longevity.

The lounge furniture is blue, grey and pink, also resembling but not matching the school colours of blue, maroon and green.

"The key thing for us is that everything is on wheels and moveable and flexible and we can create shifting spaces to suit

our needs," he says.

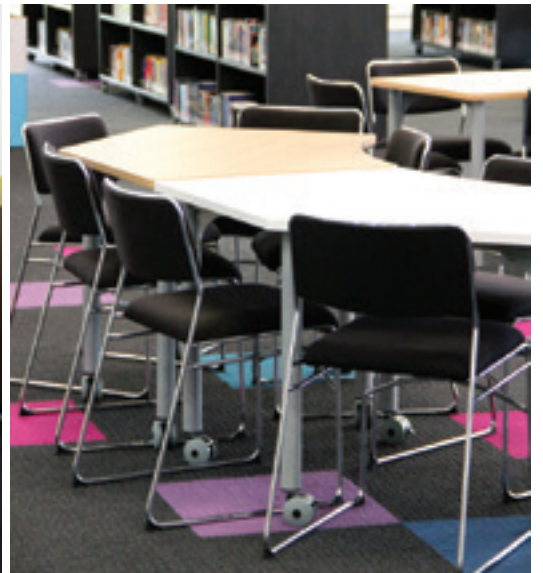
"For example the library might be used for staff development days, or classes or events."

In a compliment to the library's new look, Sylvan says teachers and students have commented on the new black shelving which enables better displays for books and can be wheeled to different spaces.

"The teachers have said they love the shelving and some of the girls have made comments which is so nice." ●







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# Library caters to students' contemporary taste

**Teacher librarian Mariusz Sterna arranges the books at Cornerstone College (Mount Barker, South Australia) like a retailer displays shop products.**

He uses the latest modern shelving designed specifically to showcase book covers so students can easily find their favourite titles.

"As soon as you walk into the library you are greeted with a wall of colour and beautiful books," says Mariusz.

"The books are a lot more visible and because of that the borrowing rates are going up."

Fry Library and School Supplies took a major part in the refurbishment of the Cornerstone College library which had not been significantly spruced up for more than 10 years.

The business specialises in an array of contemporary shelving including browser bins, in which books can be displayed face out, book spinners, mobile library furniture and curved shelving.

Mariusz says Cornerstone's old library was neither hideous nor beautiful. It just wasn't contemporary enough for the tastes of the current cohort of students.

"Students these days are used to beautiful things," says Mariusz.

"When you look at an iPhone it's a

thing of beauty. Students want to be surrounded by beautiful things because that's what they are used to and they've come to expect this now."

The new library with its light walls, bright colours, cosy nooks, comfortable beanbags and armchairs, and orange, purple and lime carpet tiles is more to their liking.

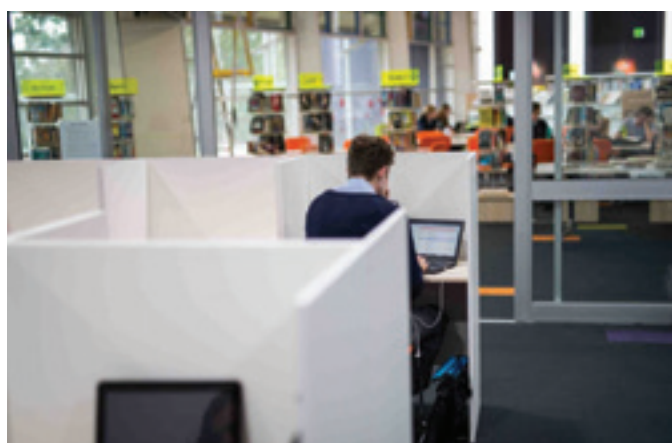
The library's old, dark and immovable shelving, which had been too tall and darkened the space, have been replaced with brighter sweeping curved shelving on wheels and upright spinner shelves which students rotate and physically interact with to browse books.

"We change the books constantly, for example when Stephen Hawking passed away we brought out books that were relevant," he says.

"We constantly change display books for many relevant occasions including *Mother's Day* or *Anzac Day*."

Mariusz says the old furniture was "mismatched and out of style" but the vibrant new armchairs encourage students to settle in as do cosy nooks built into the walls.

The library now has a glass-walled room for studying where "carrels" – single desks with dividers designed for quiet and uninterrupted studying – have made a comeback and are well used by senior students.

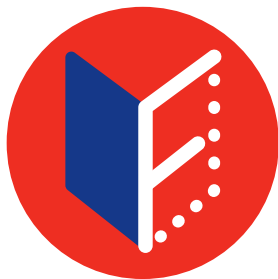


Mariusz, who is completing a doctoral study on school libraries, says research indicates senior students prefer to be separated from the younger grades as the two groups have different needs and library-based expectations, has also been facilitated at Cornerstone with separate spaces.

He says the adage "If you build it they will come" was proving true with the new library.

"We have already noticed significantly greater patronage of the space and a lot more book borrowing because it's a lot more comfortable and modern looking," says Mariusz. ●





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# Beloved ‘daggy’ library’s modern makeover

**Although the girls at Avila College, Mt Waverley Victoria, had much affection for their old library, it was long overdue for a makeover.**

The “daggy” 1980s style building had exposed roof rafters, glass walls, heavy shelving and a scuffed blue carpet.

The imposing library desk, which stood like a barrier between staff and students, was the signature orange laminate of earlier decades.

“In the time since anything had been done, most other libraries would have been updated twice,” explains head of library Dianne O’Neill.

“Even still, the girls loved the library and it was always well used and they didn’t seem to mind.”

The girls loved the library then but they love it even more now.

After painting the rafters white, the job of replacing imposing heavy furniture and fittings with functional and colourful designs began.

Queensland-based Quantum Libraries was chosen to undertake the refurbishment and Dianne worked with (sales



manager) Colin Matthews who flew down to Victoria to bounce ideas.

“Colin envisaged a new future for us. He listened to how we wanted the library to look and function and then helped us create that space,” she says.

The library’s collection of tall shelving was replaced with low shelving which contributes to the open feel of the room and better showcases books.

All the new shelving can be wheeled to alter the floor space.

Dianne explains that the old library had a glass corridor outside where students would eat their lunch before entering.

That hallway has been reclaimed into the new library and houses eight “booths” (think diner booths) where students can study or eat inside.

“The booths are prime real estate,” says Dianne.

“I think the eating has made the library a more social place with groups chatting and eating and girls catching up on work. It’s a vibrant place.”

Couches, cushions and slimline counters and desks add colour to the room, with bright shades of red, blue and yellow enhanced against black edging or highlights.

A nook of soft lounges where students can sit together or alone, or nestle on a floor cushion, is tucked cosily between shelving.

Dianne says the modern makeover has boosted the popularity of the library and she anticipated it would translate into an increase in book borrowings.

“We’ve got very keen borrowers because the library has always been busy but their mindset is much improved with the new library.” ●







Coolum Library, Sunshine Coast



Caloundra Library, Sunshine Coast



St Claire's, Townsville



All Hallows, Brisbane



Araz chairs - Rewind Canterbury chairs - Milan chairs - Game On flip tables



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Display storage shelves



Araz two seater chairs & laptop tables



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Curved & round ottomans



Single column tables - Sterling magazine shelves



Custom mobile reading nooks & shelves - Curved ottomans & easy boxes



Circle ottoman - Curved mobile Stirling shelves



Custom opacs



Custom curved ottoman



Araz chairs - Curved ottomans



Leaf ottomans - Curved shelving - Pullout cd/dvd drawers



# Digital administration is not a luxury but a necessity for schools

**Andrew Pierpont recalls the days when the school secretary would place a thick folder on his desk full of paper cheques to sign.**

Back then, teachers also wrote lesson plans by hand and marked the attendance roll on paper.

Today, however, many aspects of school administration and classroom preparation are streamlined through software programs known as school management systems.

School management systems are a one-stop-shop for teachers, students and parents where everything from assessment grades to attendance rates can be recorded and tracked in real time.

"Administration is a vital component of school functioning and really we can't function without school management systems now," says Andrew, president of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association.

"In the long run, school management systems are time saving. Lesson plans have to be done some way, some time; rolls need to be marked, bills need to be paid.

"When you do everything in a school management system there is a lot of efficiency."

Andrew explains that school management systems enable consistent application of policy, for example, tracking a student's attendance.

"If a student has been absent too long a little flag will come up so teachers don't have to remember because it's embedded in the system.

"It also keeps track of the financial component of schools and the formulation and tracking of the budget.

"It helps teachers track curriculum and plan how they will deliver the curriculum."

However, with so many



education software platforms on the market, schools are advised to do their homework before choosing a school management system (SMS).

The best systems can save time and enable meaningful communication with students and parents.

But choosing the wrong system can be an expensive money-wasting headache for all involved.

## Industry viewpoint

*When choosing a school management system, schools should first decide their priorities, advises Guy Thomas, managing director of Loop Software and creator of the Daymap SMS.*

Ask yourself, is your school's focus simply data collection such as marking the roll and tracking attendance or is it enabling continuous access to student reports and assessment results?

Does your school want only teachers and students to access the system or is it a priority to also bring parents into the fold?

School management systems can streamline and combine so many aspects of school business

including:

- Digital student timetables
- Attendance marking
- Real-time access to students' results and assessment information
- Setting and tracking homework
- Continuous feedback on assessment
- Student reports
- Newsletters/bulletins/correspondence
- Payments
- Excursions

*Software creator Guy Thomas says school management systems can be modified and customised to suit each school's individual needs.*

"Schools have so many different reasons for wanting a management system," says Guy.

"For government schools, for example, it's more about compliance. They have to track data such as attendance rates.

"For example, Queensland requires same-day attendance

notifications and they need to text parents by a certain time of day and report back attendance rates.

"For government schools, attendance reporting and data gathering is a huge component of what they need. Funding is often tied to enrolments and schools are audited so they really need good processes.

"Independent schools are more keen on publishing student information and communicating with parents.

"For them it's about getting parents engaged in student education. School management systems make it easy for parents to see what homework their children have, track results of their assessment and book parent teacher interviews."

## School input and road testing

Andrew believes software creators should interact closely with principals and schools when developing programs to ensure they meet the needs of educators and administrators.

"It is important that professionals are listened to," he says.



***Lesson plans have to be done some way, some time; rolls needs to be marked, bills need to be paid***

"Principals and principals' associations had a lot of input in One School (used in Queensland state schools) and it shows because the system is very user-friendly."

