



SACE Subject 'Boring'

Thousands of students are complaining that one of the new SACE subjects is boring, teaches them nothing and is a complete waste of time.

'Personal Learning Plan' is a Year 10 subject which replaced 'Australian Studies' as a compulsory subject. It is designed to help prepare students for success in SACE studies, directs students to map out study plans and careers and identify skills they need for the future.

However, more than 2000 SA students have joined two 'Facebook' groups and signed an online petition urging authorities to cancel the 'Personal Learning Plan' subject.

[Kids think school is boring - Ripley alerted](#)

Single-Sex Education

This week, *The Advertiser* reported on the continuing debate of single-sex versus co-ed schools.

Research from overseas reveals an increase in single-sex schools. For example; the number of public schools offering single-sex classes in New York has grown from 12 in 2002 to more than 360 last year.

Meanwhile, a New Zealand study claims that single-sex education narrowed the performance gap between boys and girls, with a "slight tendency for males to outperform females".

However in SA, it's a different story. The non-government school sector offers single-sex education at 21 schools - with co-education at 179 schools. In contrast, only two of the state's 588 public schools are single-sex.

[Single sex schools multiply](#)

Senate Inquiry Into BER

We recently reported that the Auditor-General was conducting an inquiry into the BER program. This followed numerous complaints of waste and skimming.

Now, the Senate of the Australian Parliament has announced that they will be conducting their own separate inquiry.

The Senate inquiry will investigate what are being called, 'irregularities and anomalies' in funding. The inquiry will investigate:

- conditions and criteria for project funding
- the use of local and non-local contractors
- the role of state governments
- timing and budget issues, including duplication
- requirements for school signs and plaques
- the management of the program; and
- any other related matters.

[Next week: inquiry into the inquiries into the BER](#)

Indigenous Teachers Needed

There are calls for measures to attract more Indigenous people into the classroom. At present, there are 104 Aboriginal teachers, in SA, including 17 school leaders - about 0.6% of the total teaching workforce.

The State Government's Aboriginal Employment Strategy aims to lift this number to 2% by next year, reflecting the proportion of Indigenous people in the wider population, and to 4% by 2015. The teachers union believes it is important for non-Aboriginal students to see Aboriginal people in positions of authority and as educational leaders - but feel little action is being taken to achieve this.

[More](#)

Spencer Gulf School Given BER Money

Bad News: Last week we reported that the Spencer Gulf and Outback Technical College was facing closure at the end of the year because of lack of funding.

Good News: The school has been awarded \$75,000 to upgrade its buildings as part of the National School Pride BER funding program.

No announcement was made as to whether the upgrades would be completed in time for the school's closure.

In Federal Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard said that a decision had not been reached, and the money is being held and will not be spent until the question of amalgamation or closure is clear.

[Waiting for clarity: Beckett's working title](#)

Early Childhood Education

All State and Territory governments have signed on to the Rudd Government's \$970 million Universal Access to early childhood education initiative.

This investment will help make preschool more affordable and accessible for all Australian families.

The Universal Access initiative will ensure that by 2013, all children will have access to 15 hours a week of quality early childhood education, for 40 weeks in the year before they start school. Programs will be delivered by university-trained early childhood education teachers.

[More](#)

NAPLAN Results

Following the release of the NAPLAN results last week, teachers and principals are calling for the Federal Government to delay publishing school results on a new website.

This comes after education ministers approved a website format that fails to include details of school funding. Education groups argue that the government is betraying a commitment to only publish school results in context, to avoid simplistic league tables.

[Less transparent ... more opaque](#)

NAPLAN Results Mistake

A DECS calculation error has resulted in SA schools being sent the wrong NAPLAN test results for about 4000 students.

Students' progress was measured in three ranges - low, middle or upper - and those on the cusp were recorded as achieving in the higher or lower range, rather than the middle.

Education leaders said the mistake caused confusion and made them question the creditability of the testing program. DECS termed the error 'minor' and said affected schools would receive the correct information this week.

[What does the 'n' stand for in NAPLAN](#)

This is the last 'SAASSO Education Update' for term 3.

It will be back in term 4.