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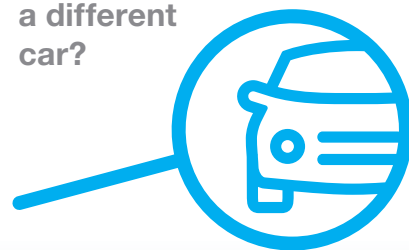
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We need to talk about **the digital divide** in our schools



The most clicked headline on our *School News* newsletter this month read, 'Teachers less likely to take phones away from white, privileged children'.

It sparked a conversation about how the funding disparity between public and private schools in Australia impacts education technology use across the curriculum.

The article in question was penned by US and French researchers, Emeline Brulé and Matt Rafalow, who found that predominantly white private schools viewed social media and video games as potentially useful to education while mostly working and middle class, multi-racial schools perceived it as irrelevant and at times even hostile to learning.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 96.9 percent of higher income families (at the highest quintile) are much more likely to have home internet access than lower income families. Just 67.4 percent of families at the lowest quintile have home internet access. Regional Australians also have less access and wealthier Australian families tend to have



Rosie Clarke,
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more devices at home too. These findings have significant ramifications to education, where devices are increasingly required for homework, class work, projects and the internet is now essential to almost all educational activities.

The statistics prompted researchers from RMIT University and the University of Canberra to criticise investments made in the National Broadband Network for exasperating this "digital divide". They wrote to *The Conversation*: "Instead of a digital economy designed for everyone, we appear to have created a highly stratified internet, where the distribution of resources and opportunities online reflects Australia's larger social and economic inequalities."

I'm talking about a wealth divide that's always existed but technology has worsened



When the Rudd government delivered basic laptops to all Year 9-12 students, it was deemed an investment in digital education but also unsustainable. Bring your own device (BYOD) schemes soon launched to fill gaps but quickly posed their own problems. Students whose parents can buy higher powered laptops have clear advantages over those with older, basic models. Students whose families can't afford to buy devices at all rely on donations or borrow from their school or library. A classroom of children working on different systems present unique issues for teachers. Even when schools try to mandate software, such as a referencing program or Microsoft over Apple, it's difficult to reasonably enforce. Tablets are cheaper than laptops, but they are no longer considered suitable for most secondary school learning.

To be at the forefront of education, schools need to be

at the forefront of technology and that is difficult to do without an extensive budget.

Moreover, as project-based learning gathers momentum, technology holds more weight. A student with access to a gaming computer, high-speed internet and the full Adobe suite at home simply has advantages over those who don't. Likewise, schools with laser-cutters and 3D printers can offer students opportunities that other schools cannot. When we talk about a digital divide, we are talking about a wealth divide that already existed, but technology has worsened.

Digital technology informs future careers: gaming is a billion-dollar industry, politics lives on social media and climate change requires tech-innovation. It is becoming desperately apparent that students without access to digital tools are increasingly disadvantaged in Australia. ■

Public school students and staff fighting fires

Article and images by
The NSW Department
of Education

As the bushfire crisis escalated on the mid-north coast of NSW, public school students and staff put themselves in the path of danger to defend their communities.

As a firestorm bore down on Rappville in October, principal Danny Henman was convinced he wouldn't see out the day. A volunteer with the Rural Fire Service for the past 15 years, Danny said he had never witnessed anything like the fires that devastated the area, just south of Casino, leaving two people dead and 52 homes destroyed.

"I stood in front of a firestorm to



**Newee Creek Rural Fire Brigade
volunteer Kaleb Cooper**

defend the pub and the house next door. We went without oxygen for three minutes as the fire created its own atmosphere and consumed all the air."

Worried about his two other crew, the principal of Southern Cross School of Distance Education searched and found one volunteer under the building trying to get some air while fighting a fire that

had taken hold on the floor. With the smoke so thick he couldn't see; Danny followed a fire hose to locate the third crew member who had retreated to the fire truck so he could breathe.

Amid ruins, the pub they were defending had survived.

"I thought I was dead that day," Danny said after fighting fires for 13 weeks. "I've seen things this fire season I've never seen before."

Danny is just one of the many NSW Department of Education staff and students who have shown remarkable bravery and compassion, risking their lives to volunteer as fires swept through northern NSW.

"You don't think about it at the time, you just do this for the community," he said.

Public high school students Kaleb

Cooper and Liam Birrer also fought fires on the mid-north coast of NSW. Liam made headlines when mainstream media reported he had missed an HSC exam to fight fires.

A volunteer with the Sancroix-Thrumster brigade for the past two years, the 18-year-old was out fighting fires threatening homes near Lake Cathie near Port Macquarie when he should have been sitting his Metal and Engineering exam.

The Hastings Secondary College's Westport Campus student said he couldn't sit the exam knowing his Rural Fire Service crew were out on call.

"I called the school and let them know," he told the local newspaper. "I was sitting there listening to the scanners and I just didn't want to sit around and do nothing while those guys were out there."

Private school funding growing 3x faster than public school

The Productivity Commission's annual Report into Government Services (ROGS) into childcare, education and training has shown that per-student total government recurrent funding to private schools has grown at 3.3 times the rate of public school funding over the last decade.

Australia is one of the few OECD countries that funds private schools with taxpayer money. The *Australian Scholarship Group* now estimates that sending a child to private school in Melbourne will cost \$504,000 for the full 13 years, and that's after tax.

ROGS showed that annual

per-student growth in total government funding for private schools in 2017/18 was 3.4 percent, compared with only 1.5 percent for public schools, the Australian Education Union announced in a statement.

According to ROGS, non-government school funding per student grew by 3.3 times faster than public school funding per student in the last decade, a gap that has widened further in the last year. In the ten years to 2017-18 government funding for non-government schools rose by 35.2 percent. Meanwhile, per-student government funding for public schools was only increased by 10.6 percent in the same period.

Australian Education Union Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the policies of the Morrison Government had entrenched the gap in funding

growth between public and private schools. She added that under the Federal Coalition, 99 percent of public schools would be funded at less than the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2023, while 100 percent of private schools would be funded at or above this benchmark.

"ROGS shows once again that per-student growth in government funding for private schools last year was more than three times greater than that for public schools," Ms Haythorpe said. "It also showed government funding for public schools has grown by only 11 percent over the last ten years, whereas government funding for private schools has grown by 35 percent."

"Public school student enrolments are soaring, yet the Morrison Government is

ignoring the needs of two thirds of Australia's school students by refusing to provide equitable funding for public schools."

"This is patently unfair to Australia's 2.6 million public school students, who deserve a high-quality and well-resourced education. The report is further evidence that the Morrison Government's school funding legislation entrenches inequality, favours private schools and denies public schools the vital resources needed for our students," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This is an appalling situation. Where is the equity?"

According to ROGS, in 2017-18 total government expenditure on VET fell by \$252 million to a total of \$6 billion, a decline of four percent from the previous year. Total annual hours of training provided by government expenditure continued to fall to 36.4 million, a decline of 6.4 percent from last year and of 30.6 percent from the 2012 peak. ■

Newee Creek Rural Fire Brigade volunteer Kaleb spent more than five weeks out of the classroom fighting fires in the Nambucca Valley. "My mum was happy for me to skip school once I finished my [Year 10] exams," he said. "I've had a few weeks straight where I've been out at the fires and [one] weekend I did a 17-hour shift around three fires."

Kaleb, who hopes to work in emergency services when he graduates from school, said he had joined the rural fire service because he "wanted to do something for the community".

He admitted at times he did get scared while on the frontline, but "you just have to push through". Kaleb paid tribute to the breadth of volunteers who were helping in the current crisis. "Each and everyone's role is important - going from the people on the ground to the office and the people supporting us from above - without them we wouldn't be able to fight these fires," he said.

Moorland Public School technology officer Sue Odgers is one of the office-based volunteers Kaleb said has been vital to support the firefighters. Her own property at Tinonee, on the mid north coast of NSW was badly



Moorland Public School technology officer Sue Odgers

damaged. She said: "We set up a control centre in our station for getting information out to our locals about impending fire danger in their area. We set up a mobile communications centre in a private car and I and other members took shifts to accompany our senior engagement officer to make sure residents evacuated."

"We weren't able to fight the fires but we made sure people who were not fully prepared to stay left before they were trapped."

Department of Education statistics showed that, as of December, 148 people accessed special leave in relation to emergency volunteering - 118 teachers, 24 school support staff and seven corporate staff.

The figures are just the tip of the iceberg as so many staff have volunteered in their spare time. Others, like Bellbrook Public School principal Allison Mitchell, were thrust into the emergency by virtue of where they work and live. Mrs Mitchell turned her small school, about 40 kilometres inland of Kempsey, into an impromptu evacuation centre when fires raced through Carrai East on November 11.

The school, which normally caters to 24 students was helping to house and feed more than 120 people, cats, dogs, chickens and even horses. By 11.30 that night, the school was without power or phones and Mrs Mitchell could see the fires coming in behind the school.

"It was very scary," Mrs Mitchell admits. "We had people turning up who had lost everything [in the fires] and we had no firefighters in town because they were out fighting fires and the roads to us were cut."

Mrs Mitchell, who went without sleep for 48 hours during the emergency, says she spent the first night walking up and down the road outside the school offering water to people

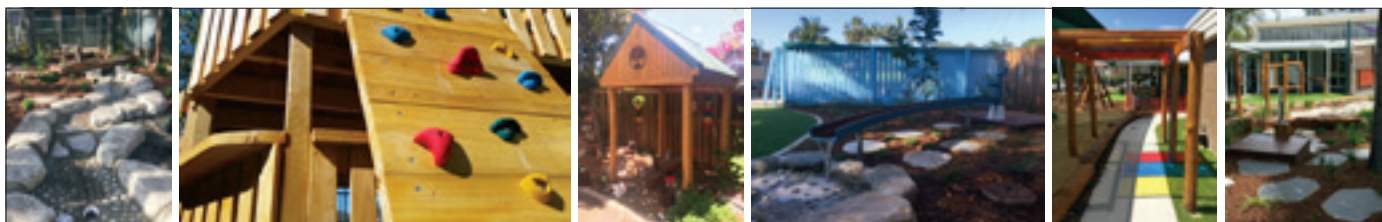
camped out in their cars.

The next day when a mass evacuation was ordered, Mrs Mitchell found herself driving to local homes to alert residents and help bring them to the school where buses waited to drive them out.

Aboriginal liaison officer Michael Gibbs, based in the department's Coffs Harbour regional office, has been part of the Rural Fire Service for the past eight years and has been working alongside students fighting fires since the start of November. Mr Gibbs, also a member of the Newee Creek brigade, said the fires were among the biggest and deadliest he had witnessed.

"I've seen a lot of lost homes and animals burned. It's quite a close-knit community so we all know each other and when we lose a home it hits us hard," he said.

Mr Gibbs said the adult volunteers were impressed by the efforts of the high school students. "We thought the [students] would get sick of it," he said. "We can see they are getting tired but they are very resilient and they keep pushing us along." ■



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Loo art for student wellbeing!

Cessnock students have turned their school bathrooms into works of art as part of a new community wellbeing project.

The *Confident Cubicles* project involved 20 schools across the Cessnock network, 851 litres of paint and support from the Cessnock Men's Shed and Bunnings.

The former principal of Stanford Merthyr Infants School, Anne Carr, who oversaw her school's involvement, said the project involved the students designing and painting brightly coloured motifs and positive messages for panels and toilet doors in school bathrooms.

"It might seem a strange place for that kind of art, but school bathrooms have always been places where students have hung out and felt confident in talking to their mates," Ms Carr said. "In that context the project makes perfect sense."



Image courtesy of the NSW Department of Education

The idea came from a project in the United States spotted by local Department of Communities and Justice Senior Project Officer Melanie Mackie, who, with colleagues, adapted it from a staff program to being a student-led initiative.

"The local Cessnock community had identified mental health, particularly in young people, as being a priority in the area and I thought that a youth-led project would be a great

way to promote a positive self-image and lead to a greater sense of wellbeing," Ms Mackie said.

Mount View High School teacher Jude Willis said school toilets tended to be a place where students escaped to when they had problems. She said: "We thought it would be a very positive and uplifting thing for some of our students, especially when they tend to run and hide in the toilets," she said.

Reagan, a Year 2 student at Stanford Merthyr Infants School, said she thought the project would be very beneficial to the students: "If we are having a down day, we can pick ourselves up by looking at the paintings on the toilet door."

Year 10 student at Mount View High School, Phoebe, was involved in the project painting her works on the wooden door panels. She explained: "I want people to have that emotional connection to something that I've done."

Cessnock Public School Year 5 student, Abby, said: "Some kids get really emotional and a bathroom is a place where they can get some alone time, so it needs to look nice."

By the end of the project, 295 timber frames were assembled, 851 litres of paint were used, and 20 schools installed the decorated door frames in toilets used by about 6,000 students. The University of Newcastle is monitoring the program to evaluate its impact on improving students' sense of wellbeing. ■



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When getting an 'A' might trigger disordered eating

By Rosie Clarke, *Editor*

For some students, receiving an 'A' on a piece of assessment feels like failure.

These are the type of students, high achievers who put pressure on themselves to be perfect and attach intense emotions to academic achievement, that may be at risk for developing an eating disorder, according to ground-breaking new research from Monash University.

Dr Jennifer Krafchek and Dr Leonie Kronborg from the university's Department of Education examined how some high-achieving female adolescents develop eating disorders after experiencing academic stress and/or failure.

Eating disorders are a serious

mental health issue. Anorexia Nervosa has the highest mortality rate of all psychiatric disorders and eating disorders more broadly, including bulimia and binge-eating disorder, range in severity but are widespread. A 2012 study by The National Eating Disorders Collaboration called *Eating Disorders in Australia* estimated that nine percent of the population has an eating disorder and suggested that up to 20 percent of females may have undiagnosed eating disorders.

Higher risk for high achieving teenage girls

While boys and men can develop eating disorders, the most recent Australian government data suggests girls and women are disproportionately affected. Females accounted for 95

percent of eating disorder related hospitalisations in the 2015-2016 year and 57 percent of those were aged 15 to 24.

The young women who participated in the new Monash study were all in recovery from some form of eating disorder and had all received an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) of 97 or above. Findings indicated that these young women were pursuing the same positive emotions from eating or controlled eating that they had previously received from academic success.

"In other words," the researchers revealed, "the same emotions that motivate academic achievement might also motivate eating disorders".

There are clear implications for schools, here.

Do we push high achieving students too far?

One middle school maths teacher from Central Queensland raised this question with *School News* during a casual conversation about ATAR's arrival in Queensland. "I had one student breakdown during class because his grade was lower than he was used to. Some kids do take it personally. It's hard to judge when self-discipline crosses over into [a situation where they are] stressing themselves out too much."

A state school teacher we spoke to from Victoria said he would like to know how to spot earlier warning signs. "I shared concerns about one student. I had to be so specific with her draft feedback -there were some extreme reactions.

It scares me a bit to think how feedback affects [students]. We had another one who was bullied and there were rumours about an eating disorder that, as a school, we had to manage. If there are students flying under the radar with stress it would be good to spot them and get in there early."

We asked Dr Krafchek how schools could lessen academic pressure on high achievers. She said: "Encouraging them to have a balance when they study, to take breaks and to give themselves permission to relax.

"Discussion groups might be helpful, although I'm not sure what you'd call it. How would you get high achievers to join a club or group?" She mentioned that Dr Jean Peterson has done lots of research on the benefits of small discussion groups for high achieving students.

Dr Peterson found that discussion groups can help prevent distress in high-ability students. In the 2017 book, *Counseling Gifted Students: A Guide for School Counselors*, she argued that prevention techniques too often take a backseat in schools to crisis intervention where problems have already developed and/or escalated. She said: "Semistructured, developmental, prevention-oriented groups can be positive, memorable, high-impact experiences for high-ability learners and an efficient use of counsellor time, since several students are seen simultaneously."

High achieving students may particularly benefit from small discussion groups with like-minded peers because they tend to feel misunderstood by others around them.

School News interviewed Dr Krafchek to find out more about preventative whole-school measures.

Q: What are some early behaviours or warning signs teachers can look out for?

A: Students that are working harder than they need to, to do well. The overachievers. What's difficult with this topic is that teachers tend to think when students are doing well *academically*, they are also doing well *emotionally*. We often focus on underachievement as a sign that there is a problem with a student, but we found that



achievement masks the fact they might be struggling emotionally.