By comparison, the Victorian government's disastrous roll out of Ultraset in schools resulted in the \$240 million system, which was plagued by technical issues, being scrapped in 2013.

"There also needs to be extreme road testing and trials of systems in large metropolitan schools, and regional, rural and remote schools."

### Lead the way

Implementing a school management system can be a challenging process, which is why it is vital that school leadership drives the project.

Guy advises that schools determine a roll-out plan over several years and ensure everyone is kept up to speed and encouraged to embrace the new system.

"When I'm working with a school we work out a three-year implementation plan and map out how the school wants to use it," says Guy.

"Then the school really needs to drive it. The change can be exhausting so it's vital that school leadership is involved at the highest level.

"It's good if you have an enthusiastic group of core leadership."

### Time saver

One of the greatest advantages of a school management system is the amount of time it saves teachers and administrators. With so many reporting demands from governments and the increasing levels of interaction sought by parents, online systems offer the ability to fulfil such responsibilities with the click of a mouse. "A school these days really can't operate without a school management system," says Guy.

"The programs are so good that even schools with 50 students or less are wanting it. It saves a massive amount of time for teachers. "For example, teachers still have to mark the roll but instead of doing it on paper they

can open up the system and click on a class and mark the roll and with just a few more clicks they can set the homework which has already been uploaded from last year and it saves so much time."

### Future

*With so many new software creators offering school management systems, in his opinion, Guy advises schools to really do their homework.*

He predicts that the industry will undergo significant consolidation as the big companies and software systems take over. "What's important to one school may be different from another."

Guy says "small and agile" businesses will continue to thrive because they cater specifically to client needs. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

## Partnership, Evolution and Technology

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# How to welcome the public with new technology

## Security-conscious schools are beefing up sign-in procedures for visitors.

Schools are under increasing pressure when it comes to checking the legitimacy and credentials of visitors to their campuses.

Traditionally, visitors would be greeted with a friendly smile at the office and asked to sign their name in a book.

While they will still receive that friendly smile today, visitor registration procedures have changed and are undertaken digitally – usually on an iPad.

The new process generally involves guests entering their names into an iPad stationed at the front counter and selecting their visitor type from a list of drop-down boxes.

But more than that, the person signing in may have to undergo significant background and credential checking to ensure they have been cleared to work with children.

## Visitor management procedures

The Victorian education department provides an extensive explanation of its visitor management procedures and lists visitors as:

- prospective parents and employees
- those who are addressing a learning or developmental need, such as:
- parent and community volunteers
- invited speakers
- sessional instructors
- representatives of community, business and service groups
- local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments
- those who are conducting business such as:
- uniform suppliers
- booksellers
- official school photographers



- commercial salespeople
- trades people
- children's services agents
- talent scouts
- instructors providing Special Religious Instruction (SRI)

As a minimum, Victorian schools are required to ensure they have a record of all visitors in case of emergency or for future investigations.

But in many states the sign-in procedures include checking whether guests who will be working with students have the appropriate approvals for example the Working with Children Check in Victoria or the Blue Card in Queensland.

## Industry opinion

*Laura Hunt, sales and marketing manager at visitor management software Passtab, says schools are stepping up their sign-in procedures to meet the new demands of student safety and security.*

"As Australia's education departments set new standards for entry into schools, these systems have to be in place to implement them effectively," says Laura.

"The policies differ from state to state but, in general, I believe it is creating safer schools that are able to manage the legal demands of today's world."

"With regards to contractors doing

work on the premises, the school needs to make sure they have dotted all the 'i's and crossed all the 't's because if circumstances arise they could be liable."

Although the level of security required to enter schools may appear "heavy", Laura says systems ensure the registration process remains simple and quick.

"If you are a visitor who complies, it will be smooth sailing for you. It will only be difficult if the person doesn't have the necessary documentation," she explains.

"For most people it should take less than a minute, particularly if they are a visitor who won't actually be working with the children.

"Usually the people who are affected by the conditions are already aware of it, like contractors. They are already used to making sure they meet the conditions of school entry."

Laura anticipates that this category will continue to develop to match the increasing security measures designed to enhance student safety.

Programs can also double up for other day-to-day uses within a school such as in NSW where a new policy requires staff to sign in and out.

Systems can track the provision of first aid to students, report and track student late arrivals and early departures, or use email and SMS to notify teachers of student

movements or alert staff to the arrival of their visitor.

Some schools use systems to monitor equipment hire or to keep track of the distribution of keys.

Data collected from visitor sign in on school open days and tours can be used by the school for future marketing and communications.

## Conclusion

Of course, an iPad on a desk is not an entirely fail safe measure as dubious visitors can always avoid the office or walk past the device.

And an iPad will never replace the smiling faces and subtle scrutiny of the staff at the administration desk.

Laura says making the most of digital technology reduces the workload of employees who would otherwise have to file reams of paper or rely on memory.

It also adds a greater measure of security with the technology's ability to dig deeper, flag alerts and store a record of every person to have entered the campus.

"As a country our sign-in processes are up with the best in the world, but I believe there will be a lot of new developments required to meet this rapidly changing area. The key here is to use technology to make a complex set of requirements, designed to protect the safety of our children, easy to implement," she says. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

# SCHOOL VISITOR MANAGEMENT



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Passtab is designed to make the management of visitor related tasks fast and efficient by providing tools to help you meet the legal requirements for people working at your school.

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[www.passtab.com](http://www.passtab.com)



 **passtab**  
school visitor management



# Capturing those special school moments



Image supplied by: Openbook Howden

## School yearbooks are more affordable and gaining popularity with primary schools as well as high schools.

In a predominantly digital world, the printed yearbook that you can hold in your hands and flick through its pages still holds a special place in the hearts of students, graduates and families. It is a tangible keepsake that protects the memories of youth and recalls a time in life that can be remembered fondly. With the reduced costs of printing, improved design software and the simplicity of digital photography, compiling a yearbook is now more cost effective and less time consuming than ever.

In this edition *School News* talks to yearbook printers and designers to get their views and pointers on planning a yearbook, design ideas and how best to capture those special moments.

## Planning a yearbook

Like any big school project,

planning a yearbook should begin as soon as possible.

Although it may only take about two months to pull together the final product (depending on your printer), the process of compiling photos and articles should occur throughout the year.

Deciding on a printer early will also take some of the headache out of archiving photos because many yearbook businesses offer software or archiving systems through which to store images for easy access.

## Design

Yearbook design decisions include everything from the size and shape of the book, paper thickness, printing colour or black-and-white and what to put on the cover.

Beyond those big-ticket decisions are finer details such as the layout of each page, the type of font, and colour schemes.

Then there's the all-important question of who to employ to

undertake the production and design work.

Yearbook providers offer choice when it comes to design options to cater different budgets and a school's level of design expertise, from DIY to using in-house graphic designers.

A number of software programs such as *InDesign* and *Publisher* are more user-friendly while specific yearbook software programs offer templates that enable the user to simply drag and drop photos and text into boxes.

## Industry opinion

MSP Photography yearbook supervisor Meng Dunn says schools should consider forming a yearbook committee and designating roles to different staff and students.

The committee can get the ball rolling with early decision-making such how many sections or chapters to include, who should be in charge of collecting photos and articles and the all-important

financial budget. Some schools might have one or two people coordinating the whole yearbook while others might share the load between different year levels," says Meng.

Openbook Howden general manager (sales and marketing) Greg Hassold advises to set a production schedule with key dates marked throughout the year such as deadlines for obtaining the majority of images and content, design decisions, proofing and alterations.

Another key timeline consideration is when do you want the yearbooks printed?

Printciple Source managing director Jeff Hosnell explains that some schools might be happy to wait until the following year to collect yearbooks because it will allow them to include more content.

"We deliver a lot of books the next year now because schools want to fit in as much as possible such as HSC results," says Jeff. ►

# Openbook Howden have been producing school yearbooks for more than 50 years.

Openbook Howden Print & Design (OBH) are an Australian owned and operated family business trusted by over 200 schools each year to provide their specialist print services including yearbooks, magazines, diaries, prospectuses, annual reports, newsletters, certificates, handbooks, brochures and stationery.

In 2017 OBH produced 46,280 yearbooks for 56 schools across Australia.

Their in-house creative team spent more than 1,000 hours designing bespoke yearbooks.

OBH employ 59 dedicated team members and they design, print and distribute everything from their Adelaide headquarters.

The great benefit of printing everything onsite and having an in-house creative team is that they know how to design for print, and also have unrestricted access to production for press checks, specifications and recommendations.

Their digital and offset presses accommodate both short or long run printing, and their art department also provides colour management, ensuring images are colour corrected accurately.



**OBH's yearbook options are flexible and can be tailored to any school's budget. Their service includes:**

- Fully customised design, layout and print
- Template designs and print
- Print only for schools who supply print ready files

OBH provide a structured and simplified approach to file management which takes the stress out of an often daunting process. They work collaboratively

with clients from start to finish and a dedicated account manager will provide advice on size, binding, embellishments and the best materials to use.

On-time delivery is key! OBH provide project management to ensure yearbooks are delivered on time. This includes working with schools to develop a schedule with key milestones, and then working together every step of the way, to achieve these deadlines. ▲

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For further information contact Greg Hassold on 08 8124 0000 or [greg@openbookhowden.com.au](mailto:greg@openbookhowden.com.au)

**[openbookhowden.com.au](http://openbookhowden.com.au)**



**openbook howden**  
print & design





Image supplied by: MSP Photography



Image supplied by: Openbook Howden

## ◀ On capturing special moments

Of course, the most important part of putting a yearbook together is ensuring you capture those milestones and special moments throughout the school year.

With so many people owning high quality phones, the quantity of images available is unlikely to be a problem.

But it is important to establish

the most practical means of collecting and collating those photos.

Openbook Howden's Greg says mobile phones are fine to use as long as file sizes are not reduced when sending images.

MSP Photography sends its schools a weblink whereby parents, teachers and students can add photos to a designated folder as the year progresses.

Printciple Source's Jeff, who sets up a Google Drive folder for his

schools, says it is important to get the archiving right.

"Parents want to see photos, they want to see as many photos as possible and they need to be really diverse," he says.

## Supplier insights and trends

Meng says MSP Photography's own easy-to-use templated program is popular with schools because they also receive support, technical advice and

collaborative input throughout the yearbook process.

"The software program has a library of templates that basically offers endless design options," says Meng.

