

WA Independent Public Schools

Within the next year, almost 100 WA public schools will be operating independently.

WA Education Minister, Liz Constable, has announced 64 more public schools will take an independent status from 2011 – with this second round being almost double the initial 34 schools who became independent this year.

The Minister states “parents and school communities are embracing this new initiative and find it allows them to have a greater say in how their school is run”.

These schools will have the flexibility and autonomy to make decisions that meet the specific needs of their students, including recruitment and selection of teachers, education programs and management of their own budgets.

The second intake will also represent a number of schools from different socio-economic backgrounds - 25% from regional and 75% from the metro areas.

[Details](#)

Year 12 ‘Super School’ Concern

The new Gepps Cross ‘super school’ campus is due to open in Term 2 2011, but there are concerns that the opening will disrupt Year 12 students.

The school is set to amalgamate 4 current schools (including Enfield High) and some parents, including Chair of Enfield High governing council, Joann Wilkins, are worried about their children starting Year 12 at one school and completing it at another.

Principal of the new school Sandy Richardson says it is not an ideal situation, but students will be kept together as they tackle their subjects.

[Full Story](#)

School Funding Reform

A new report ‘Resourcing Schools in Australia: A proposal for the restructure of public funding’, released by the *Education Foundation*, argues that public and private schools should be funded under one system - making school resourcing fairer and more transparent.

Some aspects of the report's proposed model are:

- All schools would get a minimum "community rate" of government funding.
- Extra government funding for all schools would then be calculated based on their private revenue (such as school fees),
- Schools with little or no private investment would receive support from two new major public sources - needs-based funding and the community guarantee fund.
- The \$2b community guarantee fund would be established to encourage and reward those schools in all sectors that offer open enrolments, and support closer integration of schools with their communities.

[Full Story](#)

Premiers Be Active Challenge

240 schools will receive a combined \$100,000 to buy extra sports equipment to support students registering in the ‘Premiers Be Active Challenge’.

The number of students involved has now reached 35,000 – a far cry from the 7,500 who completed the challenge in 2007 when the program began.

A further \$50,000 will be shared by 50 of the highest-achieving schools at the end of the school year.

[More](#)

Youth Parliament

Last week, almost 100 young people aged 16-25 gathered at Parliament House to debate youth issues during the 15th annual Youth Parliament Forum.

The program aims to give young people the opportunity to express their views and develop leadership skills.

Participants were given a chance to debate and amend Bills and pass ‘legislation’. Some of the key youth issues covered were:

- Mental health
- Bullying prevention
- Driver education
- Counsellors in schools
- International student support.

Their legislation will be presented to the State Government with the hope government agencies will consider their recommendations.

[More](#)

Sexual Assaults in WA

Also in WA, Education Dpt figures have revealed an alarming rise in sexual misconduct complaints against teachers – with more than one teacher a week being investigated.

Complaints range from sexual contact with students to grooming behaviour and students reporting inappropriate conduct that made them feel uncomfortable.

In the first 9 months of 09-10, the Education Dpt admitted 66 teachers and staff were accused of "inappropriate conduct, which may be sexually motivated" - up from 40 teachers in 08-09.

[Details](#)

Liberals To Give Schools Say

Primary school principals have welcomed a Coalition plan to give them more say over federally funded projects.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott & Education Spokesman Christopher Pyne have announced how they would improve the \$14.1 billion P21 element of the BER that has been plagued by claims of waste and roting.

[More](#)

Solar Scheme

After it was abruptly suspended in October last year, the Federal Government has brought back its National Solar School Program – just in time for the election.

The scheme provides grants of up to \$50,000 to schools for solar panels, solar hot water heaters and water tanks.

[More](#)

Education Tax Refund

Its tax time again and the Education Tax Refund (ETR) is an opportunity to increase the size of that refund.

The ETR began last year and entitles eligible parents to claim up to 50% of their children's education costs as tax deductions.

The amounts you can claim have increased since last year. For the 2009/2010 income year you can now get back up to \$390 for each primary school student, and up to \$779 for each secondary student.

[Details](#)