If you're working hard, it looks good to a teacher! But if you're working much harder than is necessary, with a strict routine, that's a sign of perfectionism or that they do this to feel good about themselves.

It's difficult to pick who's working normally versus too hard but being aware means teachers can try to recognise the difference. A shift in behaviour might also be a sign there's been a problem. For instance, they might have been bullied, which was a common thing in my research. Students who had been bullied socially then shifted all their focus to doing well academically.

Q: Did you notice any other correlations during your study, such as school type or assessment type?

A: No. That's what was so interesting! We had a cross-section of religions and a cross-section of schools, private and state, so that was not a correlation. [The study involved] a cross-section of people who became ill and it's not necessarily the school pressure that does it. It can be other issues that make the girls put pressure on themselves.

Q: What whole-school strategies could help prevent eating disorders develop in high achieving students?

A: I think focusing on learning goals rather than achievement goals. If these girls were being extended and not worrying so much about whether they got an 'A+' or came top of the class. Maybe they shouldn't even do the same work as other students in the class, so that it's not about whether they are top of the class,

it's just about them working at their own level and having learning goals. I think that would help to focus their emotions on learning rather than achievement.

Q: Are you concerned about ATAR or any specific systems based on this correlation between achievement and developing an eating disorder?

A: No because whatever system you use, at some point, there's pressure. It's not about ATAR scores. Anorexia usually develops in adolescence so it can present before they even get to their ATAR score. It can just develop in Year 8 because they didn't get top of the class. It's any time that they know their marks are important. If the system is based around assignments rather than high stakes exams, then they just spend hours and hours perfecting the assignments and those become more stressful. I've seen that. So, I think the actual system itself isn't important, it's the importance they put on their score or the pressure they put on themselves to be successful.

My advice is to give them the skills to cope with academic pressure. There's been research done on students who completed *International Baccalaureate*, mostly in America, where there is a lot of academic pressure but they've found that the students who had good coping skills, managed their time well, knew how to negotiate with the teacher to manage their workload and request extensions, were better able to keep a balance. So, it's about developing these coping skills like resilience and time management that helps.

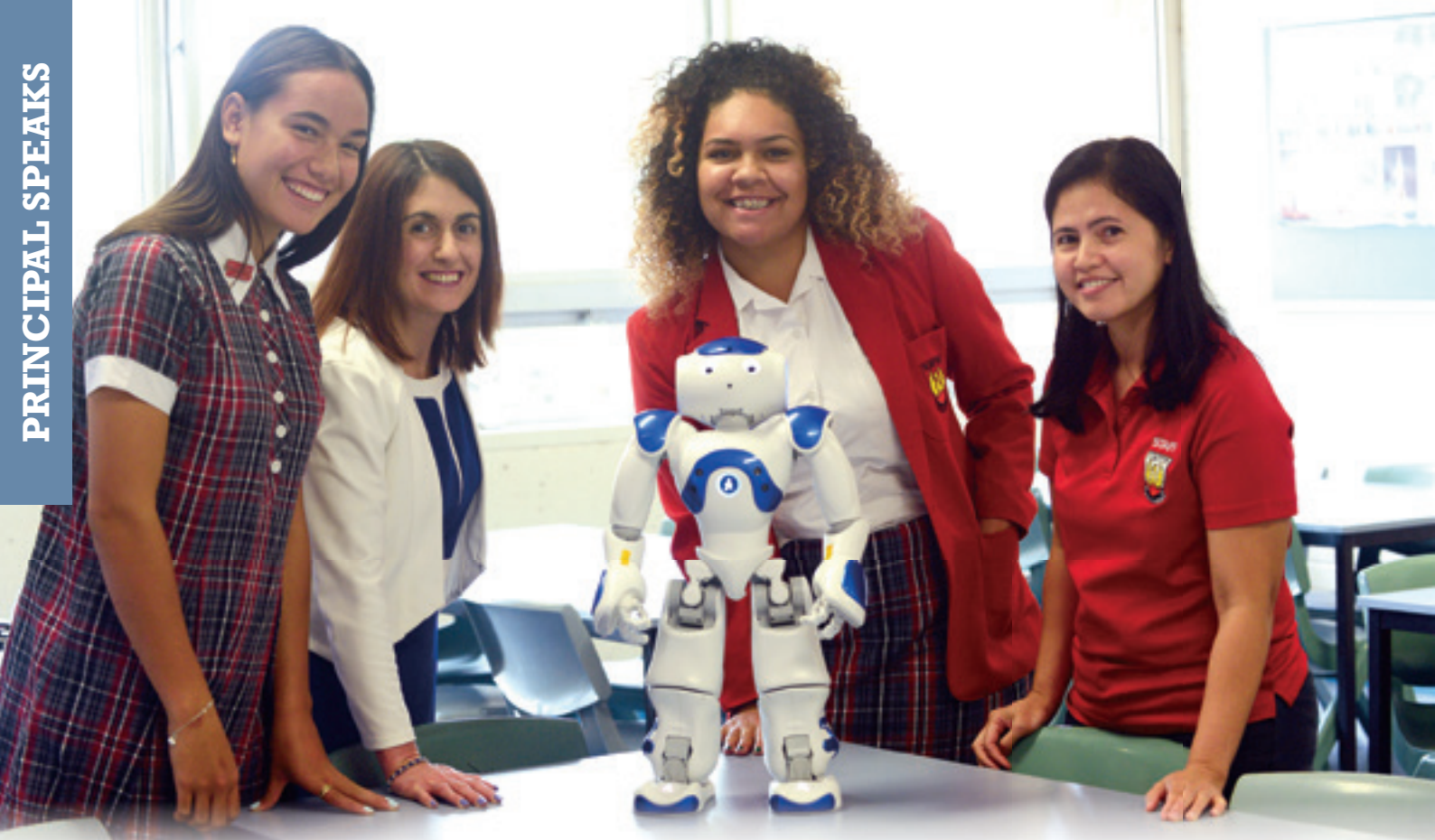
Even if teachers can just be aware

that not coming top of the class or getting an 'A' instead of an 'A+', can be very upsetting for a high achieving student. Often, the teacher might think, 'well, they still came second in the class' but getting an A means different things to different students. Remember, for some high achieving students, an 'A' is a terrible mark. The girls I interviewed were just so relieved to talk to someone who understood that. One of them said to me, 'I got a really bad mark', and I said, 'oh, how bad? Was it an 'A' or an 'A-?' and they laughed because they were relieved someone understood. They said they didn't tell their psychologists because they didn't think they would understand it. I used to be a VCE teacher and I remember once, two students got an 'A' and one was just devastated. We had to have a meeting and request to look at the exam to see what it was that he'd been marked down for. The other student with an 'A' hugged me! So, it's the same mark but totally different responses from students. I think understanding that they will have different reactions, and not just think an 'A' is 'good' will be helpful.

We understand [this mentality] for Olympic athletes who don't win a medal, but we don't think about it for our students when they achieve less than they expected. ■



Dr Jennifer Krafchek is a consultant who provides professional development in schools about the link between academic success and eating disorders. She completed her doctorate in gifted education at Monash University, Victoria, Australia. Her thesis investigated the experiences of academically high-achieving females who developed disordered eating. She has worked in schools as a teacher of VCE Psychology and as a coordinator of middle-school gifted programs.



Creating a successful future-focussed school with creativity and change

Well-respected educator and reigning winner of the Australian Education Awards' Principal of the Year - Government School, Plumpton High School Principal Tim Lloyd took some time this term to reflect on how his hardworking leadership team built a game-changing school environment. He writes...

The one constant in the world is change.

Our challenge and responsibility as educators is to ensure we maintain the same rate of change in our schools as that of the world beyond school. This makes sure students leave school with the necessary capacity and most relevant capabilities needed in society to succeed at that time.

Plumpton High School believes this goal can be best realised within a supportive, innovative, creative and stimulating educational environment



Tim Lloyd,
Principal, Plumpton High School

focussed on building intellectual capacity, positive relationships, strong self-concept, leadership capacity and high-quality reflective practices for both students and staff.

To accomplish the above, our school strategically implemented several new whole school structures in a change process over the last five-and-a-half years to support teaching, learning and leadership development. This has helped our students and staff realise their potential that is linked to the school's vision, which is based on the premise

that excellence comes when students and staff commit to becoming the best they can be, contributing to the local and global community in a meaningful way.

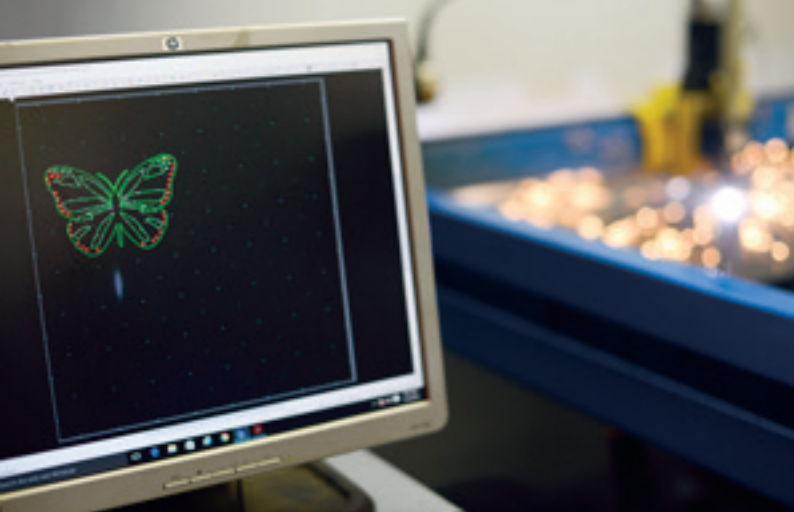
The Student Executive Council (SEC) consists of prefects in Year 12 and representatives from Years' 7-11. It is a standards referenced model that enables any student who wants to be a leader within the school can be as long as they meet the criteria. There are no quotas and no set numbers for the council. The numbers fluctuate from year-to-year. The council uses a project management model.

The concept of project management at Plumpton stems from finding solutions to complex problems that exist in the world. This leadership program is designed to develop awareness and understanding of how to collaborate to solve complex real-world problems and to develop a sense of community that looks after those less fortunate than themselves. This aligns with the school's vision and ethos. The principal and

SEC coordinators collaborate with the students and utilise the *Gazelle* commercial project management structure to run projects to fund raise and raise awareness of global issues. We build our diversity and inclusiveness through our school project teams by recognising and celebrating multicultural festivals, *RUOK*, *Harmony Day*, *NAIDOC* and *Sorry Day*.

I have sought and sourced past alumni student leaders that contributed to the current student leadership/agency model and business partners provide professional development for the senior student executive council. The current senior leaders along with our business partners mentor and coach the junior leaders in project management and support their leadership journey through mentoring. This is all done through a variety of teams that include junior leadership, unity, diversity and sustainability.

We create worthwhile project plans using a business model. I work collaboratively with staff and students from Years



7-12 to build their capacity in taking ownership of creative student-led and driven real-world projects that align with the school's improvement plan. Examples of this include the business partnerships that mentor our students from Years' 8-12 in building work-related capabilities, leadership, innovation and creativity linked to technology, complex problem solving and journalism.

Plumpton has sought to build partnerships with business to provide our students with access to a world beyond their local community.

As a result, over 600 students have benefited in 2019 from being immersed in these partnerships. If we demonstrate what the world beyond school looks like immersing ourselves in it with industry partnerships, our students learn and understand that they possess the necessary skills and capabilities to succeed in this world. It builds self-concept, courage and an understanding that our kids are 'just like their mentors'.

The school has fostered and developed partnership links with multiple universities supporting us in developing future career path options for students. In



2019, 50 offers of early entry to university were made to our Year 12 cohort. In the past two HSC cohorts of 2017 and 2018 as at March 1, ninety-nine percent of our students have either been engaged at university, TAFE, some other training or in employment. The average for youth unemployment in the area is 22.6 percent.

Our commitment to the development of a *Growth Mindset* and a wellbeing structure that supports students to develop their self-concept and ability to form relationships is evident daily. It is underpinned by a positive psychology

curriculum that is a part of the timetable for Years 7-12. Positive psychology teachers are assigned to each stage and provide lessons throughout the year that are based on the *School Wellbeing Framework Principles of Connect, Succeed Thrive* and Seligman's PERMA model positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment. All Positive psychology teachers are trained in Glaser's *Choice Theory* and all staff are trained and encouraged to utilise Michael Grinder's ENVoY teaching strategies to support classroom management and the positive psychology program.



This commitment to building a *Growth Mindset* underpinned by a knowledge of how the brain works and the effect our choices have on our emotions are all explicitly taught in our school.

This strategy is supported by the implementation of a celebrating success merit model that recognises the whole child and the building of intercultural understanding in the school.

These three projects are the lynchpin in our second strategic direction of building and consolidating relationships and the wellbeing and academic platforms work together to support the students and staff. ■





Neurodiverse learners need better equipped teachers

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Our society is weakened by its neglect of neurodiverse learners.

If we want the next generation to solve social, environmental, scientific and political issues that haven't been solved before, shouldn't we support our most diverse thinkers?

As our educational priorities shift increasingly towards inquiry-based learning and problem solving, we would hope that students who learn differently or 'think outside the box' find it easier to engage with the school system. Yet, progress has been slow and there is still a lack of empirical data on the experiences and needs of dyslexic students in Australia. While 10 to 20 percent of the global population and around 10 percent of school-aged children in Australia are believed to have dyslexia, their educational gifts and needs too often fly under the teacher's radar. The Australian Dyslexia Association reports: "Figures from the *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy* (NITL) Australia, indicate that half the 34 *Bachelor of Education* teacher training courses in

Australia devoted less than five percent of their four-year curriculum to teaching reading." Awareness and upskilling can be the first step towards improving learning outcomes for children and teenagers with dyslexia.

It's important, too, that schools aim for a broad awareness of what dyslexia can present as in children and what approaches to literacy and other subject areas work best. Having one teacher, or teacher aide who has upskilled and is knowledgeable about dyslexia is a good start. However, what happens once a student with dyslexia leaves their classroom and is confronted with a new teacher in a subsequent year-level who doesn't have those skills? It can be exhausting for students and families. Taking a thorough approach to inclusive education is essential for teachers, students and for effective communication between teachers and families so that students have a solid learning support system.

In the 1990s, psychologist Dr Beverly Steffart discovered an unusually high rate of dyslexia among students at the Central St Martin's College of Art and Design in London (three

quarters!). Her findings spawned more research around the world supporting the hypothesis that while people with dyslexia struggle with traditional approaches to reading and writing, they often excel in areas like art, music and sport. Plenty of famed entrepreneurs have dyslexia, including Sir Richard Branson, and a 2007 US study proposed that up to 35 percent of entrepreneurs show indicators they have the learning difference.

Vincent Fantauzzo is a famed Australian portrait artist, perhaps best known for his stunning painting the iconic Heath Ledger, which won him the *People's Choice 2008 Archibald Prize*. Mr Fantauzzo has dyslexia. In fact, he left school at the tender age of 13, barely able to read or write. He told ABC in November: "You can be dyslexic with numbers and you're incredible with words and not numbers – I got the jackpot, I got all of them [...] memory is such a big part of how dyslexia affects me." Diagnosed with severe dyslexia in his 20s, Mr Fantauzzo's brain clearly works a little bit differently. He struggles with the written word but is immensely

gifted with artistic talent.

Students with dyslexia are more likely to leave school early and struggle with traditional modes of written assessment. How can we change this trend? Perhaps if Mr Fantauzzo's dyslexia had been identified in childhood, he would have received the tools and learning aids dyslexic children need to help them learn to read and write.

If teachers have the skills to identify and support unique cognitive styles like dyslexia in the classroom, they can set a sequence of events in motion that ultimately keep children engaged in school. Teachers should be empowered to work with learning support aides, tools and teams, employing evidence-based interventions that support more flexible and diverse ways to learn curriculum content.

Re-shaping our teaching strategies to include neurodiverse learners is essential. By diversifying student learning pathways, there's no telling what problems our students could solve. ■

Assisted technology to improve literacy amongst Australian students

According to the 2019 PISA report, undertaken by the Australian Council for Education Research, only 59% of Australian students achieve the National Proficient Standard in reading literacy and there is a pattern of long-term decline in Australia's average achievement in reading.