"It's up to the schools to put the book together but we can also access their book and help with troubleshooting and I think what's appealing is that we can jump in and look at their yearbook and offer a level of support."

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Meng says plenty of photos and lots of colour were the most popular design features among his clients, many of which are primary schools.

Openbook Howden's Greg Hassold says "photography is king" when it comes to modern yearbook design, with schools often wanting to cram in as many images as possible and using less text.

He says other design trends include augmented reality where a mobile phone app scans the page and brings the images to life like the moving paintings on *Harry Potter*.

Greg says student artworks are appearing more frequently on yearbook covers and schools

are even holding competitions to choose a cover design.

Printciple Source's Jeff Hosnell, who uses printers in China, says the competitive pricing in Asia means schools can now embellish their yearbooks with features that had previously been financially out of reach.

"We can add things like four or 6 page year 12 Group Photo foldouts that are glued into the yearbook and open up," says Jeff.

But a number of software programs such as *Publisher* for smaller yearbooks 24pp to 64pp are more user-friendly while specific yearbook software programs offer templates that enable the user to simply drag and drop photos and text into

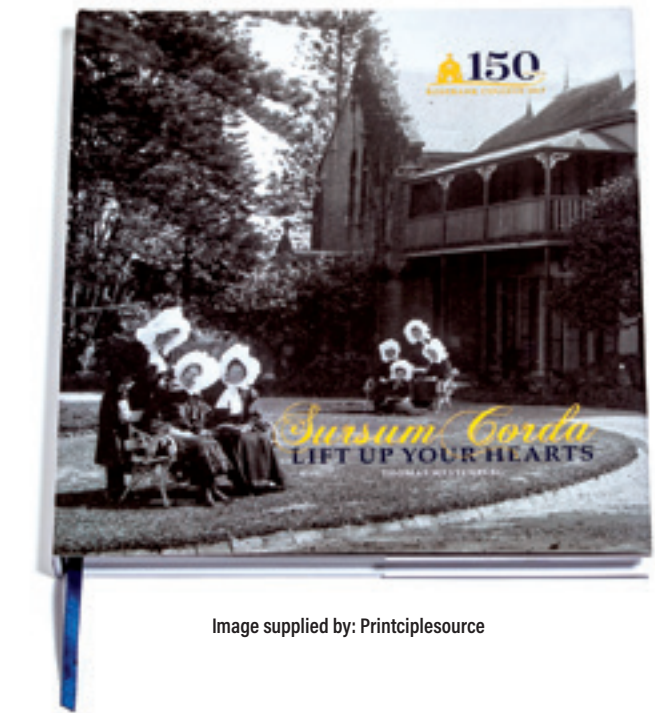


Image supplied by: Printciplesource

boxes. "You can choose multi-coloured foils that look great on the covers at very low cost. We can also do cut-outs on the cover where you have a picture window on the front cover."

One of Printciple Source's most popular offerings is its hard covers which have also been made affordable through overseas printing. ■

By Kat Donaghey, Editor



**We produce yearbooks for Secondary Schools, Primary Schools, Year 6, Year 12 and Anniversary Books. Working with the schools' yearbook team, utilising our design expertise or printing from artwork supplied by the schools, we endeavour to supply the best possible yearbook!**



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Jean Christie, Director of Marketing



#### Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown, NSW - 10 Years

*"Put simply, it is the best ever Yearbook, due to the professional creative and thorough work done by the team at Printciple Source. There is a genuine excitement about the quality of the Yearbook."*

Mr Santo Passarello, Principal



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# Planning a school camp without the stress

**Fun but frantic: filled with worry but so worthwhile, school camp is a milestone for children and for new teachers.**

## What was your first experience chaperoning a school camp?

The best kind are as exciting for teachers as they are for the students but those require good planning. Depending on the length of the camp and distance from the school, you'll need at least a year to prepare in advance: everything from food and shelter to activities, entertainment and learning experiences. Once the budget has been thoroughly accounted for, accommodation and location are probably the biggest initial concerns.



## A good night's rest

To find the right accommodation provider, think about the size of your camp-group and length of stay. If it's more than a week, you may want to consider multiple locations or make sure

the rooms will be comfortable enough for an extended stay. There are a plethora of amazing accommodation providers that cater to school groups; from cabins and camping sites, to city apartments, motels, and more unusual offerings like overnight aquarium or planetarium stays.

Don't forget to think about the accommodation options for teachers and chaperones; ask the accommodation manager about this during your initial enquiry.

A venue that's close to your school will mean cheaper transport and, particularly for the littlest campers, parents aren't too far away if the experience gets a little too much for someone.

On the downside, it can be less exciting for students and the range of activities available may not be as wide. Travelling a little further afield gets everyone in the adventurous spirit and increases the number of opportunities to tie in different subjects.

Another vital element of school camp is the unique opportunity to build bonds within student groups. Camp is a chance for kids to 'hang out' with peers outside their friendship circle; to rely on and trust each other in group activities and share new experiences that will create positive memories and hopefully strengthen their bonds. It is the camp coordinator or planner's role to try to make room for this to happen by organising the ideal itinerary. Things that might suit your student-group include an end-of-camp dance, campfire story-times, impromptu plays or social activities, or group orienteering but there are countless options.

## Food, food, glorious food.

This can really make or break a school camp. The last thing you need is for a child to get sick because of something they ate, so first of all make sure you are clear about allergies and food



## Themed programs at Queensland Recreation Centres

**The Queensland Recreation Centres offer four themed programs as part of their all-inclusive Adventure Camp. *There's Be Strong*, which develops resilience and coping skills; *Unite*, which focuses on team building; *Stand Up*, which develops leadership skills; and *Get Activated*, with an emphasis on health and well-being.**

Each of the programs develops skills through a fun, challenging, and engaging

experiential learning process, using activities such as rock climbing, abseiling, surfing, raft building and caving.

The programs have been designed in consultation with experienced teachers to align with the Australian Curriculum. A suite of teacher and student resources are also available for Year Bands 5/6

and 7/8, which include pre, during and post camp activities.

With two locations on the Gold Coast at Tallebudgera Beach and Sunshine Coast at Currimundi Beach, the Queensland Recreation Centres are an ideal choice for your next school camp experience. ●





intolerances. Second of all, plan to have good camp food. Cooking might even be a great activity to schedule into the itinerary but, either way, make sure everyone will be well-fed. Whether you opt for a caterer (do a taste test well in advance, if possible), order food to be sent to the campground, book a facility that includes food, or plan for students to bring a set amount of money for food each day, make sure you think it through.

Decide what to ban students from bringing along to camp. Some parents will want their children to bring phones, for example, so it's up to you to decide whether this is permitted. Snacks, games, technology, books, makeup: cover all your bases and let parents and students know why they can't bring certain items. If it's not explicitly banned, someone will probably bring it. ■

*By Rosie Clarke, Industry Reporter*



#### Sunshine Coast Recreation Centre

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E: [sunshinecoastrec@qld.gov.au](mailto:sunshinecoastrec@qld.gov.au)



#### Gold Coast Recreation Centre

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# Caring for kids outside the classroom

## Quality childminding services are an increasing necessity on school campuses.

The rise of “working families” in Australia has led to an increasing need for general child-minding of school-age children.

Out of School Hours Care (OOSHC), which offers childcare before and after school and during school holiday periods, has been growing up to eight per cent each year.

With fewer families able to rely on grandparents or a friendly neighbour to watch the kids, more schools are introducing convenient care services on campus.

However setting up an out of school hours care service requires more than hiring a group of baby sitters for a few hours in the afternoon.

The sector falls under childcare and is governed by compliance and regulations that add a layer of complexity to a school's day-to-day business.

Outsourcing out of school hours care to commercial or not-for-profit providers is a growing trend which enables schools to focus on their core business while still providing quality child-minding services.

## Industry opinion

*Extend After School Care CEO Darren Stevenson says the three areas of greatest consideration when setting up an out of school hours service at school are:*

**1. Staff:** Ensure the people hired to look after and teach the students have the correct qualifications. Co-ordinators should have at least a *Diploma in Children's Services* or *Certificate III in Childcare Services*. Staff should all be first aid and CPR trained.

Says Darren: “The most important thing when setting up are the people running the service. The same way that



classroom teachers are vital to the success of schools, with OOSHC, the educators are vital to the success of the service. Therefore you need to focus on the right staff who are passionate and engage with the students but are also qualified and experienced.”

**2. Programs:** Childminding services involve more than supervision. Programs should be engaging and enjoyable, encourage social development, hone problem solving skills and set challenges.

Says Darren: “We want children to go to OOSHC because they are happy to do so, not just because they have to. Does the program have engaging resources, board games, reading areas, games to play, structured activity?”

**3. Management:** Co-ordinators should keep accurate records on everything from attendances to education tracking and daily observations. Management duties also include administering the childcare subsidy and general compliance.

Says Darren: “Compliance and regulations can be difficult that’s

why outsourcing is a growing trend. A lot of hours can go into managing the service.”

Darren says principals should select a provider that also complements the schools ethos and values.

“Ask for word-of-mouth references and due proper diligence; search online for breaches, bans, fines. Does the provider have a good track record of compliance, treating people well and building long-lasting relationships with schools?”

*Sherpa Kids Australia General Manager Michael Rasmussen says schools should make an informed choice rather than selecting the most well-known providers.*

“In my opinion there needs to be a solid balance between what is best for the children and families and what is best fit for the school,” he says.

With this in mind, communication, engagement and staff are the important elements to consider when choosing a provider for your school.

**1. Communication:** Dialogue

between parents and the provider and between school and provider is critical.

Says Michael: “It may seem simple but parents and schools not being able to speak with the decisionmakers of their services can be extremely frustrating.”

**2. Engagement:** Providers that engage in a genuine relationship with the school generally provide a service that is viewed as an extension or partner of the school.

Says Michael: “It needs to be more than just about financial remuneration. Big providers can obviously offer higher rents, financial incentives etc, but does this ensure a real partnership and better care?”

**3. Staff:** What do the provider’s staff bring in terms of value to this service? Are the staff consistent or do they turnover regularly? Is the owner/director involved in the service?

Says Michael: “As would be the case in the school employing staff, they should look at the providers staff in a similar way.” ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

## supplier profile

EXTEND

## Who's looking after your kids?

**School leaders and working families place their trust in outside school hours care providers to ensure children are receiving the best quality care when school's out.**

It'll come as no surprise to know the Educators on site at your outside school hours service are the key to gaining the most developmental and social advantages for children who attend.

