



Tougher Truancy Laws Planned in SA

Plans to toughen truancy laws will see parents face higher fines and be stripped of ways to avoid prosecution if their primary school children fail to attend classes under proposed changes to the Education Act in South Australia.

Parents of secondary school students will still be able to argue they could not control their child, but courts for the first time will be able to order them to work with the school to solve the problem.

Other changes announced include:

- Medical help for children who are absent from school because they are primary carers of sick relatives
- Forced sharing of enrolment information between all schools to catch out truant's misinformation
- Fines of \$7500 for people hindering or obstructing officers in identifying children not at school
- Increased fines for parents who fail to make their children attend school
- Forced declaration of previous school enrolments when changing schools to identify a pattern of truancy
- Immediate explanation required for long-term truancy to prevent avoidance of the issue

[More](#)

Teaching As Second Career

More people are selecting teaching as a second career, resulting in wider experience being brought to the profession. AEU figures show 38% of new teachers among the union membership are aged over 30.

Currently, there is a trend for younger teaching graduates to leave the profession in the first three years. But the AEU believes people who have specialised skills in areas such as engineering or science are starting to decide to obtain a teaching diploma and teach in those areas of shortage – and stay in the profession for longer.

Since 2007, DECS has run a targeted scheme to recruit practising mathematicians and scientists seeking a career change. It offers two \$14,000 attraction and incentive allowances per year and a guarantee of permanent employment.

SA Tertiary Admissions Centre data show enrolments in education courses for students aged 21 and over increased this year.

[Details](#)

Teacher Wages Linked To Test Results

While other states are considering giving teachers extra pay based on a set of accredited skills, Victoria is set to be the first state to link teachers' wages to students' test results.

Despite on-going concerns that the NAPLAN tests cannot accurately measure whether a student has improved, Education Minister, Bronwyn Pike has said results of the tests would be involved in determining whether teachers are eligible for bonus payments of up to \$7000.

[More pay](#)

SACE Being 'Dumbed Down'

Marden Senior College teacher, Mike Wohltmann, has expressed his concerns rejecting claims the new SACE has widespread support. The teacher of 30 years says the new SACE is a "rehash" of old subjects and policies and is too focused on vocational education and retention rates.

In a letter to *The Advertiser*, Mr Wohltmann makes suggestions about reforming the secondary school system, including getting rid of school uniforms, doing a "stocktake" of subjects to reduce duplication and keeping schools open as late as 9.30pm for more flexibility around students' jobs and work experience.

However, the State Education Minister, SA Secondary Principals Association and SACE Board have defended the new SACE saying teachers were positive overall.

Elements of the new SACE were introduced to Year 10 students this year. It introduces new compulsory subjects and gives students more flexibility in the way they can complete their certificate, such as through more vocational education and training.

[More](#)

Grants For SACE Preparation

SA Education Minister, Jane Lomax-Smith, has announced \$3.38 million in grants will go to schools for further SACE training next year.

The training will help teachers become familiar with revised Year 12 subjects, including the new A-E grading system, and assist them to deliver and assess updated Year 11 subjects.

[Details](#)

Fire Danger Confusion

Last week's extremely hot weather saw the State Governments first test of its new policy of closing high risk schools when the new fire danger index reached the highest level, 'code red'. However, it resulted in much confusion and debate as many people were not aware of what was going on and found warnings of school closures were being issued too late.

Despite DECS deciding school closures following advice from the CFS and Bureau of Meteorology, a CFS leader warns closing schools when catastrophic fire conditions are forecast is putting children's safety at risk. Mt Remarkable CFS Group Controller, Geoff Slee, told *The Advertiser* that rather than close schools on highly dangerous days, they should be used as safe havens.

[What to do?](#)

SA Child Protection System

A parliamentary report into Families SA has found the South Australian Child Protection System is in crisis. The report warns caseworkers are under qualified, carers are deserting the system and the department needs more staff and resources.

Evidence received by the committee had established that the total number of notifications has doubled in the last 10 years. The Tier system for isolating children at severe risk of abuse or neglect has failed. The Committee heard that Families SA investigates less than half the notifications received. On some occasions, five to six notifications may be made about a child before a case manager is assigned.

[Full Story](#)