Scanning Pens, cofounded by Jack Churchill (Sir Winston Churchill's great, great grandson), has developed assisted technology to empower Australian students, with literacy disabilities such as dyslexia or those who have English as a second language, to become independent readers.

As students have gone back to school for 2020, Scanning Pens announced new product features for two of its key



products: the ReaderPen and ExamReader – both lightweight, pocket-size devices that scan and read text aloud with a human like digital voice.

The ReaderPen and the ExamReader have a voice recorder, several English Dictionaries, an inbuilt speaker, as well as earphones. They are Mac and PC compatible, and no software is required.

Scanning Pens consulted with teachers, speech pathologists, parents and students which led to enhancements such as an Australian accent and seven new languages including Chinese, an Auto Read function that scans multiple lines, as well as an

intuitive set-up wizard. "Seeing and hearing words together improves comprehension by 76%" said David Campbell from Scanning Pens.

"By engaging reluctant readers through a combination of text and audio, they become more confident and independent and they are better able to keep up with their peers," he added.

Whilst the ReaderPen is suitable for everyday reading and learning situations, the ExamReader is specifically made for students sitting for exams. The ExamReader has been evaluated by every Exam Board across Australia and applications for its use in Year 12 exams will be considered on

a case-by-case basis. "Exams are particularly stressful. The ExamReader levels the playing field by allowing students with reading difficulties not to be disadvantaged. It also saves the school having to provide a human resource to assist the student" says David Campbell.

Deborah Swords, Learning Support Teacher from Mackillop Catholic College on the NSW Central Coast recently trialled the ExamReader.

"The pens provide greater independence, the students were happy that they got to complete the exams themselves, without intervention. The pens not only saved time – the students loved them," she said.

Schools interested in trialling either the ReaderPen or the ExamReader can call Scanning Pens on 02 8069 6022 or email auinfo@scanningpens.com ▲

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www.readerpen.com [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [p](#) #readerpen

Challenges dyslexic students face in the classroom

In every classroom in Australia, some students struggle to acquire the reading, spelling and writing skills necessary to access the curriculum at an acceptable standard.

Some students will be diagnosed with a specific learning disorder, an impairment in reading (dyslexia), while some may not have access to a diagnosis and others need explicit teaching and guidance due to a learning difficulty. As dyslexia isn't the only cause of reading difficulties and early intervention is imperative, we don't need to have a diagnosis to act.

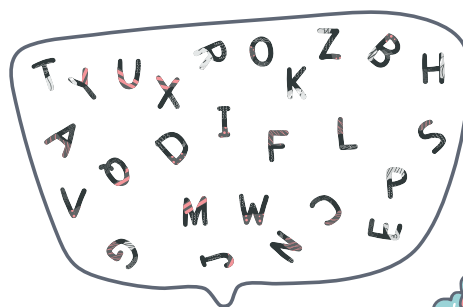
The referred definition from AUSPELD, IDA, NICHD 2002



Sandy Russo,
Director of Education, SPELD SA

reads: "Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.

"These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component



of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."

Dyslexia occurs in around three to five percent of the population and reading difficulties account for up to 80 percent of students with specific learning disabilities receiving special education services. As teachers, it is crucial to learn how to identify struggling readers at any year level and in all subject areas. We need to gain the knowledge and skills to implement evidence-based, whole-school programs; constantly monitor progress; interpret data collected; and, with this knowledge, create lessons that explicitly teach and reteach skills until students gain competency and fluency in the area(s) they struggle with.

There are many myths surrounding dyslexia, like the

belief that coloured glasses or lenses help dyslexic students learn to read. Science disproves this myth, yet it is one of the first things some teachers resort to as a strategy for struggling readers. There are no quick fixes.

This article concentrates on evidence-based considerations and practices needed to ensure those with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, are identified early and receive the practise they need to become good readers.

The core difficulty of dyslexia is 'inaccurate and effortful' word reading. Students with dyslexia tend to struggle to decode and revert to guessing words. Such students struggle with phonological awareness (PA) and processing information effectively.

A student may seem to be able to read due to memorising words, but our visual memories can only store so many.

Such students are frequently unable to spell words they can read and have difficulty with unknown words.

TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

SPELD SA PROVIDE TAILORED WORKSHOPS AND IN-SCHOOL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

UNDERSTANDING DYSLEXIA AND OTHER LEARNING DISABILITIES

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

SYNTHETIC PHONICS TRAINING


Sounds ~ Write | Jolly Phonics

PHONIC READERS AND CATCH-UP READERS

Using them in your classroom

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM

Reading tasks | Writing tasks | Classroom accommodations



SPELD SA

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FOR MORE INFORMATION email workshops@speld-sa.org.au



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

12 **Australian Inclusive Schooling Conference** Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

CONTACT: Illume Learning

WEBSITE: www.inclusiveschoolingconference.com.au

ABOUT: Australian and international leaders in the field of inclusive education to share informative and engaging presentations on the philosophy, research and practice of inclusive education.

18 **National FutureSchools Festival 2020** Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

CONTACT: sophie.carden@terrapinn.com

WEBSITE: www.terrapinn.com/exhibition/national-future-schools/index.stm

ABOUT: By the organisers of EduTECH, National FutureSchools offers a drilled down perspective compared to its sister event; with a unique focus on teachers and student wellbeing across all levels and types of education. This is the best location for buyers to evaluate and see the latest technologies in action.

25 **IEA Conference 2020** Adelaide

CONTACT: eliza.saito@sa.gov.au

WEBSITE: www.sace.sa.edu.au

ABOUT: The theme is *Prescient Educators: Teachers Shaping the Future* and aims to inspire teachers as champions of change. Its guest speakers include Grattan Institute's Dr Peter Goss and SA's very own international documentary filmmaker, Henry Thong.

26-27 **Marzano Research Summit** Brisbane

CONTACT: Solution Tree

WEBSITE: www.10times.com/marzano-research-summit

ABOUT: This is a school transformation event for F-12 educators: summit keynotes, breakout sessions and resources translate Dr Robert J Marzano's 50 years of research into practical strategies attendees can use to significantly advance student achievement.

MAY

15 **National Education Summit Brisbane** Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

CONTACT: educationvisitor@iecgroup.com.au

WEBSITE: www.nationaleducationsummit.com.au

ABOUT: National Education Summit Brisbane focuses on special needs, creativity and innovation in learning, capacity building school libraries and digital classroom practice.

JUNE

2 **EduTECH** ICC Sydney

CONTACT: sophie.carden@terrapinn.com

WEBSITE: www.terrapinn.com/exhibition/edutech-australia

ABOUT: This is the largest education event in Asia-Pac and the Southern Hemisphere. Consisting of one large exhibition, five parallel congresses and eight masterclasses. ■

Free screening tools schools can adopt that help to isolate areas of weakness:

- David Kilpatrick's *Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST)* can be accessed online.
- The *Macquarie Online Test Interface (MOTIf)* has diagnostic reading, pseudoword, comprehension and spelling tests developed at Macquarie University accessible online.
- SPELD SA has free synthetic phonic assessment tools F-2 available online.
- DIBELS Edition 8 short (one-minute) fluency measures designed to focus on the five big ideas of early literacy F-8 can be found online as well.

Louisa Moats suggests that "teaching reading is rocket science". Training for all school staff is important as most students who have learning difficulties including dyslexics can become good readers. What is needed is evidence-based instruction and decodable readers until students break the code and become fluent readers.

Early intervention is best and schools that have whole-school literacy agreements, which follow a sequential synthetic phonic progression, supported by phonic books and regular screening, are set up to capture

many students with learning difficulties in their Tier 1, whole-class instruction through programming extra revision. If a student continues struggling to read, PA and phonic skills may be missing, and it is essential to screen at this point. These students should then receive Tier 2 intervention, extra practice within small group activities allowing revision of the program that is being taught in class. Some students who are still struggling after this may require Tier 3, one-to-one intervention using a recommended remedial program such as MultiLIT or the SPELD SA Intensive Literacy program.

Students with severe reading difficulties will require differentiation, adjustments and accommodations in the classroom. As a team, I suggest your school works its way through the *AUSPELD Understanding Learning Difficulty Guide* available for free through the Scootle portal.

Topics in this guide include what you might see in the classroom at different year levels, recommended teaching strategies, examples of effective accommodations, information about the RTI model and more.

You could be the difference between a student being a successful reader or having limited options in life. ★

TEACHING TOOLS

FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS, TODAY

By Rosie Clarke, *Editor*

A new decade warrants a festival of bright, new ideas.

Gamification, innovative learning spaces, distance learning and digital technologies are some of the key topics that education leaders will delve into at this year's FutureSchools event. While these are things that future-focussed educators are keen to explore, it's areas like ethics, wellbeing, student voice and Indigenous education that are hot-button issues for teachers on the frontline of our school system. So, in 2020, FutureSchools is tackling all these topic areas and more to facilitate collaboration and initiative that will impact our education system over the next decade.

The National FutureSchools Festival is the largest event for K-12 schools and is expected to attract over 3000 educators.

This year's event promises an



innovative and personalised experience for teachers and principals. Educators can create their own agenda and move freely between 16 key topics/ tracks presented by over 220 speakers across the 2-day festival. Talks, panel discussions, workshops and an array of activities at the

festival provide unique ways for attendees to earn up to 19 hours of teacher identified professional development. Hosted at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre and open until 8.30pm on day one means Victoria-based educators can take advantage of professional

development and experience the festival after school hours. FutureSchools is always an interactive and immersive festival that connects educators from around the country with world-renowned speakers, cutting edge ideas and most importantly, each other! 20►



The transformative application of video in the classroom

EnhanceTV, Australia's leading non-profit, video-on-demand site for schools is proudly presenting at the Future Schools Festival. Two dynamic sessions will provide practical ways video can increase student engagement, facilitate collaboration and foster creativity

At EnhanceTV, we have been pushing the boundaries of the multimodal, both in video technology and pedagogy to discover the possibilities of the medium. Our first session: *Cultivating Collaboration: cross-curricular application of video in the classroom*, will explore the cross-curricular capabilities made possible through video. We will take a close look at the documentary



genre and its ability to create learning opportunities across the subject domains, leading the way in social innovation. These are the ideas that have been inspiring us at EnhanceTV, and we would love for you to share your thoughts and experiences.

Video is one of the most powerful storytelling mediums available in the classroom: addressing all modes of communication while allowing

students to use higher-order thinking when given the opportunity to construct video narratives. In our second presentation: *Students as storytellers: shaping their world and the world around them*, we will explore how video can be used to its full potential in the classroom, acting as a launchpad for students to think about their place in the world, their culture, their wellbeing and the environment, as

well as a creative storytelling tool students can utilise in a range of learning contexts.

Video is a pedagogical tool that allows us to transcend the four walls of the classroom. We will give you practical ways for your students to take the power of storytelling into their own hands using engaging content and tools.

Find us at stand E27 on the 18th and 19th of March. Take up a free teacher account today, and join us during lunchtimes (12.30pm) for a fun 10-minute quiz on 'Classic Aussie Films You Know and Love.' The winning free teacher subscribers will receive a **FREE 12 month subscription for the entire school, valued up to \$2900.** So take a free teacher account today, and get immediate access to the world's leading educational storytellers.▲


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STAND E27



We will be presenting two sessions at National FutureSchools 2020:

Cultivating Collaboration: cross-curricular application of video in the classroom
Students as storytellers: shaping their world through video

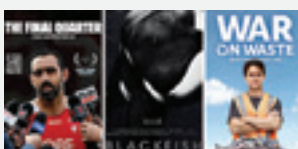
- ✓ We're not for profit. We're for teachers and filmmakers - both are important storytellers.
- ✓ Easily discover national curriculum-linked videos and learning resources.
- ✓ Can't find it on catch-up services? Try EnhanceTV. We don't delete the broadcast programs we record.
- ✓ We are safer than YouTube as we're ad-free, fully curated and use classifications.



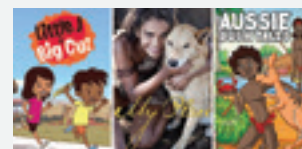
We are one of Australia's largest libraries of educational broadcast TV content



Australian novel adaptations



Critically acclaimed documentaries



Indigenous Australia for primary

Sign up to a **FREE user account** today to participate in a fun lunchtime quiz at 12.30pm (both days) at FutureSchools stand E27. The winner will be upgraded to a **FREE 12 month subscription** for their entire school!



◀18

The festival expo presents a maze of opportunities to test out new and exciting education technologies, software, tools, products, and learning environment solutions. It's a great opportunity to mix with staff from other schools and find out what they are doing, too.

The aim of the game is to upskill, inspire and motivate, so attendees walk away with ideas for how to improve educational outcomes that are practical, rooted in evidence-based pedagogy and curriculum-centred. Leave armed with practical takebacks for principals, executive teams, classroom and curriculum leaders, ICT directors or coordinators.

Craig Macfarlane, National FutureSchools founder and



Managing Director has told us the festival-style event "offers a drilled down perspective with a unique focus on teachers and student wellbeing across K-12 education". He said: "This is the best location for school leaders to evaluate and see the latest technologies in action".

The issues of our time

Here are some of the exhilarating plenary discussions and talks you won't want to miss.

Education documentary filmmaker and founder of Boundless, Ted Dintersmith will discuss why *It's All About the Change Model*.



World-class educator and NSW Department of Education's Global Teacher Prize Finalist, Yasodai Selvakumaran will discuss *Subject Based Learning* and *How To Enhance Student Engagement*. Vasse Primary School Principal, Sinan Kerimofski will also ponder how schools can facilitate student agency with environmental developments from flexible seating to agile space.

Pasi Sahlberg, Deputy Director of Research at the Gonski Institute For Education, will examine those latest shocking OECD statistics, discussing our place in the world.

Anita Collins, world renowned music educator from Muse Consulting & Bigger Better Brains, will deliver a rousing discussion of music and what we can all learn from it.

School News hopes to see you there!

Find out if you're eligible for a FREE PD pass. School News has a limited number of FREE tickets for our readers. Scan the QE code below to register. ▲



Inspiring students outside the classroom

Inspiring students outside the classroom with PGL Adventure Camps.

There's no doubt that education goes beyond the classroom and that students need to push their boundaries, develop physically and mentally, and learn the skills to deal with challenging situations outside their usual range of experience.

There are plenty of opportunities to do all this, one of the best being a school camp.

Established in 1957, PGL offers residential adventure camps for schools at two camps in Victoria (Camp Rumbug, South Gippsland and Campaspe Downs, Kyneton)



and one in Queensland (Kindilan, Redland Bay near Brisbane).

PGL's philosophy is founded on the idea that outdoor adventure activities are an effective pathway to improved confidence, enthusiasm for learning and positive attitudes which translate into more motivated, better achieving individuals.

PGL offers a range of outdoor adventure-based programs for schools:

Activity Camps

Choose from a Leadership or Teambuilding focus - students enjoy a packed activity program designed to challenge, motivate and inspire each individual. Activities include abseiling, canoeing, raft building and flying fox.

Year 7 Orientation Camps

An ideal way to encourage year groups to bond, support each



other and build trust. Activity sessions focus on problem solving, coping with new situations and working as a team to help students build the right foundations for their school career.

The Amazing Adventure Camp

In this 'Amazing Race' style camp, teams compete in a series of tasks and challenges designed to help them develop a positive mental attitude, find common ground and learn survival techniques along the way.

Camp Out Experience

In the supported setting of PGL's own camp bushland, students immerse themselves in learning

about the natural Australian bush environment, camping outdoors with the help of experienced PGL leaders to help develop mindfulness, resilience and leadership skills.

Study Skills Retreat

An opportunity to spend time away from the school environment to learn, reflect and connect with teachers and peers, while developing important skills for study. It's a specialised program combining adventure activities and teacher-led study time.

Every PGL adventure camp has an experienced team of activity instructors and dedicated PGL Group Leaders to provide support with the organisation of each group.

Accommodation and Facilities

All PGL adventure camps include accommodation, activities, and free evening entertainment. A 1:10 free-place ratio for teachers also provides great value for your time away. ▲

Find out more about PGL at www.pgladventurecamps.com.au call 1300 859 895 or email info@pgladventurecamps.com.au



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Inspiring adventures at our camps in Victoria and Queensland.