Founder and CEO of Extend, Darren Stevenson says, "Sixteen years ago I had a vision of providing every child with amazing opportunities to grow and learn. Over the years it's become clear that the most pivotal influence in each child's Extend experience is the Educators we hire for each service."



"This is why we always interview, vet and hire all our own Educators. Every single one. I'll never send a temp or agency Educator to an Extend service. We have to meet you and vet you personally before you are allowed to look after our kids." Extend is the only national, multi-service provider who never

uses temp or agency staff.

Mr. Stevenson concedes hiring all their own Educators is an expensive and time consuming process which is why no other national providers do so.

"It's much quicker and easier to just call a temp agency to

fill a shift. But what you get is a stranger coming on site. They don't know the kids, the parents, the school leaders, or the processes. It's fraught with risk."

Running outside school hours care isn't the same as running the uniform shop or school maintenance. In outside school hours care children are alone with the Educators after hours.

There are no school teachers or parents around when outside school hours care is operating. Therefore it's vital all schools ask providers the right questions.

Mr. Stevenson says, "Schools should ensure, when choosing an outside school hours care provider, they ask very specific questions. The most important is, how do you hire all of your Educators? I'm sure the answer will surprise most schools." ▲

# DON'T TAKE YOUR EYE OFF THE BALL!



## DO YOUR RESEARCH!

Many outside school hours care providers make promises that are impossible to keep.

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## supplier profile

SHERPA KIDS

## New Direction

**Sherpa Kids is an international company headquartered in Australia which runs before and after school care services and holiday care in schools and other community facilities. The organisation, which has some 100 franchises worldwide, looks after around 5,400 primary school-aged children every day.**

Whilst the name Sherpa Kids may not be as synonymous within the Outside of School Hours Care (OSHC) industry in Australia as some of the bigger providers, it is their intent to change this over the coming years. It is a goal to ensure school leaders know the name Sherpa Kids and connect it with an understanding of commitment and quality.

Sherpa Kids Australia is in over 30 schools across the country, which are owned and operated by more than a dozen franchisees. The fact that Sherpa Kids services are delivered by the business owners is important; the service is being provided by someone with a significant investment in the business and the incentive to make sure it is being done right and being done well.

Sherpa services deliver a highly structured, engaging environment designed specifically to achieve a positive social and educational outcome. It is this that differentiates them clearly from their competitors. Activities include arts and crafts, music and drama, sport and games, cooking and technology. Many are based on specific themes, and tailored to fit in with the individual requirements of schools, their cultures and ultimately their communities.

Sherpa Kids Australia recently went through significant change with new ownership and a new direction. New Managing Director, Michael Rasmussen, comes to this role with a lot of experience in business as well as education, being a qualified teacher as well as having operated several large OSHC services in NSW.

When asked his opinion on modern OSHC services in primary schools, Mr Rasmussen says in his experience as a classroom teacher, School Sports Manager and now an OSHC operator, he has been exposed to many different OSHC programs operated by a variety of providers.

"Many of these services, on the surface, appeared to be well



run," he says. "The children were happy, there were lots of activities, the staff looked as though they were enjoying their work and the physical environment was clean and tidy. Is this what it means to have a good OSHC service at your school? In part, yes, however there is a lot that goes into ensuring a service is able to look like the one previously mentioned. Factors such as, staffing – in particular managers, the school relationships, review and discussion, and parent communication. These aspects can so easily change and subsequently the service dynamics goes with it. My experience allows me to ensure these ingredients go into the services we provide and the support is there to ensure the stability of these key factors and the continued success of the service."

Mr Rasmussen says that when speaking to principals and school leaders that they often ask what makes Sherpa Kids different to other providers.

His answer refers to the Sherpa Kids business model and its franchisees.

Many large providers, he says, such

as those controlling more than 50 services, find it difficult to ensure the factors mentioned above remain strong in each and every service. Sherpa Kids provides the only franchised OSHC service in the country. This means the schools deal directly with the business owner, not a manager or regional manager but the Managing Director. This holds many benefits for the school and their families. Their franchisees generally do not control more than five or six services each, which ensures the business owners remain very close to their services. Their connections with the school and its families is intimate and it enables them to be more effective and efficient in all that they do. An ideal franchisee understands the school systems and the needs of a modern primary school. The franchisees are essentially running a small school, as they control educational budgets, deal with such aspects as staffing, programming, assessment and reviews, so experience in these areas is important.

In explaining Sherpa Kids Australia's role, Michael says: "Our job as the franchisor is to

oversee each operation and provide operational support with our team of highly experienced OSHC professionals. This allows me

to personally take the successes of what we do in our existing services to new, potential school sites and discuss with the principals the possibility of engaging in a long-term relationship to provide the same level of quality care at their school."

As Sherpa Kids continues to work towards building awareness of its name within the network of primary schools throughout Australia, it guarantees that schools that engage with Sherpa Kids will enjoy professional working partnerships. Mr Rasmussen concludes: "We ensure we are always willing to work in with the needs of the school and to integrate what we do into the life of each school. I acknowledge there are many good providers in the marketplace but we want to put ourselves out there as a leader in what we provide rather than how many services we have."

Sherpa Kids is available to talk to you about the out of school hours care needs at your school today. ▲



# Looking for a solution to your OOSH/OSHC challenges?

Australian families are desperate for good quality, affordable day care or outside school hours care



**These days both parents are likely to be employed and working longer hours than ever. This, combined with transport issues, can make the issue of after school clubs or after school care a stressful one for parents and children alike.**

## **AND IT'S BECOMING A MAJOR ISSUE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.**

Volunteer-managed OOSH or OSHC committees are struggling with the issue of out of school care in the face of new regulatory reforms that increase quality expectations but also increase administrative burdens. Senior educators like you are looking for a better way and OOSH service providers are frequently an attractive option.

You'll be well aware of the difference it makes to you and your school community when you have high quality, well managed outside school hours care on your site. At Sherpa Kids we deliver exactly that - but with a difference that other after school care and OOSH service providers cannot match. Because our business is built on the local franchise model you get the best of both worlds; the care and concern of a local decision maker based in your community, combined with the confidence and authority of stable, professional central management.

**Firstly, your service is owned and managed by a carefully selected local community member;** usually a mum or dad and, in some cases, an education professional.

They understand families, they understand schools, and they want to mirror your school's values in their before and after school care services and vacation care.

The Out of School Hours (OOSH) care sector is intensely regulated. So, it's important that procedures are followed correctly. When you partner with us we will take care of your OOSH services set-up in full. We'll manage all your administration, recruitment, training, staff rota, parent communication and compliance obligations.

And we'll buy all food and resources locally from retailers in your area.

**Secondly, the franchisees are all part of a highly professional group with centralised resources geared to ensuring State and Federal regulatory compliance and enabling development of engaging programs for the children we care for.** We've developed a fun and flexible, engaging programme of before and after school activities that is syllabus-led and can be tailored to fit the individual requirements of schools and their curriculums.

**Fun, flexible and engaging OOSH/OSHC programmes that are syllabus-led.**

**Sherpa Kids Australia are currently working with local schools in Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra areas. Sherpa Kids presents your school with the opportunity to make real a difference for your local community by providing out of school care. Please contact the team at Sherpa Kids to find out more.**

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**[www.sherpa-kids.com.au](http://www.sherpa-kids.com.au)**

**REACH ENGAGE CHALLENGE**





# Exploring QLD from reefs to rivers, bush to beach

**Queensland's popularity as a tourism destination also makes it perfect for education adventures.**

With today's young people spending more time indoors, socialising less in person and exploring the world through devices rather than experience, outdoor education is considered more important than ever.

Encouraging students to close their schoolbooks and step outside the classroom fosters learning through physical experience, adventure, pushes their limits and stimulates the senses.

As a result, learning is deepened, grades improve, self-esteem is boosted, friendships are formed and strengthened and leaders are born.

Outdoor Education Australia chair Peter McKenna says outdoor education programs are designed to enhance personal development or connect students with the environment – or both.

"They are more important than ever because young people are getting fewer opportunities to connect in the outdoors and with each other so any opportunity which promotes that is more important than ever," says Peter.

But not all outdoor adventures involve bush and beach camps or daredevil activities. Museums, theatres, sports stadiums and even theme parks also offer many memorable education opportunities.



Many educational venues are available within walking distance of each other at Brisbane's Southbank.

This edition *School News* explores Queensland as a destination for education adventures.

## Why take your students to Queensland?

Queensland's popularity as a tourism destination also makes it perfect for outdoor learning.

From the southern border right up to Cairns in the north, the state is dotted with outdoor education camps in some of the most beautiful natural settings.

The Department of Education runs 24 outdoor and environmental education facilities in such tourist-worthy locations as North Keppel Island, Moreton Bay and

Tallebudgera but there are also many private providers.

Private accommodation such as YHA have also aligned their facilities with locations on the tourism trail such as the Airlie Beach, Hervey Bay and Cairns.

"I think Queensland is a natural attraction," says YHA Brisbane City manager Sam Owen.

"We have three of the biggest sand islands in the world, the Great Barrier Reef, Daintree, world-renowned and heritage-listed natural assets and national parks.

"Around Brisbane we have easy-to-reach places like Springbrook National Park and then up north you have Airlie Beach and the Whitsundays.

"That's why Queensland is so popular with backpackers and YHA has aligned itself with those popular locations."

Queensland's capital city of Brisbane also offers cultural and sporting attractions such as museums, science centres, theatres and stadiums, many of which are free and easily located within walking distance from each other.

## Attractions and Museums

Museums, educational centres and attractions cater to students by offering tailored learning programs, discounts and tours.

While the bulk of Queensland's largest facilities are located centrally in Brisbane and the south-east corner, many more are also dotted across the vast state's regional towns.

For example, the tiny outback town of Winton has a population of just 875 but is bursting with prehistoric and historic educational experiences including the Australian Age of Dinosaurs where students can learn about and see real dinosaur bones that were discovered in the area.

The town also boasts the new Waltzing Matilda Centre celebrating the town's connection to Banjo Patterson.

A couple of hours down a long straight highway from Winton is Longreach where the Qantas Museum tells the story of Australia's national airline which was born in outback Queensland. The Stockman's Hall of fame, also in Longreach, relives Australia's droving past. ►



Students can explore Qld's reefs.



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◀ Brisbane City offers a trail of cultural experiences including the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), ScienCentre, Queensland Museum and Queensland Maritime Museum as well as a series of educational programs at the State Library.

