



Closing The Gap For Indigenous Children

The 'Save the Children Australia' Association is urging state and federal governments to introduce free preschool education for all Indigenous children, in an attempt to close the literacy and numeracy gap.

The organisation claims that school children in remote areas face greater difficulties reaching the minimum education standards and wants the government to introduce free early education to all four year olds in Indigenous communities as soon as possible.

[Full story](#)

Indigenous Education Gap - The Facts

Indigenous children have fallen too far behind in the basics of education.

According to the OECD:

- 13% of Australian 15 year olds are at risk of not having the basics skills required for work.

This statistic is disturbing enough, but the numbers go even higher for certain sections of Australia's population:

- 23% of children from the lowest socio-economic quartile
- 27% of children living in remote parts of Australia
- **40% of Indigenous students.**

The difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in PISA maths and literacy skills is equal to more than two years of schooling.

The 2008 National Assessment Plan Literacy & Numeracy also shows a dramatic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children:

Met minimum year 3 reading standard:

- 93.5% of non-Indigenous children
 - 68.3% of Indigenous children
- Figure drops to 53.9% in remote areas.

Met minimum year 3 numeracy standard:

- 96% of non-Indigenous children
 - 78.6% of Indigenous children
- Figure drops to 70.4% in remote areas.

Met minimum year 9 reading standard:

- 94.2% of non-Indigenous children
 - 70.7% of Indigenous children
- Figure drops to 57.4% in remote areas.

Met minimum year 9 numeracy standard:

- 94.8% of non-Indigenous children
 - 72.5% of Indigenous children
- Figure drops to 60.4% in remote areas.

Australian Government research also confirms that students with low literacy and numeracy skills and Indigenous people are less likely to finish school.

As part of the *Education Revolution*, the Rudd Government has committed to:

- halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy for Indigenous students within a decade
- halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children within a decade
- provide four year olds in remote Indigenous communities with early childhood education in five years.

Private Schools Want More Funding

SA's private schools are calling for more funding from the State Government in the lead up to next year's state election.

Representatives from the Catholic and Independent school sectors met last week; where they established that SA non-government schools receive the second lowest per capita level of state grants in the country - \$1491 per student.

They also claim they are given no specific state funding for capital works programs, which is needed for maintenance, new buildings and classrooms.

[Anybody want less funding?](#)

Training For Science Teachers

Last week we reported on research conducted by Flinders University which revealed that up to 40% of science teachers in SA's high schools are not qualified in their subjects.

It has subsequently been announced that our science teachers are starting training to deliver the new SACE - however, the training does not include professional education.

Instead, teacher knowledge will apparently be improved through school visits by scientists and industry partnerships.

[Learn by osmosis](#)

Help With SACE

Disengaged teenagers in Mount Gambier, who can't attend traditional schools, are turning to a program which aims to help them complete SACE while also improving their life skills.

The Independent Learning Centre offers personal development programs for students in anger management, parenting, body image, nutrition, safe-driving, career development, as well as workplace and online learning, and the transition from SACE.

The program was set up two years ago with 50 students; the enrolments now reaching 125.

An Independent Learning Centre was set up in Naracoorte last June, with plans to also reproduce the program in the Riverland.

[Details](#)

Tougher Laws

Childcare and education providers would be subject to mandatory regulations by a new independent body, under proposed new changes from the State Government.

New legislation would require all schools, preschools, creches and OSHC providers to be formally regulated.

[More](#)

Keep an eye out for your child's NAPLAN results. The national literacy & numeracy tests were taken in May and parents will be receiving a report for their child very soon.