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Supporting students through natural disasters

By Kristen Douglas,
Head of headspace Schools,
The National Youth Mental
Health Foundation

Across the country, we are experiencing some of the most intense natural disasters in Australia's history.

From harsh droughts to devastating bushfires, there is no doubt it's a concerning time for all Australians.

However, with much of the focus on attending to the immediate threats and issues and simply making it through, day to day and week to week, it can be easy to overlook the impact heightened stress, heartache, worry and concern can have on our own mental health, and that of our family, friends and young people.

We know teachers are on the front line, dealing with not only their own concerns about what might be happening in their community but also having to support and remain aware of the impact on students.

Crucial to providing any kind of support to students is recognising and understanding how you are feeling and looking after your own mental health first, seeking professional support if needed. It's only when you have addressed your own mental health that you can respond to your students' needs in the most appropriate way.

Key national youth support services:

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
www.kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890
www.headspace.org.au

ReachOut.com:
www.au.reachout.com

Key national 24/7 crisis support services:

Lifeline: 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service:
1300 659 467
www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

In the days and weeks after an event like a bushfire, or during a period of drought, keep an eye on student behaviour as responses to trauma or distress can manifest in different ways; such as reactivation of previous problems, increased sensitivity to issues of justice and equity, behavioural changes like withdrawal or acting out and peer conflict.

Having open and honest conversations can be helpful for students: for some, this will mean speaking about what's happening but for others it might be drawing or writing down their feelings or experiences. It will be important to acknowledge these feelings and discuss issues in a way that considers student maturity.

At times like this, students

might also look to teachers to explain what's happened and make sense of the world. We know it can be hard to provide responses that make sense and reassure students, but it is important to recognise and respond to students in distress. While honesty is necessary in discussions, stick to the facts and try to remove personal opinion. Although it's a difficult time, it's crucial to express hope and positivity for the future.

Remind students that after a traumatic event, or prolonged stress it's even more important they focus on mental health in dealing with difficult emotions. Empower them with the knowledge of how to spot signs their mental health might be impacted; this can also extend to friends and family. Find ways to remind students that nutrition, sleep and exercise are extremely important to get through tough times, and we know that these are often the first things to be forgotten.

Connection is also vital and a support system will help young people get through tough times; this might be talking with a family member, friend, teacher or school counselling staff member. Most importantly, let them know

that there is support available and where they can find it.

Students should know that although their environment may be stressful outside of school, school is a safe space for both students and teachers. For more resources on how teachers can best support students, explore the *Be You* fact sheets and *headspace* supporting students portal online. Here are some other resources that may assist school communities to support students responding to the immediate and longer-term needs following the impact of natural disasters.

- Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network produced a resource for teachers in response to the Victorian bushfires, which includes a range of excellent ideas for classrooms, called the *School Recovery Tool Kit*.
- The Australian Red Cross produced a resource for parents and caregivers that gives an excellent summary of stress and trauma as well as some excellent strategies and activities that may be helpful for both parents and teachers.

This can be found online and is called Helping children and young people cope with crisis.

Additionally, check your State and Territory advice for responding to critical incidents or trauma reference documents.

If you or someone you know is struggling, visit headspace.org.au to find your nearest centre or call eheadspace on 1800 650 890.



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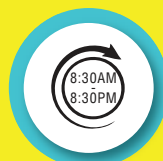
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Safety first:

digitising school visitor management

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Sign-in protocols have changed drastically over the last few years.

Schools now need digital systems that minimise administrative duties and use up less paper but create a rigorous record of visitors, events, incidents and activities. Digitised systems make it easier for schools to organise, vet and welcome guests while keeping students safe and protecting themselves from liability. New systems can scan ID to make sure volunteers and visitors who come into contact with students have appropriate documentation such as the *Working with Children Check* in Victoria or the *Blue Card* in Queensland.

A thorough visitor management system should be quick, seamless, and gather lots of data. In the event of an emergency, schools need to know who is on school grounds. If an investigation is carried out at some point in the future, a record that details who, when and why someone was at your school is invaluable. A digital record can house more information than a physical one as it is not so limited by space. For instance, you can retain photos of entrants, along with a

record of any staff they met with, which areas of the school they had access to and where applicable, which students they interacted with.

As a society, we are more security-conscious now than in previous decades. Digital visitor management systems allow schools to implement a thorough vetting procedure that keeps students safe without adding to staff duties or diminishing the welcoming atmosphere of your school. Almost the entire process, from scheduling and room booking to reminding school leaders or staff members about a new arrival, to carrying out ID checks, printing name tags, directing visitors around the school, and distributing health and safety messages, can all be programmed and streamlined with a digital system. Every moment a visitor spends at your school can be recorded and tracked in real-time, without impeding on their experience or the experience of students/staff.

Effective systems can also cover daily tasks like staff sign ins or alerts about fire alarm testing. They can make reporting incidents, accidents and late student arrivals much easier. They can also notify teachers about student movements, staff meetings or guest arrivals with a

quick email or SMS. Some digital systems pose other benefits like data collection for future marketing or communication strategies.

There are lots of software platforms on the market, so ask around to make sure the system you choose is cost-effective and improves on, or integrates with, your current system(s).

Industry insights

School News spoke with Stephen Darracott, Vice President and General Manager at Pitney Bowes Australia and New Zealand, to find out more about services now available to schools.

"More schools are recognising the need to implement a robust visitor management system. Most schools choose a system depending on the physical environment they're looking to manage. For example, if you have little space or a small reception desk, a kiosk is a great option as it's free standing. If you do have enough room, desk-mounted options offer the same functionalities at a lower cost. No matter which option you choose, you'll get a complete hardware package that's ready to go and supported in case of any issues.

"A good visitor management

system will let you pre-print labels for groups in advance or can be integrated with Outlook, so people sign in using a QR code on their mobile. Messages, screens and ID labels are fully customisable for each school. Background images, maps, or diagrams can be added to match school branding. Printed labels can include the school logo, the visitor's photo and any other information needed to identify them. You can also set up the system to communicate health and safety guidelines for the person to read and acknowledge.

"On the home screen, you can add a screen saver to promote your school, upcoming or past events. The system can automatically email and/or send an SMS notification to the appropriate person or group in the school. Most organisations will provide training so schools can get the most out of their new technology."

In the future, he revealed: "Phones are increasingly common as a form of ID, especially with the recent introduction of the digital driver's licence in NSW. It's definitely on the horizon for visitor management and we'll likely start seeing technologies that let visitors sign in with their mobile device." ■

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Profitable fundraising ideas for your school



Schools increasingly rely on fundraising to afford new technology, resources and upgrades.

For large schools with active community engagement, a couple of events each year may be enough to generate the additional funds required.

For smaller schools, it can prove more of a challenge. One-off events can be fruitful but there are more sustained ways to fundraise that enrich the fabric of school community engagement and can take place throughout the year with less fuss.

They often integrate with events too!

How does outsourced fundraising work?

Some companies specialise in supplying products to schools, specifically for fundraising. Schools can reach out to them with their fundraising goals and find out which products, approaches and fundraising initiatives might work best to achieve those goals. There is a wild array of possibilities here. Schools can place an order for well-known brands of chocolate, drinks and snacks, household products, school stationery items or sustainable products like keep-cups and reusable straws. The next step is to distribute them for students to sell within their communities.

Wrappy up your fundraising

Bee Wrappy beeswax wraps are an alternative to single-use plastic and traditional cling-wrap.

They are made using 100% natural ingredients and are beautifully designed, hand-crafted, dipped and folded at the foot of the Blue Mountains in NSW.

They replace plastic wrap for sandwiches and other lunchbox items, wrap cut fruit and veggies, can be washed and re-used and their natural ingredients make them 100% bio-degradable

"It's an easy and simple way for our customers to do just one thing better," said Sam Bala, Bee Wrappy founder.


In 2019 Bee Wrappy created their fundraising program, helping to raise more than \$90,000 for schools across Australia. The program follows a simple, no upfront cost approach that helps reach fundraising targets and encourages families to eliminate



unnecessary packaging that goes into school lunches. Bee Wrappy offer their 3 PACK of beeswax wraps as the fundraising product.

"It's a great entry level pack and very competitively priced at \$25, giving you great results." During your fundraising drive, you sell as many packs as you can with no upfront cost.

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E-commerce options are even available so that payments can be made electronically, sending third-party reminders to parents about fundraising goals and initiatives so that schools don't need to send students home with letters or hold out for cash donations.

When you place an order for outsourced fundraising products, you may receive free promotional materials to distribute to your fundraisers, and you can mark-up the products to maximise profitability. Many of the suppliers will buy back unsold stock so that you aren't left in the lurch. Sustainable products, like produce bags, reusable coffee cups and straws are popular items that could work particularly well if your fundraising goal is linked to sustainability (perhaps an investment in your STEM equipment or saving for a solar array).

Don't forget that students should wear their uniforms if they will be fundraising in public, both to present a professional



image for the school and to boost confidence and a sense of pride. Students should always be accompanied by an adult when fundraising, so encourage students to buddy up or get into teams that make parent chaperoning easier to manage.

Keep records too, so that you can identify best-selling products and spot your fastest selling little fundraisers. You can shuffle products around based on popularity and the success rates of other students/groups.

See a need, fill a need

Outsourcing products that your wider community, parents and

friends would purchase anyway is a great way to fundraise. Even if you mark-up products, knowing they are supporting a school initiative should make selling the products more seamless. Household items that families use every day like sunscreen, lunchboxes, toothbrushes, kitchen supplies and bin bags will always sell so use your imagination when hunting for products but keep your audience in mind. Do parents tend to loiter during pick-ups and drop-offs? This could be a good opportunity to have snacks, drinks and reusable beverage items for sale. Bumper stickers for cars

and other branded keepsake items also work well.

Pre-orders are your friends

Minimise effort and maximise profits by incentivising pre-orders. The easier you can make it on parents, the better. Sending students home with a box of stuff to sell without warning and with a tight deadline won't win over mums or dads. Think about whether you'd prefer to invite parents and students to order in advance or maybe a strategic stall set-up will get the job done. People are more likely to make online orders with you if they are familiar with the products. 28►

Fundraising success on a plate

Schools around Australia are switching to fundraising projects that are meaningful and creative.

Pictureplates have been a tradition of Australian school life since 1977. Still made in Australia from durable and dishwasher-safe melamine, the plates offer children a chance to celebrate their creativity—and give families a lasting keepsake of this special time in their lives. Long after those drawings on the fridge have faded, their Pictureplates will still be going strong.

Teachers and parent volunteers are supported with many time-saving initiatives: from comprehensive planning tools to a simple ordering system that lets parents pay securely online. Everything is backed up by friendly Australia-based phone and email support. No wonder Pictureproducts was



voted the People's Choice Fundraiser for two years running. Whether it's for a mid-year memento or a Class of 2020 celebration, Pictureproducts offers a fundraising activity that is profitable, memorable and fun. Order a no-obligation free starter kit for your fundraising team today. ▲

School News readers receive a free upgrade in 2020. Pre-print your Pictureplates with your school's name and logo free of charge—the perfect way to commemorate the children's time at school. Just mention this ad when you order your Starter Kit.

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Outsourcing can enrich your school's fundraising approach



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Have you tried tasking a business studies class to market some fundraising products? National vendors can also help you create a fundraising website with an online ordering system, product stock list and rolling calendar of events.

Goals and motivation

Make a big deal out of anyone who's selling well, meeting or exceeding targets and getting your school closer to that big goal by handing out incentive rewards. Experiential rewards can work well; for instance, allow your top selling students to do something fun or decide the theme of an upcoming school event.

Aussie families are doing their very best to create a sustainable future for themselves and their children. A fantastic way to encourage this behaviour and support your school fundraising endeavour is to partner up with local businesses and bigger vendors that specifically offer sustainable items for schools and other groups to sell. Many of the products available include first aid kits and reusable coffee cups, seed bombs, beeswax food wraps, produce bags, steel straws and a variety of others.

This is a very cool way to help fund a specific project like installing solar panels, buying

sports equipment or taking students on a sustainability-related school trip because it aligns with your school's goal. Not to mention you also get to supply homes with functional items.

Fundraising events that stand out of the crowd

You can rent and purchase all sorts of activities, inflatables, mazes, games and experiences like gladiator set-ups, rock climbing walls and even dunk tanks that will give your fundraising event plenty of unique selling points to get parents, families and wider community members through the gates. Generate some competitive appeal by sorting entrants into teams and score throughout the day.

Make novelty items available at school fun days, discos, fetes and free dress days. You can team up with a company that supplies novelty items or design your own school memorabilia. There are a huge variety of knick-knacks you can sell that kids go gaga for, such as glowsticks, tumblers, sunglasses, and packs of cards.

Don't forget to send reminders and updates with a steady stream of photos through your newsletter, text, Facebook, assemblies or even signage. ■



BOOK REVIEWS

What's new to the bookshelf this term...



Never Forget

For age 4+
By Clare Hallifax, Simon O'Carrigan
Scholastic

Ideal for young readers learning about ANZAC Day, this unique picture book is inspired by works of art painted during the First World War. Illustrator Simon O'Carrigan worked closely with war museums to collate, curate and recreate original art.



Cast Away

For young adult readers
By Naomi Shihab Nye
HarperCollins

Written by Young People's Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye, this is a poignant and modern collection of poems that considers our disposable society. Mature, funny, thoughtful and exciting, this is a great multi-disciplinary text for older readers interested in sustainability, voice and cross-cultural responsibility.

Aussie Kids: Meet Taj at the Lighthouse



For age 6+
By Maxine Beneba Clarke and Nicki Greenberg
Penguin Random House

Emerging readers will discover a range of fun facts about lighthouses in this inclusive adventure. From renowned children's author Maxine Beneba Clarke, this story is part of a junior fiction series celebrating unique children living in every state and territory across Australia.



The Sisters Grimm

For young adult readers
By Menna van Praag
Penguin Random House

Touted as a tour de force of imagination, this fantasy novel is a high brow fairytale that interrogates traditional depictions of female empowerment. Interested in sustainability, voice and cross-cultural responsibility.



Haywire

For age 9+
By Claire Saxby
Omnibus Books

Set during the Second World War, this middle-grade epic is a stand-alone novel following the lives of two boys that covers the history of Jewish refugees interned as 'enemy aliens' who arrived on the Dunera and were known as the 'Dunera Boys'.



Edie's Experiments 1: How to Make Friends

For age 7+
By Charlotte Barkla
Penguin Random House

A junior novel about a young girl who turns her school into a giant science experiment, this is a fun-filled story about friendship with a great STEM-positive message.



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Improve learning outcomes with theatre education



Images: Alpha Shows

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Theatre education in schools has a measurable impact on student development.

According to research in the *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, titled 'A Study on the Relationship between Theatre Arts and Student Literacy and Mathematics Achievement', "students in arts integrated classrooms tend[ed] to outperform their counterparts in both math and language arts".

Perhaps more interestingly, boys seemed to benefit most from theatre arts integrated learning as those who took part had significantly higher test scores in language and mathematics. The study clarified that "males who were part of the theater arts intervention outperformed control group males at each grade level".

Research like this is vital to keep in mind as we evolve our education system towards future technologies. Too often, governments are quick to de-fund the arts and parents push their children into STEM subjects. But time and time



again, the arts have proven how beneficial they are to learning development and civil society more broadly. Citizens who participate in the arts, as creatives but also as audience members, have higher levels of civic engagement.

Theatre builds confidence, memory, teamwork, stamina,

problem-solving; all manner of skills that are critical across all curriculum areas. Some of your students may have never seen a play or a theatre production before. Introducing them to theatre arts with incursions and arts integration can open them up to worlds of imagination and, most importantly, engagement.



Providing your students with the tools they need to engage in theatre education is one of the most powerful ways to facilitate their learning.

We spoke to a range of experts on theatre incursions, stage, sound and lighting design for school theatre set-ups to find out more.

Industry opinions

No stranger to theatre, Alpha Shows' CEO Ben Jackson was engaged in the arts as a school student taking part in "local 'pantomime' productions every Christmas". Now a teacher and motivator who's not just a "thespian obsessed with the theatrical form in and of itself". He said: "It taught me that only through live theatre can true transformation happen."

What do theatre incursions do for students?