State Parliament, Suncorp Stadium and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) cater to politics, sport and drama while a range of theme parks on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast include Dream World, Sea World, Movie World and Sea Life Mooloolaba.

Finally, zoos are a popular and accessible attraction that combine educational learning with a fun day out. Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast is the largest but others such as Wildlife HQ and Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary are also worth a visit.

## Activities

When it comes to outdoor adventure activities, once again Queensland's natural attractions are hard to beat.

From camping to high ropes, bushwalking, snorkelling and muddy obstacle courses, Queensland's outdoor education centres offer activities that

promote personal development and connecting with nature.

Outdoor Education Australia chair Peter McKenna says the programs at outdoor education centres are continually updated to suit the needs of students.

"The level of resourcing provided by the Education Department is exceptional and first class in terms of the number of venues, the variety of programs, the availability of programs and the partnership," says Peter.

"We have some of the best and most experienced educators in Australia and the world in their field."

Activities and learning are tailored to match the environment. For example North Keppel Island offers a reef-based program where students can explore coral reefs, tidal creeks and mangroves, as well as Indigenous sites.

Rural-based Maroon Dam, in the foothills of the Scenic Rim, offers an insight into country life while Moreton Bay on Brisbane's east is a gateway to the local islands.

## Accommodation

Housing hundreds of excitable school students on a camp or



road trip may sound daunting but specialist accommodation providers take away the hassle.

Outdoor centres and hostels have been designed specifically for large groups with a range of room options, group spaces and facilities.

They also employ specialist staff to facilitate programs or undertake the fussy work or organising tours, transport and food.

YHA is one such non-profit organisation and has 16 properties across Queensland located for ease of access to attractions and nature icons.

The organisation's mission is to promote education through personal development, foster friendships and help young people better understand the world and

others. Many of the school groups that visit YHA's centrally located Brisbane accommodation are from regional towns making the trip to the Big Smoke.

"We have a dedicated group co-ordinator who is basically a one-stop shop and can facilitate everything like booking tours," says Sam.

"The properties are set up so group bookings can have their own space with a TV and lounge.

YHA has dorms, private twin and double rooms with ensuites and standard dorms.

"We can also organise lunches or if the students are at sporting carnivals we do jersey washing in the night," says Sam. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

# Your gateway to the great outdoors

**The YHA group of properties has a mission statement that promotes "education by personal development" and a desire to help young people understand each other and the world.**

With 80 properties across Australia – and 16 in Qld – the not-for-profit organisation is a leader in the provision of group accommodation.

YHA traces its history to a German schoolteacher who came up with the idea of youth hostels in 1909 when leading his class on a hike and taking

shelter each night in barns and local schools.

Today's YHA properties are located in some of the most beautiful and popular locations in Australia and offer easy access to nature as well as city attractions.

Facilities include fully equipped kitchens, clean rooms, comfortable beds, spacious bathroom facilities, social areas, comfy lounge rooms, televisions and board games.

Friendly and helpful staff are also on hand to help organise tours and schedules and assist with day-to-day practicalities such as clothes washing. ●



Students enjoy the facilities at YHA Brisbane.

# Giving students another sporting chance

**As more schools struggle to provide quality physical education, outsourcing could be the way of the future.**

Physical activity is more important than ever as young people lead increasingly sedentary lives.

But physical education advocates warn that many schools are failing to provide even the minimum requirements to promote health in children.

The Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) has warned that it's time to put health education, physical education and sport at the forefront of our children's education.

Children aged 5 to 17 should accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate physical activity (including some vigorous activity), according to Australia's *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guideline*. As much as several hours per day of activity is recommended for even better health.

The guidelines state that children should also engage in activities that strengthen muscle and bone on at least three days per week and limit the use of electronic media such as television and computer games to no more than two hours a day to prevent excessive sitting.

But despite widespread acknowledgement that sport is important, schools are struggling



to prioritise physical health.

The Australian Curriculum sets a 'notional' requirement for 80 hours a year of physical education (not including extracurricular sports programs) but the time allocation remains the responsibility of the states.

While state governments have standards in place, these are rarely met because primary schools often do not have specialist PE teachers, instead relying on class teachers with little experience or knowledge of sport.

From state to state the minimum requirements for physical education vary, with some schools required to do as little as ten minutes a session.

Victoria mandates 20 to 30 minutes per day for P-3 students; three hours per week for years 4 to 6 and 100 minutes each for

PE and sport per week for years 7 to 10.

In NSW, the curriculum requires a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate activity (with some vigorous activity) for K to 10.

In Queensland, the Education Department's *Physical Activity in Schools* policy on its website advises a minimum of 10 minutes.

## Industry insights: supplier trends

Physical education advocate Peter Nikolakopoulos, who founded Sport Star Academy in Victoria, believes outsourcing sport to private businesses is the way forward for schools that are serious about improving the health of their students.

Peter's Football Star Academy franchise was named the *Optus My Business Awards Franchise*

*Business of the Year* in 2017.

His sports programs are in 220 schools and his expansion plans include developing a strong interstate presence.

Peter says sports providers can make up for the shortcomings in schools but they can also complement physical education teachers.

"Outsourcing sport is the way of the future; we are reshaping the way sport is taught," says Peter.

"Many schools are lacking with physical activity; they're doing bits and pieces or doing the bare minimum.

"We're passionate about keeping kids moving and there are a lot of schools and kids that need to be part of something like this."

Peter says the trend in favour of outside providers is gaining momentum as parents realise the benefits of utilising school hours to enrol their children in sports that would usually occur on weekends.

Sport Star Academy provides dedicated and qualified coaches in everything from soccer to AFL and netball meaning traditional club sports that used to take up Saturday mornings can now be undertaken at school, freeing up weekends for family time.

Peter says lunchtime sport is a fast-growing trend because it also saves time-poor families from the hectic schedule of before and after school training. ►





◀ Sport Star Academy focuses on skills, fun, unlocking children's potential and staying active and enables a natural progression of skills through the levels.

"We've got kids who have been with us for years," explains Peter.

However the peak body representing PE teachers has raised questions about outsourcing sport. According to ACHPER, a downside could be the cost especially for low socioeconomic schools.

ACHPER CEO John Stokes says his focus is ensuring there are more jobs for qualified health and physical education teachers, not less.

"I'm sure some schools are outsourcing because they either can't identify or access qualified teachers but our focus is ensuring

there are adequate opportunities for teachers of health and PE."

"By committing to strong health and physical education in schools we hope there will be continuing

demand for qualified teachers."

John says health and PE has been falling down the priority ladder because schools are placing more emphasis on STEM subjects and

improving NAPLAN results.

"We continue to advocate that physical health is an important part of wholistic education in primary and highschool." ■



## The future of sports teaching

**Sport Star Academy founder Peter Nikolakopoulos is passionate about the health of children.**

With schools now providing the bare minimum (or less) in health and physical education, Peter is filling the gaps with his school-based sports program.

Sport Star Academy offers a range of popular sports including soccer, rugby, AFL, netball, tennis, basketball, golf and cricket.

The company's Football Star Academy, which is franchised, was named Optus My Business Awards Franchise Business of the Year 2017.

"Many schools these days don't even have PE teachers, or they have to share a PE teacher with other schools," explains Peter.

"But with Sport Star Academy they have a dedicated provider. We are reshaping the way sport is taught. This is the way forward."

Sport Star Academy offers skills-based programs before and after school and during school hours including the increasingly popular lunchtime program.

With a philosophy that "champions are made, not born", dedicated coaches focus on developing students' skills, having fun, nurturing a love of sport and learning through sport. ●



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CHAMPIONS ARE  
MADE, NOT BORN





# A shady solution to the problem of skin cancer

**With sun exposure during the first 18 years of life the most critical factor for skin cancer, schools should consider how to minimise risk.**

Studies show that exposure to the sun in childhood and adolescence is more likely to contribute to skin cancer later in life.

Skin cancer has a long latency, meaning it can be many years before damage from youth manifests decades later as potentially deadly spots on the skin.

However not all skin cancer occurs later in life. Melanoma is in fact the most common cancer in young people, occurring at double the rate of other cancers.

The obvious message in such statistics is the importance of reducing the exposure of young people to the damaging effects of the sun.

It has been estimated that half of total UV exposure up to the age of 60 actually occurs before the age of 20, a time when most of a young person's life is spent at school.

Over the course of a week, students could spend many hours exposed to the sun's harmful rays during physical education, sport, lunchbreaks, assemblies and when moving between classrooms.

The accumulation of time under the sun, particularly if a child's skin (which is thinner than adult skin) suffers sunburn or tanning, makes sun safety an important health and safety issue that all schools should address.

Over several decades now, sun safety in the form of hats and protective clothing have become a standard addition to many school uniforms.

In fact it is more common for schools to address hats and sunscreen than shade, according to one report by the Cancer Council.

But while it may be relatively easy to encourage hats in primary school, it can be more difficult to insist fashion-conscious secondary students don the broad brim.



Hat and sunscreen usage in secondary schools is generally lower than primary schools, according to one report, highlighting the importance of shade as a sun protective measure.

In fact, when implementing a school sun protection policy, schools are encouraged to consider shade as part of a suite of sun safety tools.

The Cancer Council encourages schools to undertake a shade audit and has advice on planning and implementing a shade project.

## Planning your school's shade project

- Look around the school grounds and consider what areas may need shade eg. playgrounds, assembly areas, canteens, bus stops, pedestrian links, transit zones, pools, tennis courts, sports fields.
- Optimise existing shade before considering extra shade for example, move benches under trees or remove low branches from trees to create a new play space.
- Consider the time of day when areas are most used. Shade should be available during peak UV times.