School theatre incursions are "not like the passive theatrical plays we're used to or the basic call and response 'kids' shows we've seen at shopping centres or in the park. All learning happens during peak emotional states, Ben told



us, so he believes the ideal show for school students uses specialised “psychological tools and methods to proactively and consciously trigger specific peak emotional states, and then create learnings in those moments to last a lifetime”.

“These learnings are within the safe and secure space of theatre, and in metaphorical form through myths, fairytales and the larger than life characters that connect in with ancient archetypes that resonate. We can use the drama, conflict, character journeys and struggles, trials and tribulations,

etc., as a kind of anchor point for a future ‘memory’ of how to handle everyday challenges. Through this psychological process dressed up as funny and entertaining musical theatre, we can build character traits like the choice to be loving instead of hateful or fearful, to be a hero in our everyday life, to treat others fairly and with equality, to overcome unworthiness or limiting beliefs, to exhibit resilience in the face of adversity, or simply to be truthful even when doing so is hard and might result in pain.” 32►

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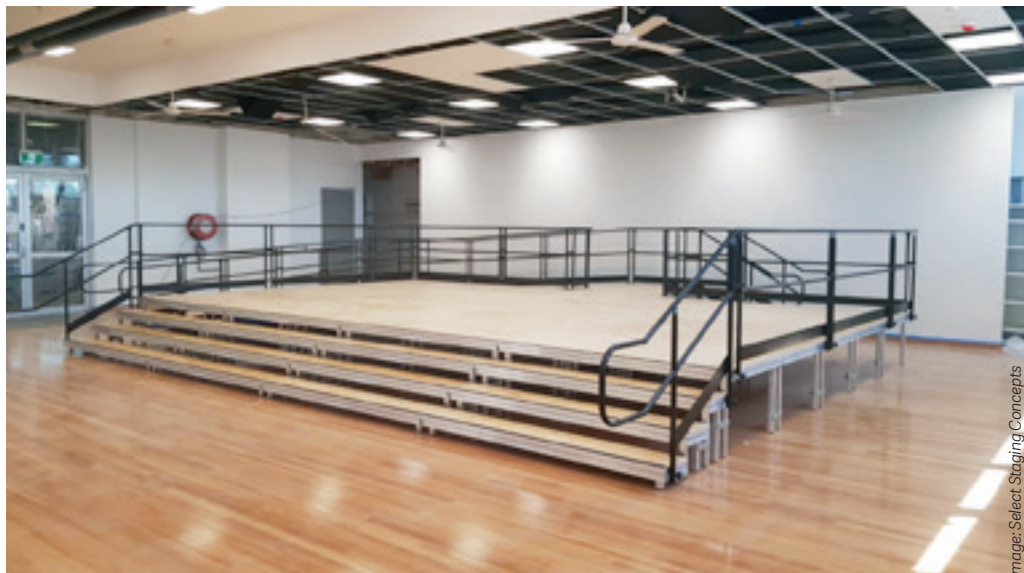


Image: Select Staging Concepts

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Stage production skills for students

Transtage Staging Consultant Peter Giblin spoke with us about how theatre production can help develop important life skills.

He said it's about "building confidence, from performing in front of an audience to developing social skills and working with people outside a circle of friends and learning how to work as a team and teaching people how to work under pressure".

He shared: "Throughout high school theatre helped me move out of my comfort zone, I socialised with groups of people I wouldn't normally spend time with, and I made some great friends from the experience."

Advice for schools looking for resources

Peter said: "Ask for quotes from many suppliers and compare as prices can really vary, there are suppliers whose target market are high end production companies and there are suppliers whose target market are small studios and community organisations. Read supplier reviews and where possible always ask to inspect before you buy!"

Tips for staging solutions

Peter noted: "Where possible consider purchasing stages because while it is more affordable to rent, over multiple uses it can be quite pricey. A set of stages can be used as a traditional stage as well as seating solutions, choir risers or drum risers for

concerts. So quality staging can be very modular and adaptable to various needs.

Installing or refurbishing your school AV/lighting equipment

Michael Stephens, Installed Systems' senior sales engineer from The PA People told us: "Think about who uses the equipment and for what purpose. Whole-school assemblies? Annual student productions? For this type of use, an entry-level system that is easily operated by occasional users would suit your needs. Perhaps with the capacity to add additional hired equipment like a sub-mixing desk for additional hired wireless microphones, multicore and cabled microphones.

"If the system needs to double-up as a teaching tool, it is important that teachers can use it to conduct lessons and fulfil the curriculum requirements of their courses."

Future-proof your installation

A good first step is to ask other principals and schools that have upgraded or built new projects, according to Michael. "They will usually be very happy to discuss what has worked well and what hasn't. Should you have an outdated system that needs refurbishment to a digital system with wireless connectivity, etc., check which brands have stood the test of time and ask for those again. Keep in mind that some items will wear considerably faster than others, for instance a

horn loudspeaker exposed to the elements as part of a campus PA system will need replacing faster than a digital matrix presentation switcher."

New theatre technology trends

Michael Added: "A significant trend reaching the end of its introduction is the shift over to digital signal transport to the extent that in design currently, other than in some exceptional cases, analogue signal transport is not considered at all. Digital solutions have made audio, visual and lighting support much more efficient for schools."

School event and performance staging solutions

Leonie McDerby from Select Staging Concepts offered some tips for when you are purchasing a new stage for your school.

"Everyone benefits from involvement in a school production, sports event or musical extravaganza – students, teachers and the local community. A well-designed product can be so flexible. You can get one flat stage and then change the leg height and add different stage accessories to have tiered seating, choir riser, a catwalk or even a multi-height performance stage.

"Consider whether the stage is easy to install, dismantle and store. School stages need to be robust, versatile, easy to assemble and usually portable, but safe.

Which stage podium is the right solution for your school?

Leonie said: "Whether it is for a classroom, an energetic sports class or an event/performance stage, there are four principal design features which need to be taken into consideration.

"Space: How much space do you have to assemble? How much storage space? Are there restricting access points or stairs to consider?"

"Sizing/height: What is the podium to be used for? How many people are on the stage? Can the stage start small and



Image: Transtage Staging



Image: The P.A. People

be added to as required? Do you need multi-level heights?

“Shape: Is there an oddly proportioned stage location? Do you need curved or angled sides? Are catwalks required?

“Finish: Does the podium require a Marine Grade Carpet finish for outdoor use, comfort or acoustics, or an anti-slip, or a dance surface?

What colour fits your interior design? “School needs change over time, so a versatile and multi-use stage is optimum.

Why not maximise the versatility of multi-height leg options by looking into stage accessories like valances with school logos, front fascia, handrails, chair border rails, steps and access ramps?” ■

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Why Sydney is the greatest educator

Sydney Wild - Photo by Srikant School

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Culminative research in education over the years has shown how important field trips are for young learners.

Experiential learning deepens

understanding, layers social skills and can improve overall educational outcomes. Class trips to Sydney can integrate a huge variety of learning areas. Working towards an extended trip can not only motivate students through the year but tying the trip in with a project or cross-curricula topic can give students a palpable

sense of purpose. As they research and develop solutions for real-world problems in their local communities, what can they learn from Sydney?

Australia's biggest city is a versatile place to custom build curriculum-linked trips, combining rich experiences with tourist hotspots. Of course, most class tours head

straight towards the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, The Rocks and maybe even Bondi Beach but there are so many other adventures that can facilitate excellent teaching moments and give students the opportunity to engage with real-world problem solving.

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George St Sydney – Photo by Laura Crox



Interior Sydney Opera House – Photo by Angela Matijczak



Photo by Sachin Stiles



Sydney transport – Photo by James Ree

Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a massive undertaking with projects sweeping the city and surrounding suburbs. Investigating some of its projects could allow students to critically engage with their own sustainability projects. In November 2019, as part of the Eora Journey project, Sydney engaged Aboriginal curator Emily McDaniel to create the Harbour Walk, which is a curated series of interconnected stories and artworks along 9km of Sydney Harbour foreshore, from Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour to Woolloomooloo. It is a stunning exploration of Aboriginal

storytelling on community land. Students can engage with Sydney's colonial history and investigate how well the city is working to better reflect its Indigenous heritage by celebrating the living culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney.

Sydney's new light rail system opened in December, making headlines as "the slowest transport system of its kind in the world", a claim to fame remarked by the NSW Labor leader. Dogged by bad press and mixed reviews, the new transport system cost Sydney \$2.9

billion and was supposed to mark a significant step towards reducing traffic congestion, eventually replacing buses and cars in the CBD. What went wrong? Students can embark on a voyage of discovery answering that question, comparing routes, speed and carbon output to other modes of transport in the city, finding out whether it really is the slowest tram ride or whether that's 'fake news', and learning from Sydney's mistakes to develop their own models.

STEM activities: hands-on science education excursions are too

numerous to count in Sydney, with behind-the-scenes workshops at museums, factories and aquariums, lessons with scientists in the field or close encounters with incredible biodiversity in-and-outside the city walls. Students studying pollution, infrastructure or waste and recycling in the classroom could expand their learning by visiting one of the country's largest recycling plants. Look out for science programs, festivals and events designed specifically for school students at the museum, Sydney Olympic Park, Botanical Gardens, zoos and universities.

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LASTING LEARNING
IN JUST TWO HOURS

Experiences make learning outcomes unforgettable

By Mandy Clarke, *Industry Reporter*

Do you know how easy it is to forget things you learn? Within a month, you will likely forget 80 percent of everything you read in this issue of *School News*.

You may also forget this... The Ebbinghaus 'forgetting curve' theory, which argues that as we are learning we are also doing a lot of forgetting.

However, if we use all our senses to absorb information, we are more likely to retrieve that information when we need it. It is with this framework that we can demonstrate the effectiveness of experiential learning methods in cementing new information. Hands on experience stimulates more of our sensory



processes, maximising our ability to learn and retain information.

Experiential learning can be offered inside or outside a classroom environment. Education theorist and Professor of Organizational Behaviour, David Kolb, points out that the purpose of experiential

learning is to take what the individual has studied in a classroom and enhance that knowledge by giving them opportunities to do and see those principles in action.

Providing extraordinary learning experiences away from a classroom should create life-changing learning moments for your students and open their eyes to a world of possibilities. But remember, it takes significant research, planning, and experimentation to identify experiences that deliver the most concrete learning outcomes for students.

Latitude Group Travel specialises in designing custom educational tours and are pioneers in experiential learning-based tours. The company's general manager, Felicity Irwin, told us that schools

need to prioritise curriculum-linked experiential learning activities to deepen learning and actively engage students.

She said: "Successful delivery of teaching goals and outcomes can only happen by collaborating with teachers to comprehensively understand the curriculum they wish to deliver to support their classroom learning. A safety-first approach, working together to determine desired student outcomes and then identifying relevant experiences maximises learning opportunities and with this approach we continue to successfully provide a variety of tours to many schools across Australia. Since 2014 we have partnered with Ravenswood School for Girls to customise a series of unique tours for their

◀ 35

These are held throughout the year and provide unique, fun learning opportunities. The world-renowned Sydney Theatre Company has an exquisite year of plays and shows planned for 2020, including a genderfluid reimagining of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Students can embark on behind-the-scenes tours of most major theatres in Sydney, meeting stage directors, costumers, and seeing how different fields come together to create a successful stage production.

If you don't want to schedule your own trip, you can contact an educational tour provider who will work with you and your student interests to customise a trip that ties in with projects, class topics and learning goals, whether they involve the arts, urban renewal, ecosystems, or something completely different.

Not interested in a city-based excursion? Students can visit the Blue Mountains or an NSW hinterland farm stay to discover how communities are bouncing back from the bushfires, volunteer some time, find out how to milk a cow and better understand the life cycle of our food. Kangaroo Valley is only a two-hour drive



Sydney Vivid Festival Circular Quay - Photo by Paul Carmona

from the city and presents various adventure activities from kayaking river tours to exhilarating walking trails in and around the falls. History lessons will never be the same again after participating in an interactive living history tour. The Nurses Walk provides an interesting insight into the early days in and around The Rocks area, created in 1979 to commemorate the nurses that walked between the two hospitals that operated between 1788 and 1816. The nurses were plucked from groups of convicts and received only their board and no pay. Students can explore hidden alleyways, lanes, shops, stairways, cafes, markets and museums for a memorable tour of

this historic area. The Art Gallery of NSW is a great spot to visit with students but so is the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative, one of Australia's longest running Aboriginal-owned and operated art galleries, which focuses on art from NSW. The Museum of Contemporary Art also has a dedicated curator for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs. The gallery features regular exhibitions by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

The State Library of NSW has a large collection of Australian and Pacific Islands and Australian Indigenous materials and offers a service to help both Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal visitors research Indigenous histories. The Sydney Observatory also has an exhibition explaining how the constellations in the southern sky were created from an Aboriginal perspective.

Sydney is a sprawling, diverse city poised for massive change over the next few years. It is focussed on solving many of the same problems as your students: how to build a sustainable future, how to better engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and how to combine arts and sciences. This makes it the ideal learning environment to plunge them into. ■



students including their STEM tours and we are excited to be working with them again this year.”

This partnership ignited potential, passion and purpose for the students at Sydney’s Ravenswood School for Girls, one of Australia’s leading independent girls’ schools. It offers holistic education with a strong academic focus where student learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked.

Wanting to provide deeper, future-focused learning opportunities, the school chose Latitude Group Travel to collaborate on bespoke experiential tours for students.

Danielle Cavill, TAS Coordinator for Ravenswood, described the tours as experiential learning through innovative, custom designed and STEM curriculum-linked activities. Experiences covered the sciences, technology/ICT, engineering and mathematics, engaging students

in active learning. She told us: “I chose to use Latitude Group Travel for our educational STEM tour for Year 8-11 students because their communication is clear, easy to read and understand, thorough and exceptionally well researched. Latitude Group Travel has also been highly professional in all communications with parents and students.”

Danielle said the STEM tour has allowed school staff to “learn alongside the students and work with them to extend their learning”.

Detailing the support staff receive from Latitude Group Travel, Danielle said: “They work with our tour intent and curriculum goals and in collaboration with the school, to organise parent communication, bookings, the itinerary, insurance and also present at tour information evenings. While on tour, they are available 24/7 to

provide support and afterwards, create a movie and photo poster for staff and students to enjoy.”

Developing unique tours specifically for Ravenswood students has developed the girls’ confidence to travel and sparked their inquiry to learn. Danielle noted: “Our collaboration with Latitude has provided many outstanding learning opportunities and evoked many valuable STEM conversations. Staff who had previously organised tours have commented that they are reassured Latitude Group Travel has the know-how to organise and provide safe and outstanding tours for students, while also fully supporting staff.”

We asked Danielle to offer tips for other schools who would like to develop some experiential learning activities and outcomes. She said: “Choose areas of interest you would like the tour to focus on that you know will connect and excite the students and start the conversation early so parents/carers can prepare for the tour.

“Don’t have an educational tour so specific that it excludes students or makes students think they aren’t ‘smart’ enough to participate.

“Choose staff who are interested in the subject matter as this helps to extend the students’ learning and enable them to access more from the tour.” ●



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Teach me and I
REMEMBER, Involve me
and I LEARN ”
- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

45%

OF AUSTRALIANS ARE MISINFORMED ABOUT SUNSCREEN



in Brisbane, the Cancer Council revealed that only 55 percent of Australian adults recognise that it's safe to use sunscreen every day, down from 61 percent in 2014. Seventeen percent of respondents were worried that sunscreens contain ingredients that are bad for your health, while separately 20 percent believed that using sunscreen regularly would result in not having enough vitamin D.

The Cancer Council stressed: "Sunscreens in Australia are strictly regulated by the Therapeutics Goods Administration to ensure that the ingredients they contain are safe and effective. Australians should be confident that they can use sunscreen on a daily basis, there is no evidence to suggest the ingredients are bad for your health."

By Mandy Clarke, Industry Reporter

New Cancer Council research has shown that Australians are increasingly misinformed about sunscreen, prompting skin cancer prevention experts to bust common sunscreen myths and remind Australians to slip, slop, slap, seek (shade) and slide (on sunglasses).

Presenting new statistics from its National Sun Protection Survey, at the World Congress of Melanoma



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Without daily sunscreen application, Australians are more at risk for sun damage.

As teachers and school staff, do you wear sunscreen every day?

For many years now, Australia has unfortunately held the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. With temperatures rising, it is more important than ever to protect ourselves and our youth from harmful rays.

The number of young Australians who experience severe sunburn is shocking: recent data from the Department of Health and Human Services' Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset indicated that more than half of emergency hospital presentations in Victoria for sunburn last summer were babies, children and teens. Head of targeted prevention and early detection program SunSmart, Heather Walker said: "It was shocking to see such high numbers of young people getting burnt badly enough to warrant hospital treatment."

According to figures shared by SunSmart, Victorian emergency department presentations for sunburn during summer 2018-19 showed that 53 percent of hospital presentations were children and adolescents under-19. Of the total 296 sunburn presentations reported, 32 percent were adolescents aged 10-19, while an alarming 21 percent were children under-nine.

"The report showed that the financial year 2018-19 had the second highest number of emergency department hospital presentations since 2004, and the highest on record for December."

Relating to the rise in the number of cases of sunburn, Ms Walker



noted the "overcast conditions and the impact of the bushfire smoke on UV may be causing Victorians to overlook the need for sun protection". Almost all cases of sunburn can and must be avoided at any age but especially in childhood, a time when, according to SunSmart, "sun exposure in the first 20 years of life determines to a substantial degree a person's lifetime potential for skin cancer". Vigilant prevention is essential.

During school hours, the daily ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels

are at their peak and this means that schools must take an aggressive approach in teaching sun safety to kids and making school grounds 'sun safe'. The Slip Slop Slap slogan is well known to most adults as it has been the signal for sun protection over the last two decades.

However, this slogan has been updated to Slip Slop Slap Seek Slide to reflect the importance of seeking shade and sliding on wraparound sunglasses to prevent sun damage.



SunSmart tips for schools:

Make it a rule that your students wear wide brimmed hats when outdoors, these hats can block up to 50 percent of UV radiation to students' eyes and face and so they should be part of your school's uniform policy. Be mindful of UV protection and maximum coverage when designing your uniform. Provide SPF30 or higher, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen and make sure it is in date.

Make it policy that children bring a dry change of clothes if they will be participating in any water-based activity because wet clothes lose their ability to block UV rays.

Encourage your staff and students to wear close-fitting wrap-around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible and comply with Australian Standard AS1067.

Teach students about meteorology and being sun smart. Teach them when the most UV radiation will occur and when the most dangerous part of the day is and why not use reminders (create a system – texts, alarms) to wear hats and apply sunscreen at lunchtime.

Join the National SunSmart Schools Program. Launched in 1998, it's offered in all primary schools nationwide.

Go to the Cancer Council website for tailored educational resources to schools. Age appropriate lesson plans are available for download.

Make a commitment to minimise exposure to sun throughout your school by increasing shade in outdoor playing areas, through shade sails, tree planting and playground design. ■



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Your school could save a life

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

A scarcity of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) has experts concerned about public safety.

Around 20,000 people suffer cardiac arrests outside hospital every year in Australia, according to the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. AEDs are used by bystanders in just 20 percent of outside hospital cardiac arrest cases because there aren't enough of them accessible to the public, warned the Heart Foundation.

Did you know AEDs will only shock if they detect a lethal cardiac rhythm?

Studies have shown that defibrillating someone who has arrested within minutes, can save their life and provide them with the best chance at a positive neurological outcome. Every minute that defibrillation is delayed, chance of survival decreases by 10 percent, according to the American Heart Association, although effective CPR can extend this. Health officials advocate for AEDs to be as widely available and

AED basics

1. Turn it on. Look and listen for instructions.
2. Uncover the person's chest. Cutting tools should be in the AED unit if required.
3. Put electrodes on the person's chest. Young children may require smaller pads contained in-unit.
4. Follow the AED's visual or audio directions until paramedics arrive.



accessible as possible to give those who experience an arrest the best possible chance at life.

Did you know that no formal training is required to use an AED?

Schools are often centrally located in our communities and play host to a wide variety of public events and activities. Anyone can have a cardiac arrest due to injury or underlying condition, including both adults and children.

Making sure AEDs are visible, signposted and swiftly accessible can save lives. Register your AED to the AED Locations and Good Sam apps so that anyone can find and use it in an emergency.

Advice from the AED sector

We cleared up some common misconceptions with key defibrillator suppliers to the school sector.

Alpha First Aid general manager Brent Messer said the first common misconception is that "if you use a defibrillator on someone and they do not survive you are legally liable".

He clarified: "False. You have absolutely no liability when using a defibrillator. Defibrillators are designed to administer a carefully calculated shock that will not harm the casualty. Defibrillator settings cannot be altered so there is no liability on the first aid responder

if the casualty does not survive. When a defibrillator is used in an emergency *The Good Samaritan Act* is applicable, acknowledging that the first aid responder did everything within their power to revive the casualty and the loss of life is at no fault of their own.

Another misconception is that "I don't need to use a defibrillator if I've called an ambulance but, in an emergency, you must always follow the DRSABCD plan. When a casualty is not responding or breathing, defibrillation in conjunction with CPR is critical to ensuring the best chance of survival. "Some people believe that applying a defibrillator in the rain will cause it to electrocute the patient, but this is false.

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The Chain of Survival

The Chain of Survival is an internationally recognised algorithm that aims to improve sudden cardiac arrest outcomes. It recommends:



- Early recognition of the event
- Early call to 000
- Early commencement of CPR by bystanders
- Early attachment of an AED
- Early intervention by medical/ambulance
- Early transport to hospital for surgical intervention



Image courtesy of Defib For Life

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There is a minimal possibility of shocking the patient if it is raining. If possible, always try to move the patient into a dry area, remove any wet clothing and towel dry the casualty. If the casualty's chest is not dry, the electrode pads will not stick

to the skin, which will hinder the strength and effectiveness of the shock delivered."

Finally, "In the event of an incorrect diagnosis, applying a defibrillator to someone will shock them. False. Defibrillators are designed to assess the rhythm of

the heart and whether an electrical shock is required. If the defibrillator acknowledges the casualty's heart is beating correctly, it will inform the first aider that the shock is not advised. In this instance, even if the first aid responder misunderstands and presses

the 'shock' button the shock will not be delivered."

Paramedic of 23 years and founding director of Defib For Life, Andrew White told us what he learned from attending hundreds of cardiac arrest call outs.

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Defib For Life is a not-for-profit organisation whose primary focus is to raise awareness on the importance of having an AED in your school, your work place. These life saving devices are the only treatment for a Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Take the risk away; don't wait till it's too late – **INSTALL A DEFIBRILLATOR NOW.**

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"I noticed that the patients who survived did so when we arrived within minutes or when they received immediate CPR from someone at the scene."

"There are no laws that mandate AEDs in schools but most states support the implementation of public access defibrillators into the community."

"There is no doubt that public access defibrillators increase lives saved. In 2018/19, 95 Victorians survived their cardiac arrest and went home because a bystander was willing to react to their emergency and use a defibrillator."

He added: "When opened, AEDs provide simple voice prompts designed with the layperson in mind to help guide them through a rescue attempt until help arrives. Some AEDs can tailor the shock delivered to suit the size of a patient so it is less likely to harm surrounding heart muscle while resetting the cardiac rhythm."

"Schools are required to have a current Emergency Response Plans (ERP), and a Cardiac Arrest

plan should be added to the ERP. Pupils, staff, volunteers and parents are all at risk of having a sudden cardiac arrest, some more than others. People aged between 45 and 55 years are far more likely to suffer a sudden cardiac arrest than a pupil but most people are unaware they have an underlying heart condition until it's too late.

"Teachers, for a long time have been required to be first aid trained and most schools already have a preferred supplier for CPR accreditation. Accredited courses have been designed to include an AED component."

"In an ideal world there would be a defibrillator available within 90 seconds of any location. The logic behind this is to ensure that a defibrillator can be attached to the collapsed patient within three minutes."

"Larger schools may need to consider placing multiple AED's around its school grounds. A portable unit for use on out of school excursions and camps should also be a priority." 44 ►



Image courtesy of St John Ambulance Victoria

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We spoke to Anthony Cameron from Australian Red Cross, who advised us that “a survival rate as high as 90 percent has been reported when defibrillation is achieved within the first minute of collapse”.

“When defibrillation is delayed, survival rates can decrease to between two and five percent beyond 12 minutes,” he added, stressing the importance of schools establishing a CPR and AED protocol.

“The Australian Resuscitation Council recommends that accredited CPR training (including the use of a defibrillator) is completed at least annually. The approved provider of a centre-based service must ensure that the following persons attend any place where children are being educated and cared for by the service (and are immediately available in an emergency): at least one educator who holds a current approved first aid qualification; at least one educator who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training; and,

at least one educator who has undertaken current approved emergency asthma management training.”

“While AED manufacturers are required to meet Australian standards it is very important for staff and students to familiarise themselves with the look, feel and function of the purchased unit so that in the event of an emergency, staff and students will be prepared to use the unit they have purchased. While any person should be encouraged

to access and use an AED in an emergency, training is strongly recommended.”

When choosing a location for your school’s AED, Anthony recommended considering accessibility and protection: “Is it accessible to anyone in an emergency? Can the unit be transported anywhere in the school in (or under) a minute? Is it stored in an area protected from elements and or misuse? Finally, consider sporting areas like pools, gyms and ovals as they can be likely places for emergencies.”

Remember: “Promote AEDs using signage, casing, assembly announcements; conduct first aid drills and onsite training for students and staff, or even attach information on email signatures.”

St John Ambulance Victoria CEO Gordon Botwright was passionate to clear up misconceptions people have about using AEDs on children.

She explained: “A defibrillator is required when a person suffers a sudden cardiac arrest, sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, at any time regardless

of their age. Children may even have a known medical condition that can cause them to have a sudden cardiac arrest. All AEDs have the option for either paediatric (child pads) or a method of placing the AED into paediatric mode. Paediatric pads are recommended if a child is under eight or weighs less than 25kg.

“The main takeaway for schools is how easy is it to place the AED into paediatric mode as some units use universal pads, in which case the AED is easily placed into paediatric mode without even needing to change the pads.

“Schools should position an AED either in the school office or in the sick bay; a location that is well known to students, staff, parents and visitors and is easily identifiable. The devices also perform self-checks to ensure they are always ready for use. I do recommend a weekly visual inspection just to ensure the machine is ready for use, the indicator is active and any consumables are in-date. Visual inspections take less than one minute to complete!” ■



Image courtesy of Alpha First Aid

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Ethical veganism

a big concern for kids

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Veganism is everywhere... except our curriculum.

According to Roy Morgan Research, the number of Australian adults that eat completely or almost meat-free diets increased from 1.7 million people in 2012 to nearly 2.1 million in 2016.

ABC recently surveyed more than 25,000 Australians about their diets and found that 10 percent of respondents identified as either vegan, vegetarian or semi-vegetarian (meaning they sometimes eat seafood or poultry). Just one percent identified as vegan, but the most interesting finding was that 50 percent of young people who refuse to consume animal products do so because of environmental concerns. Older people who avoid animal products overwhelmingly cited health concerns.

It's hard to be a healthy vegan

There is research supporting the idea that veganism can be better for the environment. This is mainly because cattle grazing generates massive amounts of methane and carbon dioxide, well established greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, as Harvard Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition Walter Willett told *NPR*. So, it is easy to understand why young people are more interested

in the vegan lifestyle amid rising reports of eco-anxiety around climate change. Our students live in communities where bushfires, floods and droughts are a near-constant threat and food is one of the few things they may feel they can control.

However, health experts have expressed concern about kids and teens 'going vegan' because of nutritional deficits. Doctors in Belgium even called for parents who force their children to follow a vegan diet to be prosecuted. The Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium went so far as to publish a legal recommendation. Commission leader Professor Georges Casimir told *The Telegraph*: "This restrictive regime requires ongoing monitoring of children to avoid deficiencies and often irreversible growth delays. [...] It is unsuitable for unborn children, children, teenagers and pregnant and lactating women. [...] It is not medically recommended and even forbidden to subject a child, especially during periods of rapid growth, to a potentially destabilising diet, requiring frequent supplementation and control."

Australian health officials advocate that vegan and plant-based diets can be healthy and beneficial to the environment, but care should be taken to avoid deficiencies. For instance, iron and B12 are often singled out as

important nutrients for vegans and vegetarians to monitor and potentially supplement with. Public Health Nutritionist Mathew Dick told *Queensland Health*: "While many medical experts agree that a well-planned vegetarian or vegan diet can be a healthy way to eat, it is generally not recommended that young children adopt a vegan diet and parents should be cautious about putting their child on a vegan diet."

As research indicates Australia will at least maintain its status as the third-fastest-growing vegan market in the world, should schools be tackling plant-based diets in schools? Veganism is everywhere: social media, fast food chains, documentaries and Netflix shows; popular celebrities and environmentalists like Greta Thunberg even advocate for people to 'go vegan' to help the planet. There are a lot of opinions, advocates, articles and debate out there but how much do students learn about the health and environmental impact of a like veganism? As it turns out, that is quite hard to quantify!

Food literacy is uneven (at best)

A 2017 Griffith University study interviewed home economics teachers about food literacy in Australian high schools and found that one year of compulsory 'food related studies'

in either technologies of health or physical education (HPE) was "was insufficient to develop sustainable food-related life skills and introduce broader concepts of food literacy such as environmental sustainability".

Currently, food education in Australia tends to centre on food preparation and hospitality. Some schools tie in vocational activities, others have elective subjects where students may learn about topics like obesity or nutrition labelling. However, as Deakin University researchers found last year in material they published on *The Conversation*, there is far less "coverage of environmental and social issues, marketing practices or family dynamics" in secondary food education.

What should we do?

Well, Deakin University researchers argue upskilling food technology, or home economics teachers, could be a good solution. A more comprehensive food education programme that spans early-to-secondary education, avoiding repetitiveness and delving into cross-curricular issues like sustainability would be of benefit. They look toward the new *Refresh.ED* program in Western Australia, which focusses on 'food systems' and incorporates a wide range of topics, including food marketing and sustainable practice, that can be applied across the K-10 curriculum. ■



Teaching our kids is **thirsty work**

Many people would agree that teachers are under paid, over worked, and simply under appreciated for the incredible job they do educating our children.

Contrary to popular myth teachers work long hours and are often time poor, rushing between lessons and monitor duty in the playground during their breaks.

This can lead to another “underism” – the under hydrated teacher.

Maintaining good hydration is critical in all walks of life and the opposite, dehydration, leads to fatigue, lack of concentration, poor performance, irritability,

headaches, and dizziness – not characteristics we would normally want to see in our teachers.

Forward thinking school Principals have realised the importance of keeping their teaching staff refreshed and well hydrated by providing a quick and convenient means of getting an instant hot or cold drink with a BIBO Water Bar.

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Image courtesy of Outdoor Instant Shelters



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By Rosie Clarke, Editor

A badly planned sports event can cause staff headaches and negatively impact student wellbeing.

Mental health researcher Helen Street warned ABC that compulsory participation in sports days and carnivals can make them reluctant to exercise and take part in activities ever again. She said: "Forcing kids to compete when they're not wanting to can cause extreme anxiety. It can be really humiliating and stressful for them." Teamwork, sportsmanship, resilience and physical stamina are all things that come about when students feel supported, not humiliated. So, when planning your sports day, keep 'bringing together your school community' at the forefront of all decision-making.

More broadly, stress is the most prevalent of mental health issues and the fastest growing condition is anxiety, according to 2019 research published by independent Australian research group Roy Morgan. "This is particularly true of our young people, with 22 percent

of 14-17-year-olds now reporting that they suffer from anxiety (compared to just six percent nine years ago) and almost one-third of 18-24-year-olds suffering from anxiety (32 percent, compared to only 11 percent back in 2011). A bright spot in the research was that those who played team sport generally reported lower levels of anxiety, stress, and depression.

When structuring activities, consider streaming events so that low-stakes games take place alongside competitive ones. Include activities that require balance, navigational ability or problem solving to encourage learners of varied abilities to participate. Introduce silly prizes and prioritise fun. Consider sensory needs by setting up a 'quiet zone' for more relaxed activities. Encourage costumes!

Done right, engaging young people in sports can have a hugely positive impact on their wellbeing. In an earlier study, Roy Morgan also found that the more than one million Australian adults who participate regularly in team sport are less likely than the average Aussie to experience depression, anxiety and/or intense stress.

Any event that encourages students to be more active and helps with their physical development and general health is a winner and this is a huge incentive for sports day events.