- How will climate impact on the type of shade you provide? Is it windy, rainy, hot or dry? Are your school grounds exposed to salt which can cause corrosion. These factors may impact the type of shade you install.
- Shade type many vary from season to season. For example summer shade must reduce UV exposure as well as heat and light whereas winter shade should prevent UV while allowing sufficient heat and light. Adjustable shade may one solution.
- Shade canopies should extend at least one metre past the areas of use, with built-in vertical barriers.
- \*Shade structures should be designed to minimise UV reflection. Choose surfaces that reduce UV reflection such as brick or glass rather than concrete. Walls should be made of materials that reduce UV reflection.
- Check with council authorities as to what government approvals will be needed for shade structures.
- Trees should be a major element in school shade, particularly trees with dense foliage and broad canopies. Avoid trees that are toxic, drop seeds and fruit, attract bees, have sharp thorns, drop branches or cause allergies.
- Built structures to consider include pergolas/verandas, demountable marquees and tents, adjustable awnings, umbrellas and shade sails.
- Materials for built structures include glass, fibreglass, canvas, PVC, steel sheeting.
- It is advised to seek professional advice from a shade installer, builder, landscaper or architect to ensure your shade structure is safe and will provide the desired amount of shade.
- Consider the UV protection levels of different shade cloths. Dark, close weave and heavy fabric provide greater levels of shade and UV protection. Shade cloths usually state their level of UV protection.
- Ensure shade options are not a safety hazard, for example, avoid guy ropes which can be a tripping hazard and ensure vertical barriers are not able to be climbed.
- Consider how a shade structure can double up as rain protection. ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

## The beauty of umbrellas

**Umbrellas are a long-time favourite sun protection for individuals and are gaining increasing popularity as a provider of group shade.**

Large umbrellas are not only aesthetically appealing but, according to Instant Shade Umbrellas general manager Michael Wloszczak, can offer up to 99.8 per cent UV block out.



"Umbrellas are an alternative to shade sails," says Michael.

"Umbrellas are flexible because they can be closed if you don't require the shade or removed from the fitting if you need to use the area for a function.

"They are made from canvas which is more densely woven than shade cloth and water repellent. You can get different sizes and they are cheaper than shade sails depending on the size."

Commercial umbrellas are usually

graded on the degree of wind they can withstand, ranging from a strong wind of about 60kmh, to gale force (between 80kmh to 100kmh) and typhoon standard (150kmh).

They make a stylish addition to eating areas, playgrounds, spectator benches and tables.

"We have several models and price points and we can also do multiple umbrellas in a row for maximum shade coverage," says Michael. ●

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## Parents behaving badly at school

### The chaos at drop off time has forced schools to install signs and boom gates to protect kids.

A BOOM gate is not usually associated with school carparks but an increasing number of schools are installing the safety feature to keep parents out.

Parents behaving badly in carparks – driving into restricted zones, ignoring signs and refusing to abide by rules – has forced many principals to increase security measures. Without realising it, parents who ignore school regulations and drive their children onto the school grounds and into staff-only carparks are putting young lives at risk.

In fact 'low-speed vehicle runovers' in locations such as schools are responsible for tragic deaths and

injuries that could otherwise be prevented.

Australian data shows 43 child pedestrians aged 0 to 14 years were injured at schools between 2002-03 and 2009-10 – almost the same number as were injured on farms.

From 2001 to 2010, 29 child pedestrians were killed in "non-traffic" locations outside of the home such as schools, universities, hospitals, prisons, factory premises and military camps where vehicles would be expected to be travelling at low speeds and performing low-speed manoeuvres.

The *Child Pedestrian Safety: driveway deaths and low speed vehicle runovers 2001-2010 report* by the department of Infrastructure and Transport highlights the surprising discovery that such accidents occurred in places that

were considered a "safe haven" for children.

While it was difficult to determine how and why these car-versus-pedestrian accidents happened, some factors are believed to include difficulty seeing behind vehicles when reversing and the built environment.

The accidents raised questions about visibility of small and near objects and whether the movements of pedestrians and motor vehicles needed to be more segregated.

"There are fears among many in the medical profession that unless the major factors behind these deaths are understood and preventative measures implemented to mitigate the risks involved, the numbers of children killed or seriously injured could increase over the coming years," the report states.

The duty to protect children from parents behind the wheel has led schools to invest money in signage and boom gates.

### Industry take

*Larry Wainstein, managing director of Signpac, said one of the biggest issues for schools was parents driving into the staff carpark to drop off children.*

"We get a lot of schools where there is carparking for staff only and the parents don't care and drive in and they really shouldn't," says Larry.

"Parents don't realise that what they are doing can lead to drastic consequences."

Signs such as "Staff Carpark Only", "No Student Access" and "No

pedestrians" act as an indicator to mums and dads as to where they can and cannot drive their vehicles.

"The signs are for the parents – not the staff or the teachers – because the parents are the ones not doing the right thing," says Larry.

"The signs are to make parents aware of where they can't go and how they should behave."

Larry urges schools to "embrace the power of signage" to make sure that kids are safe.

*Seton Australia director of marketing Adrian Castorina said the positioning of signage on school grounds was paramount to ensuring parental compliance.*

"During drop off and pick up times it is common to see traffic congestion as well as unsafe parking and driving practices. "The positioning and design of signage is fundamental for safety in car parks to ensure children are protected inside and outside of school grounds. Clear signage also warns drivers about school zones, parking and crossing areas.

"Not all carparks are the same and some may require specific signage to alert carpark users to special circumstances to ensure everyone understands the rules of the carpark.

"Carpark safety audits and checklists are one way to ensure a school's carpark is well equipped to keep students and the broader community safe."

However in some cases parental behaviour is so bad that even signs are not having the desired effect.

Alan Roberts, whose company Rotech Group specialises in boom

## Safety for your school

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gates for industry, mining and military, says he has been receiving more and more inquiries from schools.

"The real problem is parents driving where they are not meant to," says Alan.

"With boom gates you can keep parents out so they are not driving their children into the staff carpark and creating safety problems."

Rotech recently supplied a boom gate at Mooloolaba State School on the Sunshine Coast because parents were ignoring the designated drop off area and driving through the main gates to the teachers' car park.

"The teachers' car park was a restricted zone and despite being designated 'out of bounds' for students and unauthorised vehicles there was nothing to prevent access to this area," he says.

"What was needed was the ability to strictly control the access into the teacher's car parking area during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-ups."

The school's new boom gate remains closed during the school drop-off period between 08:30 and 09:30 and opens afterward to enable contractors and other visitors through.

Alan says boom gates give control to schools to decide who can enter and leave the property. The boom gates can be opened a number of ways, including through mobile phones, intercoms and coded touch pads.

"I think schools will definitely be installing more boom gates. We have been getting inquiries from all over Australia." ■

*By Kat Donaghey, Editor*

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## When school safety goes 'boom'

**BOOM gates can be an effective solution to control who enters a school.**

Rotech has been providing fast, safe and secure vehicle and pedestrian access controls to industry since 1999 and is now servicing schools.

They offer a choice of automatic and manual boom gates that enable fast and secure vehicle access.

Solar-powered boom gates are another option for sites that do not have easy access to electricity.

Rotech director Alan Roberts says boom gates are increasingly sought

to prevent parents driving into restricted school areas.

The gates can be opened a number of ways such as a pin code or intercom to ensure only authorised vehicles can enter.

It takes about three seconds for the lightweight aluminium pole to raise, ensuring prompt access.

The gates can also be timed to remain closed during certain hours of the day.

Alan says schools should budget about \$5000 for a solar powered boom gate. ●



Rotech's boom gates, like this one at Mooloolaba State School on the Sunshine Coast, keep parents out of staff carparks.

## Sign language of schools



**When you walk through a school, signs help navigate the way.**

But more than that, Signpac director Larry Wainstein says signs enable schools to promote their brand.

Signpac has been creating signs of all makes, sizes, and purposes for schools across Australia for more than 20 years.

The list of products include signs for antibullying, carparking, directions, scoreboards, welcome and cut-out school crests.

A popular current trend is digital signage using LED technology for up-to-the-minute messages that can be

posted without leaving the office.

The digital signs have full colour and photo image capability and can be controlled with a no cost WiFi system (and come with five years' warranty and ongoing technician back-up and service).

Larry says schools should consider signage to ensure the safety of students and visitors and communication but also for branding purposes.

"We understand what signage schools need and can help them change the face of their school" says Larry. Get more information at [signpac.com.au](http://signpac.com.au). ●



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**Best Practice**

# New app to track school buses

**Technology has made the job of tracking school children easier, with new Apps and programs giving parents peace of mind.**

A simple tap or swipe can let mums and dads know exactly where their children are at various hours.

One new App which was developed specifically for schools and parents focuses on tracking the bus route, rather than the child.

PCS Route is the brainchild of a parent who has experienced the frustration of mis-timing when to pick up his kids from the bus stop.

The App was designed by the team at PC School so mums and dads can precisely time their arrival at a bus stop during both the drop off or pick up of children.

The App allows parents to track the bus route their child is on so they don't have to play a guessing game

at collection time, particularly if buses are running early or late.

It will be officially launched at the *EduTech International Congress and Expo* in Sydney in June and is being offered as a free trial to any school for the remainder of the year.

PC School director Brendan Croese says the program doesn't require much technology to operate – just the App and a phone.

Only the bus driver and parents have to install the App on their devices – not the children.

"This App has the advantage of requiring no specific equipment. All the driver needs is an iPhone or an Android," says Brendan.

"Basically the school sets up the bus routes. The bus driver turns on the App to transmit the location.

"Parents go onto the App and select which bus route they want to



follow. "Parents can track whatever bus route they want to track and they can see in real time whether it is going to be ten minutes early or half an hour late and they know what time they have to leave to meet the bus.

"When the driver has completed the route he switches off the transmission."

The *PCS Route App* can be used for standard bus routes or special trips such as school excursions or sports trips.

It can even alert parents to transport issues along the way, such as a bus breakdown which might require alternative arrangements.

"I know parents can track kids on Google but our App is different because the child doesn't actually need to have a phone or a device," says Brendan.

"The parent tracks the bus route, not the child." ■

## CHILD BUS SAFETY

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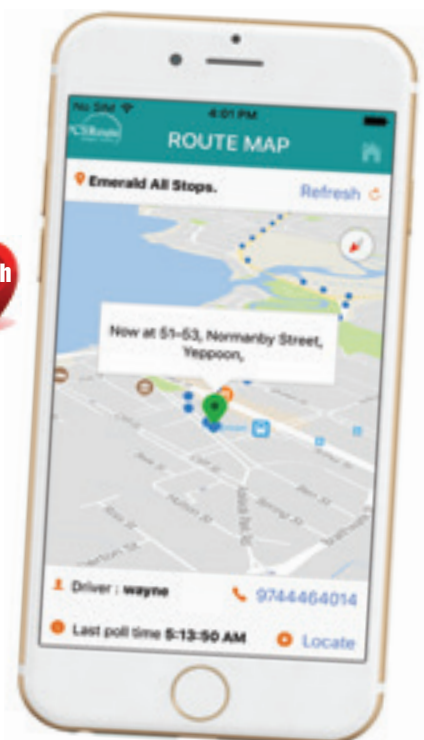


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# If you build it, they will ride

## Riding to school is gaining popularity in schools that have invested in secure bike racks.

Aussie kids are among the most chauffeured in the developed world, with only two out of ten children riding bikes to school.