However, sport is at its best when it breaks down barriers between people, encourages new friendships, and (frankly) is lots of fun.

Consider how seating can build community and participation. Retractable seating is a great option for larger spectator events and competitive activities.

Tiered seating aids visibility, particularly if your school has a multipurpose oval, court or hall. For more intimate events and all-weather solutions, gazebos, marquees and flexible shade solutions can help you control and manage crowds.

Customising colours to suit houses or teams can also help build rapport and encourage friendly competition between student groups.

Consider how you want to MC your event. Schools too often report stolen horns, strained voices and stressful whistleblowing when PA systems can help keep participants and onlookers engaged, entertained and in-the-know.

When organising your equipment needs, don't overlook safety: make sure school staff and chaperones know where they can access automatic external defibrillators and first aid kits.

We approached the industry to find out more about sports day equipment options available to schools.

Industry viewpoints

Melissa Munday from Outdoor Instant Shelters introduced us to some new ways that schools can incorporate branding into a sports day event.

Marquees branded with the school or house name and logo printed on the roof can create a wow factor. Marquee sizes generally come in 3x3m or 6x3m size and boast walls to keep the wind and rain out. Schools can have the whole roof printed to stand out or just the front roof valance, depending on budget limitations. For the best quality marquee, look for some that offer the highest UV rating and are waterproof, mildew-proof and non-fading. The strength of the frame is vitally important, especially in windy conditions. Aluminium frames are generally the best as they are lightweight but extremely strong. Schools should also look at the warranty period given on the frame. Only dedicated marquee suppliers can offer these products. Cheaper versions available online but may not stand up to Australia's harsh conditions and cannot offer a wide range of colour and customisation. Marquee packages are often the best way to go as they offer a printed marquee with walls, peg and guy ropes, plus sandbag leg weights that give stability in windy conditions.

Flag banners can either be double or single side printed and can display the school's name and logo or individual house names. Flag banners are available in a range of sizes from 2.5m to 4.8m tall and include a spike base to push into the ground or a foot base for indoor use. ■

The sustainable circular economy starts at school

By Andrew Ford,
*PhD Candidate,
Western Sydney University*

It is increasingly urgent to address environmental issues within society by developing a sustainable 'Circular Economy' (CE) design and production ethos that renders the current industrial 'consumption' linear production model obsolete.

This is even more acute within our learning communities. Here, not only are concerned school leaders seeking environmentally sustainable design (ESD) within their infrastructure, but environmental issues weigh heavily on students. Most would agree that we must change how we use our limited resources and protect our fragile ecosystems. Students will need to develop skillsets to better grapple with the intricacy of 'sustainable circular design' models that are necessary for future commerce. The problem is that CE design is vastly more complex.

Environmental issues are already a focal point of students' education today as they research and develop real solutions.

However, there are many immediate, impactful things that learning communities can do. This article provides some practical things that may help prepare students for a dynamic, uncertain future while launching your school's CE journey.

CE design requires transparent and open collaboration from all potential stakeholders for shared benefits. The new mindset means your trash could be another school's treasure. With industry also grappling with this complexity,

an opportunity exists for constructive disruption to occur in both learning and in application. Open collaboration on practical design with a more creative and holistic, future-focused mindset not only helps industry partners deliver better services but results in designs that are better suited to a school's requirements.

It is critically important to the Circular Economy Model that waste and energy consumption are minimised.

Practical steps for today; begins with 5 'R's

These are: Retain, Re-use, Re-purpose, Re-manufacture and Recycle. It begins with a co-creative design program where all stakeholders, including industry partners, work toward a future-focused vision. Professional designers and architects play a critical role in ensuring sustainable design practice is maintained.

Retain

This is by far the most important of the 5R's. It is where sustainable design starts. It is important to choose materials using life-cycle analysis (LCA). This will include the material's ESD credentials and a recyclability pathway. This applies to furniture, technology, acoustic wall materials, ceiling materials, and flooring.

Flooring is under-estimated for both its role and ESD impact. We are almost always connected to flooring, visually and physically. In 2016, Australia imported 28 million square metres of PVC flooring, according to an ABS report titled 'International Merchandise Trade, Customised Tables' provided in June, 2018. A wonderful alternative called Linoleum can replace it in most spaces.

50 ►



Substantially made from readily sustainable crop-based materials, at least one brand is CO2 neutral, with a lifespan of 25 years or more (250 percent greater than vinyl).

At end-of-life, it is potentially compostable. PVC, at the end of its 10-year life, must be incinerated. With a much lower LCA result, linoleum is a far better solution, environmentally and commercially, yet remains less popular than PVC flooring.

Australia also imports similar amounts of nylon carpet. We love our comfort but need to prioritise purposeful design as students no longer sit on classroom carpets for extended periods in modern learning spaces. Warranties of 10 or more years are now available from most carpet providers, reflecting a more sustainable quality. However, in that time, their loop-pile construction will increasingly harbour dirt, germs, and other unwanted particles, all of which can negatively affect student health and well-being and any sense of user engagement.

A more practical textile, 'flocked flooring' acts like carpet and like a resilient material. It has a soft feel but its fibres cannot compile stains, dirt and germs in the same way. Due to its high definition digital print capability, manufacturers offer wonderful designs and can print customised designs aligned to pedagogy or local culture.

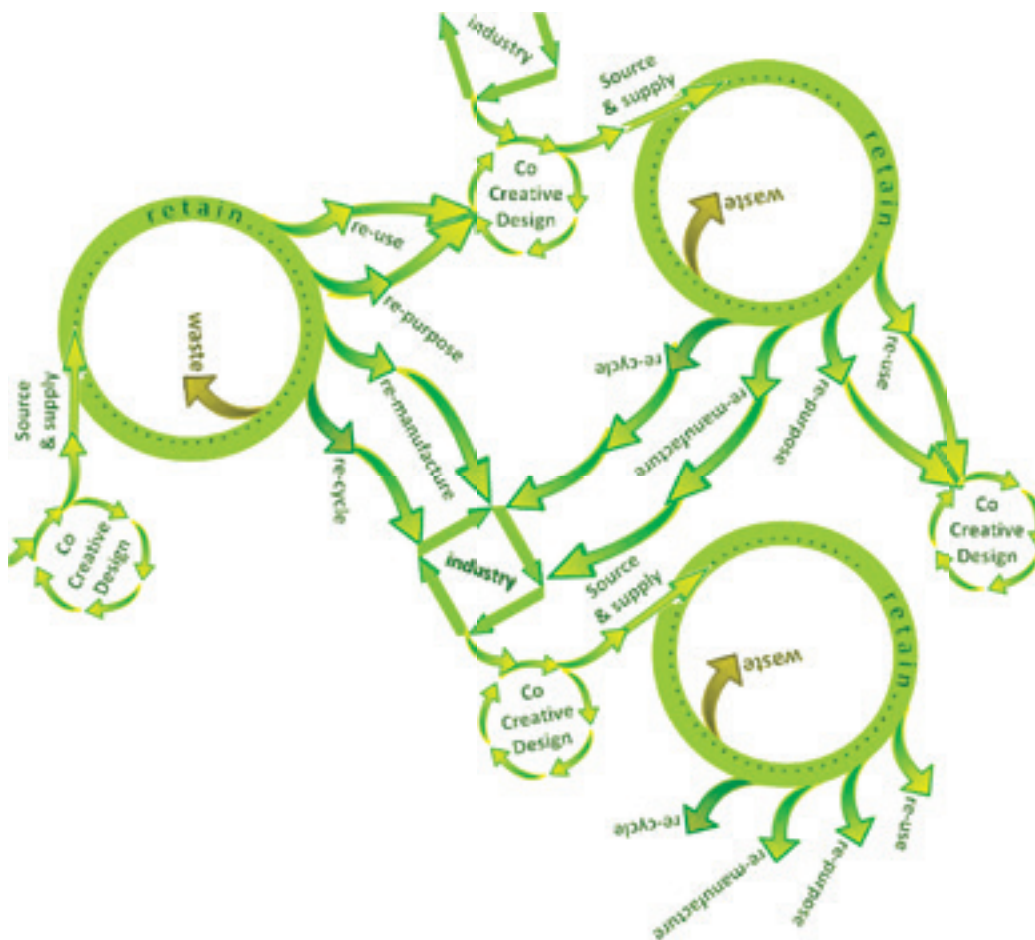
With a life span beyond 25 years, its LCA is substantially better for the environment.

Re-use

Very simply, find somewhere else to use a product or material either on campus, another facility, another school, out in the community, or donated to a shelter. Have a garage sale, donate, connect with your community and share goals.

Re-purpose

With reduced books within libraries, library shelving needs a new use. Libraries house a tremendously strong and adjustable shelving system. Repurpose them for your industrial tech rooms and makerspaces to hold tools and equipment. Just



A user's experience for circular economy design, supplied by Andrew Ford

add pegboards, lockable boxes, lockable wheels etc.

Replace damaged table-tops to recover frames and consider constructing new shapes. It may not save much but it is better for the environment. There are dozens of ways to re-purpose old products and components – if you need help brainstorming, just ask me! If you know how to re-purpose an item but don't have a use for it, find someone to share the load with you.

Re-manufacture

This is like re-purposing but it involves a manufacturer or local technical college, who might tackle it as a training project with students. The re-manufactured item could be returned to your school, donated, sold or traded elsewhere.

Either way, less materials are lost out of the circle and could spark innovation in new industries.

Re-cycle

At this stage, an item is pulled apart to its different material

Students need to grapple with the intricacy of 'sustainable circular design' models necessary for future commerce



constitutes and recycled accordingly. Done properly and responsibly, manufacturers can use the recycled components and reduce their use of new raw materials.

End-goal

Establishing a local Circular Economy is complex, but like all complexity, doing it one step at a time, with a determination to continue

in this manner, will become second-nature to you and your collaborators – some of whom will become our future industry and community leaders. ★

Andrew Ford is a PhD candidate researching human-centred, user-experience and circular design models in the context of learning environment design. He works with Forbo flooring to develop new ways to improve sustainable design within learning environments.

Colour psychology, zoning, and material trends

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

What floor material best suits the needs of your learners?

Typically, schools take a varied approach to flooring. While carpets, vinyl and rubber flooring come in all colours and designs that can be customised to your needs and preferences, wooden floors are less customisable but can offer a warm, classic feel. Each material has different acoustics depending on use, particularly as sensory processing disorder awareness increases. All schools need quiet spaces to enhance student comfort and concentration. Noise levels can be improved by installing softer surfaces like carpet. Sound absorption studies have shown that when comparing carpet to hard flooring, carpet is up to ten times more effective at absorbing sound. Mats and other coverings can also help.

Vinyl is highly versatile and can withstand heavy wheel and foot traffic. Vinyl tiles are flexible, easy to fit and replace and can be used all over your school because many brands offer non-slip, non-scuff qualities. They can also be designed for use in gymnasiums. Often, they provide a good balance between affordability and durability. Rubber tiles are a resilient choice for schools and if they are composed of recycled tires it can help fulfil some of your building's sustainability goals. This flooring might also be better at reducing the hair-tingling noise from scraping chairs. Wood is a versatile option that can be used for lots of different needs. Timber provides good shock absorption and works effectively for heavier bodies in gymnasiums and on dance floors, providing some resilience against injury and promoting noise reduction.

Carpets not only provide good sound absorption for libraries, larger classrooms and common areas but they also boast thermal resistance.

Adhesive carpet tiles are versatile and popular as schools can replace a few damaged, used or dirty tiles to avoid stripping out an entire carpet.

If you have a high ratio of students with allergies and sensitivities, you might want to investigate newer materials or enquire about hypoallergenic options. Work with designers to discourage learners from sitting on the floor altogether by maximising functional space and diversifying seating areas.

Re-designing your school's learning environment from the ground up?

It starts with flooring. Specialists have told us that floor zoning and colour psychology are increasingly popular considerations for schools that want to reinvigorate their learning environment from the ground up. We spoke with a couple of specialists in school flooring design, who told us that schools increasingly like to use structured, colourful flooring to create learning zones and organise flow from one space to another as students follow specific colours to get to different

rooms, library areas, bathrooms, etc. Some schools are even choosing more subdued colours to reflect sensory sensitivities.

Colour psychology for classroom floors

Studies show that young children pay more attention to bright colours, so muted designs could be less distracting.

Cooler colours have been shown to have a calming influence on mood while warmer colours engender comfort. Interestingly, the colour red has been associated with increasing appetite and alertness by raising heart rates.

Schools always aim to choose flooring that is easy to clean and maintain. Dark coloured carpet won't be very forgiving with dust or paper debris but hides spillages well. Meanwhile, paler carpets stain faster, and wear-and-tear will be more noticeable.

School flooring specialists aims to strike a balance by designing a flooring system for your school that considers different area needs.



Getting students in the zone with clever floor designs

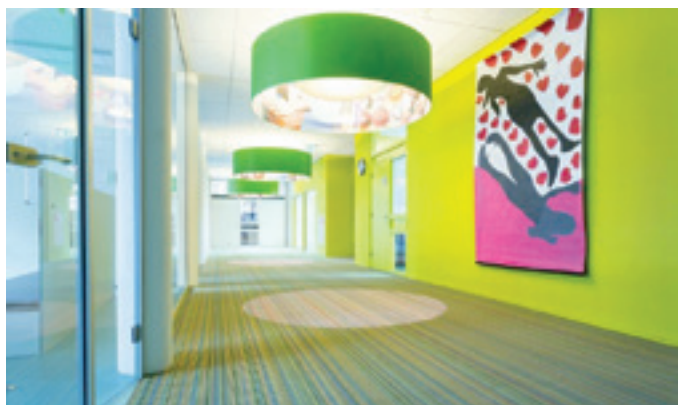
Choosing flooring types should depend on the location and function of each area. Places like the school cafeteria, kitchen and science labs or storage rooms may be subject to heavy loads where a hard wearing, non-slip, easy-to-clean and resilient floor is required. In areas like libraries and study zones, flooring and floor coverings should promote quiet, calm and comfort. Think about what furniture will be used in the space and how often it will be moved so that you can pre-empt damage from scraping chairs and tables.

Determine the relative temperature and humidity of the space. This is important for both the flooring and adhesive choice because changes in moisture can lead to expansions and contractions of a floor and lead to trip and slip hazards. Make sure your flooring and adhesive is approved for use in educational areas: suppliers will be able to confirm this for you when you ask for quotes.

Foot traffic plays a huge role in flooring decisions both during construction and after installation. Ask your supplier and installer which materials meet the specific demands of each space and ask about the installation process to prevent class-time disruption. Visit other schools that have undergone floor renovations and take note of wear and tear. Ask them about their budget and short versus long-term costs. Remember, in areas where professional-standard sports training is undertaken, it is required for schools to seek recommendations from the relevant international sport body. ■



The healthy, sustainable & engaging learning environment: It begins with the floor



If you had to decide which of the following critical conditions of sustainable learning environment design was most important, which would you choose?

1. The health, safety & wellbeing of students and teachers
2. Environmental impact & practical sustainability
3. Maintaining your heritage, and historical cultural
4. Improved student engagement and active participation

Your choice? "all of the above"
Each is critically important.

At Forbo, we agree; you shouldn't have to choose. We have engineers, scientists, and design experts working across these issues to deliver practical, purposeful sustainable design. We develop flooring materials to 'Create Better Environments' and we don't say that lightly. Our designers work to ensure all are fit-for-purpose, and for a very long time.

Practical, sustainable, purposeful design considers more than just material content and the capability to recycle at life's-end, it recognises that the design should have a lasting quality that engages more deeply with all who step onto it. Day in and day out, the floor is the most used piece of equipment in your learning space!



Choose the right materials

User health and safety are critical within your learning environments. 'Fit-for-Purpose' is a fundamental aspect of good design.

The right slip rating for each space is paramount as is air quality, improved not only by removal of VOCs and other nasty compounds, but by its capability to remain free from germs, bacteria and mould.

Ensuring that the flooring is easy to clean and maintain and won't harbour dirt, dust, mould and germs is of prime importance. Learning happens best within a clean and healthy space.

We should think more deeply about the age-old choice of motley coloured carpet "to hide stains"? is this really a good idea? Aim for a floor type that doesn't harbour all that dirt, grime and other nasties. Not only will it be healthier, we can then think more wildly about design structures and beautiful engaging colours.

Practical sustainability is closely aligned to 'Circular Economy' design. If your flooring is readily sustainable but with a limited lifespan or aging aesthetic, it's not practically sustainable; it must be extremely robust to withstand the rigors of modern, active learning spaces. It should come with a long warranty.

A range of beautiful designs structures and colours ensure it has a lasting and attractive aesthetic aligned to culturally significant design schemes. Connecting it to the culture or purpose of the environment is even more significant, connecting people to the space.



The healthy, sustainable & engaging learning environment; it begins with the floor

Marmoleum is the leading sustainable resilient floor and is produced carbon neutral (cradle to gate), from natural, rapidly renewable raw materials and comes in sheet and tile formats.

Marmoleum is PVC or plastic free. Most incredibly, the linseed oil within has natural antiseptic qualities that inhibit common germs and bacteria. With many beautiful design structures and colours, it is easily cut into organic and geometric shapes to create indigenous and other culturally significant bespoke designs.



The best flooring for a multi-modal STEM space?

Constant movement of furniture in multimodal STEM spaces can play havoc on otherwise, resilient materials. In these types of collaborative learning spaces, a robust textile such as Flotex is best. It will withstand the most extreme punishment from often unsuitable furniture stoppers or chair ends.

Flotex has up to 80 million fibres per m2. Its luxurious surface feel will not pack down or retain any lasting residue from accidents created by 'little Johnny'. Dirt, grime and germs are not harboured like carpet ensuring users won't become sick; as for little Johnny, no-one will remember what he did where.



High definition digital print design in any colour imaginable provides specifiers with wonderful choices within standard and bespoke design structures. Create your own unique design themes and use different colour combinations and scales within different spaces to differentiate.

Purposeful design equals improved user engagement, reduced fatigue, allows for beautiful way-finding and behavioural management tools, space-holders, sensory and activity pathways. Designs aligned to your culture and heritage; sensitively created indigenous design telling the stories of your local community, artworks, geometry and biophilic shapes reflecting your locality.

Taking flooring design to the next level – SUSTAINABLY FUN!

Marmoleum and Flotex are perfect robust and sustainable materials with which to create unique bespoke designs. pedagogical triggers to reinforce important lessons. We are now experimenting with robot-racetracks and organic QR codes that can trigger augmented and mixed reality.

Good design starts at the door



Coral Entrance Matting will reduce dirt by up to 95% and reduce cleaning. Flooring is so much more than just something under your feet. Properly considered, it will support deep and meaningful teaching and learning, and provide a wonderful ambience connected to those things important to you and your community. ▲

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Flotex offers a common-sense alternative to conventional carpet with the ability to handle the harsh rigours of modern active learning environments.

The high-tech construction ensures the floor will last year after year remaining 30% cleaner than carpet with an equivalent cleaning regime. Being waterproof and washable, with superior stain resistance, Flotex is perfect for asthma and allergy sufferers and will not harbour germs, dust, mould or failed science experiments.

Flotex also offers endless digital design possibilities. There is nothing like Flotex and nothing better for active, engaging learning environments.



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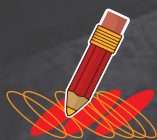
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creating better environments

Caring for nature, learning by play

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Nature playgrounds are gathering momentum around Australia.

Leaning into the popularity and success of Scandinavian forest schools, natural playscapes could be the most sustainable way to support childhood development. Bush Kinder is one of the better-known examples. Launched in 2011 by the director of Westgarth Kindergarten, the Melbourne-based site sits near Murri Creek and invites five-year-old pupils to roam and play in its diverse, natural landscape. ABC visited Bush Kinder in February, reporting that

the children were building their own aquarium, playing 'orchestra' with rocks and sticks, modelling rabbit nests and 'fishing' in small streams with ruggedly fashioned rods. Perhaps most impressively, the children were engaging in sustainable learning practice; they took care of the land they played on, protecting plant life, looking out for bugs and critters, and packing away any litter. The children also spent lots of time with Wurundjeri elders and local rangers, learning about their land and building community bonds.

A new study from the University of South Australia looked at the impacts of unstructured nature

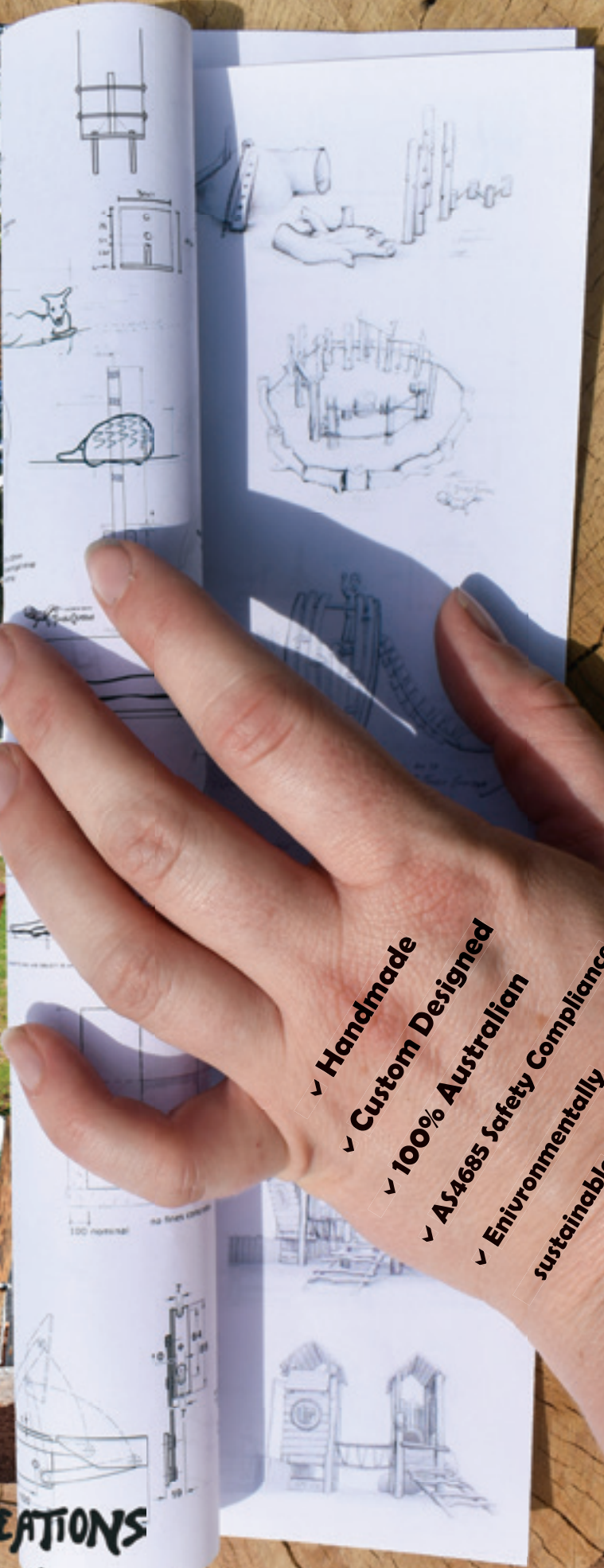
play on health in children between the ages of two and 12. It found that "nature play had consistent positive impacts on physical activity outcomes and cognitive play behaviours (imaginative and dramatic play)". One of the study's points of discussion noted: "Imaginative play has also been linked to increased social interaction - this was emphasised by early research in 4 to 5-year-olds showing more positive social outcomes during pretend play compared with structured non-pretend play (i.e. putting a puzzle together)."

In a nutshell, nature play is where children are given space outside

to freely explore, create, imagine and, well, play. There is no firmer universal definition, although many studies and articles relate it to play-based learning, which can be more teacher directed. Here, for example, a teacher may guide a child towards a fallen log or other nature play item. Alternatively, a learning facilitator might provide an idea for how a group of children might include another child in their imaginative play. Ultimately though, nature play appeals to educators because it offers organic ways for children to practice a vast array of developmental skills while building within them a sense of responsibility for land, nature and community. 56 ►



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Image courtesy of Timber Creations

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School News spoke to a couple of nature play experts about its benefits, special requirements and design options.

George Davidson from GDL Nature Play Spaces listed some of the benefits to installing a more natural play space: "Increasing resilience and the ability to negotiate risks and improving self-confidence can improve health." He added that nature play is "more sustainable to the environment and creates a more appealing landscape in any area".

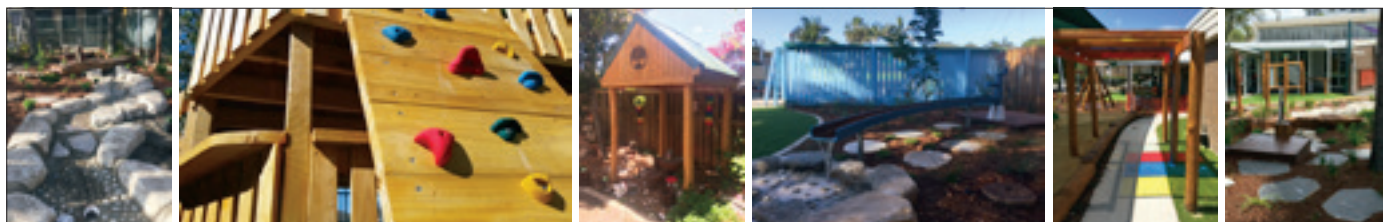
Timber Creations representative, Madelyn Smith said: "Play is so important for development, but specifically nature play is important because of the variance of challenge and opportunities. Children need to be able to understand how to adapt to uneven surfaces, different size grips and gaps and self-assess risks, and nature play provides this. Essential in developing joint dexterity, adaptation and confidence in decision making. As the benefits of nature play are becoming

more widely recognised many commercial playground manufacturers are jumping on the bandwagon with "nature-inspired" plastic or fibreglass equipment. It is important to ensure the materials used in the playground are natural materials such as timber and stone, as plastic, metal and fibreglass interpretations do not carry the benefits of nature play."

George added: "There are no special equipment or materials needed to construct a space. In fact, some of the best spaces can be created by using what's already available onsite or in your local area. Using the existing landforms and trees leads the way to designing the space."

School project examples:

"One of the most interesting projects was Annangrove Public School," revealed Madelyn. "The playground site was an uneven slope with many trees, and they wanted to incorporate this natural landscape. We developed a timber and rope balance area that weaved in and around



GDL Nature PlaySpaces

We are a landscape construction company based on the Sunshine Coast Queensland that offers Custom made nature inspired play spaces.

We cater for early learning centres, schools and public spaces. Working from our concept plans we bring your ideas to life. We work closely with you and gain inspiration from the children's ideas to bring the best possible solution to your space and budget.

What is Nature Play?

Nature play is a concept to encourage children to spend more time playing outdoors using their imaginations in a natural setting. It inspires open-ended possibilities for self-designed play, creativity, learning and socialising. In the past, playing outside in nature was a part of everyday, normal childhood experience.

For more information or to request a consultation contact George:

Info@gdlanscaping.com.au Phone 0410863756 gdlnatureplayspaces.com.au



the trees, with log and stone retaining natural mulch in an organic shape in a few different layers over the slope. This playground provided varied play opportunities for explorative play, plus encourages students to engage with the existing natural environment and trees."

George noted: "On a recent project where a new building was installed, around 20 trees needed to be taken down. The trees were all saved and have now been used within the new play space. as an area was constructed within a protected zone, it took some creativity to install a balance area as were not allowed to dig in the ground."

"Some of the best spaces can be designed and installed in locations that are wasted or where conventual play equipment is not allowed. In creative design, you can eliminate any need for softfall or fall zones as much of the risk taking can still be done on a low level. The use of sensory gardens, creeks and balance areas will fit in any space. So, we try to let a large part of our designs be done by the

schools as they are the ones who will use it most and know the children best. When they have their ideas in place, we look them over and see what's possible and practical to install.

"Where budget is an issue, working with a natural play space tends to be more cost-effective. This is the only way forward in play space design and it will not only bring new ways for children to play but also create some great natural environments for native plants and animals to grow."

Madelyn said: "The great thing is that schools can be as involved or uninvolved as they want. Some schools have the perfect natural environment that they want to encourage engagement in and enhance, and some schools are almost all concrete and need to reintroduce nature back in. If the school community has a clear idea what they want from the space, a nature play designer can take the reins and deliver in accordance with the goals of the school and their own expertise." ■



Image courtesy of Timber Creations



Image courtesy of GDL Nature Play Spaces



Image courtesy of GDL Nature Play Spaces



Image courtesy of GDL Nature Play Spaces



New STEM area fosters successful futures



By Mandy Clarke, Industry Reporter
Photos: Salisbury High School

Salisbury High School in South Australia offers educational programs that are underpinned by its motto, 'pathways to success'.

The school provides learning opportunities and innovative experiences with an ever-evolving pedagogy. Supporting the school's philosophy is its new state-of-the-art STEM area.

It just opened! The \$2.5m STEM refurbishment project presents stellar spaces for innovative learning with contemporary facilities to match cutting-edge teaching already in place. Salisbury's aim is to prepare students for jobs in a wide range of future industries.

Jason Price, Senior Leader Technology & ICT Systems, Capital Works Project Management, Salisbury High School told us about the school's new STEM infrastructure. "This was an initiative from the SA Department

for Education, aimed at improving STEM facilities in many schools to improve the future uptake of students choosing STEM-based studies and therefore careers.

"The build transformed our STEM facilities through an internal rebuild of a section of our schools main building with new science labs, makerspace, digital creation spaces, general learning rooms, plus breakout and new collaborative common spaces.

Furthermore, we redeveloped an outside space into an inviting outdoor learning space."

The school's 'STEM works' program gives teachers the specialist facilities they need to inspire innovation and creativity, stimulate imagination and challenge students.

With 75 percent of jobs in the next ten years predicted to require STEM skills, the plan is to extend and duplicate the project throughout the school site with further developments in the form of murals and displays also enriching these learning spaces.

The \$2.5m STEM refurbishment project presents stellar spaces for innovative learning



Tell us more about the interior space?

"As a school we looked at many suppliers for the internal furniture fit out of the new space. Initial meetings were started with Emma from Resource Furniture and we found the range of options for all types of new spaces was extensive.

"She assisted with the overall look of the space and guided us on selecting the right furniture. For the common/breakout spaces with upholstery furniture and meeting tables they provided actual layout plans to show how the space could be organised. This was vital in making correct decisions.

"The products provided by Resource Furniture were classroom tables/chairs, lab stools, meeting room furniture, digital iMac room workstation furniture, upholstered flexible modular furniture (Bend range), office furniture for staff preparation offices."

What were you happy with?

"The support from Emma was excellent. Resource Furniture delivered, unpacked and set up all spaces in the layout specified and then removed all waste packaging. The furniture selection exceeded expectations and was of a higher quality and design standard compared to what the school has purchased in the past. This furniture transformed the teaching and learning spaces."

What has the reaction been like from the students/teachers to the project?

"Our students love the new spaces! As a school who had not received major capital improvement for some time the new spaces were welcomed by excited students and teachers. Students did not think they would ever have spaces like this while they were at the school. They continue to enjoy and respect the new spaces. The community was amazed by the

transformation and the Minister for Education (SA) was amazed with how it transformed the old main building when he opened the completed STEM area."

What are Jason's tips for other school STEM developments?

"Before starting your own STEM area project, you should explore furniture options and ask for different options that may not be found on their website or standard brochures."

Emma Gillings, Resource Furniture, business development manager explained that the Salisbury High School STEM project was one of their standout developments of 2018. She told us: "To work on an entire project with this school was an ideal scenario for us, we worked closely with Jason Price to understand how the school wanted the spaces to work, and helped provide the best possible furniture solutions for flexible learning."

With so much more scope for furniture in schools today the choices and set-ups are endless, and it is wise to call in the experts. Emma admitted: "We have worked on several big school projects and have a good understanding of what works and is practical, and what furniture children gravitate towards when in a learning environment."

According to Emma the key to success is providing a range of flexible furniture items. She said: "Furniture that can easily be reconfigured such as breakout soft seating and lightweight tables and chairs, provides students with the freedom to setup the space to suit the task at hand. Furniture should also be able to adapt to connect and allow students to collaborate or separate to offer individual focus work. Offering a mix of furniture such as soft seating, tables and chairs and benches empowers students to learn in an environment that works for them." ●



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