In the 1970s, the number of cycling school children was the complete reversal, with eight out of ten children peddling from home (and that was before helmets were compulsory).

Despite years of public campaigns, school programs and government initiatives promoting riding, driving to school remains the dominant mode of transport.

Whether it be parents' fears for their children's safety, or the often-misguided belief that driving is quicker, mums and dads



SecuraBike racks and storage

are more often the ones buckling the children in rather than handing them the helmet.

The result is that students are missing out on the physical benefits and emotional joys of

coasting down a footpath, the wind in their hair and their heart beating. They also do not get the opportunity to experience a true level of independence where they feel in charge of their own safety and can earn the trust of

their parents to act responsibly. The benefits of riding have been well promoted. School-aged children are said to require about 60 minutes per day of exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle and riding would certainly contribute.

Some health benefits include better concentration, brighter moods from the endorphins of exercise and sounder sleep.

Riding is often faster than driving because a nimble cyclist can avoid the traffic congestion around schools. The more children who ride to school, the fewer cars there will be on the roads.

Jumping on a bike also contributes to a cleaner breathing environment, with road transport the biggest cause of air pollution from car exhausts.



**Cora Bike Rack** is a leading supplier of bicycle parking racks to schools across Australia. **Cora Bike Rack** has the experience, knowledge and product selection to provide the ultimate bicycle parking facility for your students. We look forward to learning more about your school's bike parking requirements and helping you choose the best solution available.

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Leda bike racks and storage

With so many benefits to riding, and with such positive encouragement of riding by authorities, the question is why hasn't the trend turned around?

Perhaps the key is parents. For parents to want their children to ride they must feel confident that

their children are safe, that roads are safe and that bikes are safe.

Providing plenty of cycling infrastructure such as bicycle paths, bike lanes and crossings and bike safety products such as bike shelters, racks and cages may help alleviate parents' fears

and ensure kids don't have their prized bicycles stolen. Many schools are investing in new bike storage facilities and incorporating attractive design principles so the facilities look pleasing as well as provide peace of mind.

**Rusted old bike racks with very little security can be replaced by a range of modern options including:**

**Bike racks:** Vertical racks allow bikes to be stacked above one another to conserve space. Horizontal racks catering from one to 12 bikes in a row. Numerous designs cater to aesthetic tastes and include wall and floor mounted.

**Bikes rails:** In keeping with modern minimalist principles, sleek bike rails blend into the school environment and are simple to use.

**Bike Shelters:** Providing extra protection from the elements for bikes, shelters provide a roof and act as a central location for bike storage.

**Bike cages:** Single cages or large cages for multiple bikes, cages take shelter to the next level with the addition of mesh walls and lockable doors to ensure bikes are protected from theft throughout the day.

**Bike lockers:** Single or multiple, these enable bikes to be locked and riders to store apparel.

### Industry insights

*Securabike CEO Sandy Capannolo says bike and scooter racks are the most popular products sought by schools but there is an increasing trend towards bike cages to replace school sheds. ▶*

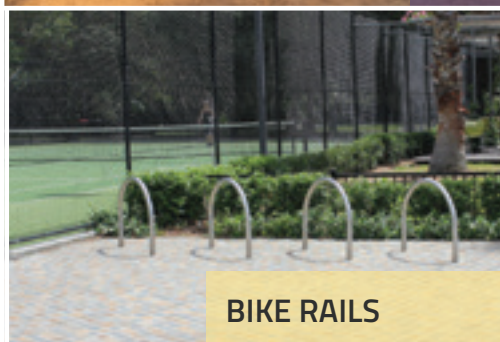
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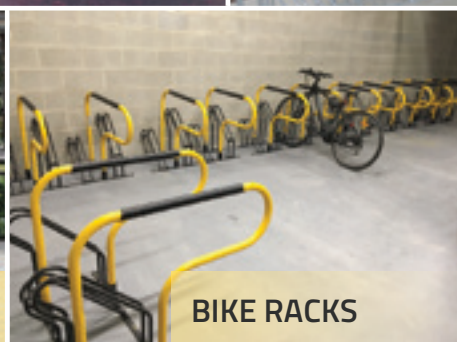
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Cora bike racks and storage

◀ Securabike is one of Australia's largest manufacturers of bicycle parking and says it has been experiencing an uptake in demand from schools that are eager to promote riding.

Sandy says schools that invest in bike safety have been experiencing an increase in the number of students riding.

"We are getting quite a number of inquiries from schools with kids who live within 5km of school and prefer to ride rather than take other means of transport," says Sandy.

"With new and improved bicycle paths and cycle routes, more and more students are taking the opportunity to use their bicycles to cycle to their schools and learning centres.

"Installing secure bicycle parking facilities for either short or long term encourages greater use of bicycles – particularly in schools."

Sandy says schools are modernising their bike racks and incorporating attractive design principles. Whereas the U-shaped rack was popular in the past, schools are now opting for new designs or ordering powder-

coating to match the campus colours.

Schools can also choose from a range of security levels to suit their budget and needs. Rails provide the lowest level of security compared to bike lockers at the most secure end.

Cora Bike Rack director Jon Routledge says the current Australian standards for bicycle racks (AS2890.3) require that bikes not be damaged, that racks support the bike and allow the frames and wheels to be locked.

"The old designs don't do that, for example, you can't lock the frame," he says.



**Aussie kids are among the most chauffeured in the developed world, with only two in ten children riding to school**

"A lot of schools have the old designs and think that is good enough but they don't comply with the new standards.

"Therefore the racks will remain unused if they can't be locked because bikes are expensive."

Jon says the lack of security provided by older bike racks is one of the key reasons students are reluctant to ride and risk losing their prized wheels.

"If you build it, they will come," he says.

"If you provide high-quality bike racks you will have more students cycling, as well as building safe

cycle ways and paths to school which are equally important.

"I think there's a greater interest in riding now; a bigger focus on kids' exercise especially now they're not doing enough fitness in school."

Jon says there is plenty of scope for schools to choose favoured designs, colours or materials to suit budgets and aesthetics.

"Students are bringing scooters and skateboards to school and they are a hazard in the classroom so they need somewhere to park them." ■

**By Kat Donaghey, Editor**



SecuraBike bike racks



Cora bike racks

# Making school lunch the healthy highlight of the day

**Any school considering outsourcing school lunches must take into account the same considerations as students' parents and caregivers in deciding on the most appropriate options, most especially with regard to the three key factors of nutritional value, cost and convenience.**

Yet, these three factors can often conflict; cheap and convenient foods – those epitomised by unhealthy 'take-aways' – are often of low nutritional value. While common-sense dictates how adults balance cost vs convenience vs nutrition, the food options presented to growing children (the primary concern for both schools and students' whanau) should be carefully considered, diverse and clearly labelled.

In other words, any food provided to children as an outsourced lunch option must, first and foremost, be varied and honest. The phrase 'no hidden nasties' comes to mind: children, parents and young people need to be able to make educated decisions about what to eat, with plenty of nutritious and healthy options available to outsource. Only then can the balance of cost and convenience be calculated so that informed choices can be made about what foods children are offered at lunchtime.

With this in mind, schools and parents/caregivers can examine in more specific detail how these (and other factors) impact on what is provided for students at lunchtime, and how.

## Nutrition

It goes without saying that optimal nutrition is essential during childhood and adolescence, when students are experiencing periods of rapid growth – not just physically, but also emotionally, socially and cognitively. And the foods that children consume during their formative years have a vital impact on this growth – and on their health in general. Indeed, it is increasingly recognised that the eating habits and behaviours that emerge at this



stage of a young person's life persist into adulthood; establishing healthy eating attitudes and patterns, therefore, can make a lifelong contribution to overall health and well-being.

To reassure and inform parents, it is worth schools checking official health recommendations for children and young people and providing their own guidance for parents and caregivers (say, as part of the information on school lunch options, including outsourced ones).

Reputable suppliers of outsourced school lunches will provide full details of the nutritional value of their lunch options.

Similarly, responsible lunch providers should provide parents and whanau information on how their lunch offerings reflect official nutritional advice – for instance, which of the four major food groups their products 'tick off'.

Of course, children being children, many of their favourite foods – those most promoted by food advertising – may be high in sugar, salt and/or fat, and the healthiest drink option, water, may not always be the one chosen by children.

However, even here children can be nudged towards choosing healthy options from an outsourcing supplier, especially if the healthier

choices are packaged and delivered in exciting ways. Plus, encouraging children to choose healthier options for themselves, rather than having them imposed upon them, gives the responsibility to the students themselves – and, hopefully, inculcates lasting healthy decision-making.

## Cost

Healthy food options (especially for fresh products with a limited 'shelf life') tend to be more expensive than less healthy options with mass-produced or processed ingredients, and this applies to outsourced school lunches as well as to home-sourced or school-sourced meals.

However, other cost considerations need to be taken into account, and these may vary widely between schools and students' families.

For schools, the cost benefits of outsourced school lunches will depend on existing facilities – for example, whether the school already has a dedicated tuckshop or canteen, and whether or not lunches are prepared in-school. Outsourced school lunches that can 'piggyback' on existing facilities – e.g., can be distributed via a tuckshop or canteen – will be less costly than implementing new systems.

For parents, outsourced school lunches may cost more than like-for-like meals prepared at home. At the same time, outsourced lunches can provide a greater range of food options, especially when it comes to fresh ingredients and variety.

## Convenience

Even with the best will in the world, busy parents may not have time to provide the best lunch option for their children every day of the week. And it is in terms of convenience that outsourced school lunches have a clear advantage, with the time-costs of food purchase and preparation borne by the supplier rather than the parents/caregivers.

Increasingly, online pre-ordering of lunches adds to the convenience value of outsourced lunches, as well as enabling parents/caregivers to monitor the types of food their children are offered. Some companies even offer pre-ordering by SMS text messaging.

For schools, the use of online or SMS pre-ordering and payment by parents/caregivers removes the logistical issue of taking orders and cash-handling, freeing up administrative staff for other duties. ■

**By Paddy Whittle,**  
*Industry Reporter*



# Waste not want not, management matters

## Australians are some of the biggest producers of waste in the world, even the littlest ones.

According to Greenpeace, the average Australian produces 1.5 tonnes of waste in a year. The ABC reported that Aussies throw away \$8bn of edible food every year.

The government's school waste management initiative, 'Get Smart' has a free web resource that cites, "Did you know that up to 86 percent of the waste a school produces can be recycled or reused?".

The government program claims that 16 percent of primary school waste is recyclable paper and cardboard, 48 percent is compostable organics, 22 percent is other recyclable materials, and only 14 percent is actual garbage. In regards to secondary



schools, the program lists waste as 27 percent recyclable paper and cardboard, 29 percent compostable organics, 29 percent other recyclable materials, and only 15 percent garbage.

But what about your school? It's hugely beneficial to find out how much waste your school

produces, so you can record the margin of improvement after putting measures in place.

The first step is to conduct a waste audit.

This task should identify where most waste is produced within your school and where improvements can be made.

There are specialist waste management companies that can do this for you, or it can be done in-house but it's important to take a keen interest in the results so that you can be involved in the solution and make an informed decision about the future of waste at your school.

Solving 'the problem of waste' is also something that could be integrated into the learning environment at your school in various ways, focussing on sustainability.

Set up bins for different kinds of waste and label them for glass, paper, plastic, compostable organics and garbage.

Crucially, avoid sending waste to a landfill by educating staff and students about other ways of disposing of waste, such as recycling, reusing and composting.

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- Kris, Phys. Ed Teacher, Newborough PS.



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### Ways that schools can reuse waste include:

- taking lost property to local clothing banks
- using plastic bags as bin liners or as packaging
- having students make recycled paper and use shredded paper as bedding for pets.

Separate organic waste, like food scraps, plants, paper and lawn clippings, from other rubbish and teach students how to use it for compost. Perhaps it could be used on the school's garden? This may save on the cost of fertiliser. Just don't compost foods or materials that may attract pests or that have been chemically treated (such as meat bones, bleached paper or dairy products).

The composting process itself can provide valuable learning



opportunities for students.

### If composting is not possible:

- ask students and teachers to take their organic waste home rather than dispose of it at school
- find out if local farmers want organic waste
- keep hens at school and feed them the waste
- have the organic waste composted at the local landfill – it's generally cheaper to drop organic waste at a landfill than other rubbish.

*Please check your local and state government regulations to make sure that any proposed composting or organics processing facilities meet relevant Australian Standards and guidelines. ■*

**By Rosie Clarke,**  
Industry Reporter

## Supporting responsible waste and recycling management

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## Safety is fundamental

**It won't come as a shock that schools are required to make sure their playgrounds comply with safety standards.**

What might come as a more of a surprise is that these standards do change, from time to time, and it's important to keep your school playground updated and fully compliant. Australia has standards that cover equipment, indoors and outdoor playgrounds and all must be met.

Each state has outlined relevant guidelines and listed the *Australian Standards* that should be adhered to, so *School News* recommends heading to your state department of education website to locate those documents. *Australian Standards* can be purchased or viewed with a subscription via SAI Global Limited, which can be accessed online.

Regular maintenance is key to

keeping on top of the situation for any school and each state has guidelines to help design a maintenance schedule that encourages playground compliance for as long as possible. Victoria suggests putting a *Playground Safety Management System* in place. This will help schools minimise risk to students by monitoring the condition of playground equipment and surfacing. "The school council is required to identify an appropriately skilled person to act as playground coordinator to ensure that all inspections, maintenance and improvements are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the school's *Playground Safety Management System*."

Kidsafe SA recommends that playgrounds be routinely inspected for hazards every one to three months, with a more in-depth inspection scheduled

every year. "This should be carried out by an appropriately qualified inspector. There are a range of agencies that provide this service for a fee."

### Building or upgrading a playground...

In many ways, this is the fun part: choosing and designing an fun-filled, engaging playground that is conducive to impactful learning and positive stress relief for students is an exciting prospect. Many schoolchildren would envy the task: designing a playground? Surely that's the dream job.

Of course, designing a playground is more complex than a child might imagine. A property manager or specialist supplier/manufacturer will be eager to discuss available options with you, and aid in the process but the main focus must be adhering to *Australian Standards*.

*Australian Standard AS/NZS 4486.1:1997-Playgrounds and Playground Equipment. Part 1: Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation* is particularly vital as it pertains to the initial stages of design, manufacturing and installation. Schools should make sure that any third-party involvement can prove compliance.

According to the Victorian government's *Guidelines for School Playgrounds*, the AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 standard is "designed to minimise the risk of injury to children using playgrounds by providing guidelines for siting and developing playgrounds, product information requirements, instructions and operating procedures intended to support sound playground design, the selection of appropriate equipment and to minimise operational hazards". ►





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## ◀ Style and safety

The two concepts might not ordinarily be associated with one another, but playgrounds bridge the gap. In this realm, generally, the safer the playground the more stylish it looks.

If you imagine an 'unsafe' playground, it'll be one that's not properly maintained or cleaned, is broken and filthy, with something like a hard concrete floor or trip hazard weeds. Not so pretty and certainly not safe. You could also place more dangerous playground equipment in this category – dirt tracks for bikes, or skate ramps.

There's a huge variety of playground options available now, from mobile structures to trampolines and nature play, so it's more important than ever to check that all requirements are met. When designing a school playground, it's important to consider how difficult a piece of equipment or design will be



Raby Bay Playground Equipment Supplied by Austek Play

to maintain, how long it is likely to meet the relevant *Australian Standards* and whether it hinders the playground's ability to provide a safe student environment.

Fully compliant playgrounds have to be properly maintained, neat and tidy. Surfacing is vital and there are a variety of options to consider, with different pros and cons, from wood-chip or bark mulch to artificial grass, sand and soft fall. The latter is a

type of brightly coloured rubber, usually recycled, that can be installed in different patterns or designs but may pose risk when very wet or in high temperatures. Wood-chip or bark mulch has its own pleasingly natural aesthetic and is easy to install but is easily moved during play and can hide trip hazards like stones or toys.

It is also possible to employ a combination of surfaces in the construction of a playground.

Depending on the design, this could be an ideal solution. However, care must be taken that the surfaces don't interact in a way that poses more danger.

## Inspections and maintenance

Every surface-type requires a rigorous maintenance schedule to help prevent injury and they should all be tested for compliance. In-depth inspections should be taken out at least once a year; particularly if you have organic surfacing that will require topping up. Look out for signs of wear-and-tear in synthetic surfaces as well as play equipment and any shade installations.

Of course, if a child sustains an injury on the playground this should be investigated immediately, regardless of how minor the injury. ■

By Rosie Clarke,  
Industry Reporter

## From concept to construction and handover

**Austek Play's director, Glenn Williams, told School News about its complete supply and installation of playground equipment and surfacing.**

"Certified to Australian standards, custom-designed playgrounds are designed by our in-house designers to ensure compliance is met. All playground equipment we supply has been independently certified to Australian

playground standards. "We specialise in custom-designed playgrounds and spaces for users of all abilities and offer a complete turnkey package, from concept through to construction and handover.

"Our playgrounds are carefully designed to encourage active participation for children of all abilities and ensure the completed project is a valuable asset for many years to come.

"Because rubber and synthetic grass has a rebound effect during falls, broken limbs are more likely to occur when falling onto rubber or synthetic grass soft fall, than onto organic soft fall such as mulch or sand. Many people do not realise that softfall is not designed to prevent breaks in arms and legs, it is

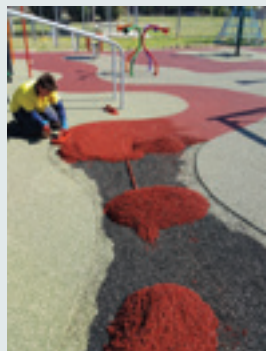
designed to prevent head injuries. "We recommend that where falls exceed 1.5 metres free height of fall, organic soft fall be used in these zones to minimise the risk of broken arms and legs, particularly under monkey bars and other overhead equipment." ●



# Child safety is paramount in the playground

**"Today, with litigation, duty-of-care and child safety are paramount in the playground," Surfacing Contractors Australia spokesman Arun Kosh explained to *School News*.**

"Both your play equipment and the softfall need to comply with the relevant Australian standards.



Sand and bark may be cheaper, but they are easily displaced and need weekly maintenance as well as a top-up at least four times a year, which equates to approximately \$3000 for an average playground. If it is not constantly maintained, the impact absorption is weakened and then becomes non-compliant, raising a safety issue.

"At Surfacing Contractors Australia, our recommendation is for wet pour rubber.

"It is initially more expensive than organic natural products but when taking into consideration less maintenance, a wet pour rubber surface will pay for itself in approximately three to five years, depending on usage.

"The other down side of an organic softfall is that it may conceal such things as foreign objects and animal excreta, all of which could have serious health effects for a child." ●

## INTERACTIVE PLAY IS THE FUTURE IN PLAYGROUNDS



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Supplier Profile | Bruce Stephens Playground Services

## Safety audits key to assurance

**Bruce Stephens Playground Services (BSPS) is a family run business specialising in playground inspections and safety audits for schools.**

BSPS was established in 2008 to provide a practical and thorough playground inspection service by a qualified Playground Auditor who has extensive experience inspecting and maintaining playgrounds.

BSPS prides itself in providing independent, thorough, consistent and professional playground inspections and audits. Our strength is our consistency in assessments, our eye for detail, and our practical experience in modifying playground equipment to meet the Australian Standards.

At BSPS we believe that regular playground inspections and on-going playground maintenance is essential to ensure that safety is maintained. Potential playground injuries can be reduced with regular inspection and maintenance, and costs can be reduced if playground components are maintained rather than



being left until equipment breaks and has to be replaced. Regular inspection and maintenance of your school playground equipment can enhance your public image and community relations, and can more importantly extend the working life of your expensive and much loved playground assets.

BSPS can inspect all makes of playground equipment to help you achieve a *Better, Safer Play Structure*. ●

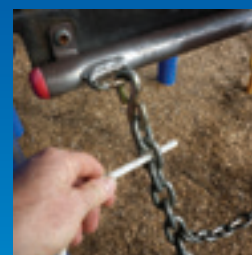


## Playground Safety Audits for Schools

### We Provide:

- Prompt and affordable service.
- Thorough inspection of your school's playground equipment and surfaces.
- A comprehensive report which lists safety issues and non-compliant components.
- Advice on rectification of issues identified.
- Assistance with arranging repairs or modification.
- Basketball and netball towers inspections
- Impact testing of playground surfaces

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