

# Costs put squeeze on school services

**LUCY HOOD**  
EDUCATION REPORTER

THE quality of school stationery and services will be cut next year as public schools shift their spending to cover the rising costs of operation.

South Australian Secondary Schools Association principal Jim Davies said a rise in energy bills and the loss of up to \$18 million in bank interest because of the State Government's decision to keep the interest for

its coffers would impact on school budgets. According to the SA Strategic Plan, all State Government agencies are required to meet a target of 25 per cent reduction of electricity usage based on 2000/01 payments.

Mr Davies said as part of the measures, the Education Department reduced energy funding for schools to 2000/01 consumption levels and last year asked schools to cut energy costs by \$4.3 million in three years.

"If we use more than the 2001 consumption figure we

are going to have to find the money from somewhere," he said. "We may have to re-direct funds from the annual materials and services charge, meaning parents will have to pay for the poor quality diary or computer software so we can make savings."

But an Education Department spokeswoman said the Government had distributed \$3 million in "green grants" this year to help schools become more energy efficient, while the SA Solar Schools program was

providing solar energy to more than 110 schools. Any school undergoing capital works will also receive wind turbines and solar panels.

"The department has a review process in place for schools concerned about meeting their energy or water targets."

SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey the Government's decision to raid the interest from school bank accounts "will start to bite" and force schools to either cut services or raise

fees. "The impact of the cuts has hit harder this year and time will tell whether schools cut the service or increase the fees to compensate." The Education Department spokeswoman said the State Government was ensuring every dollar invested in education was spent on today's students rather than stored away in school bank accounts.

But Australian Education Union SA branch president Correna Haythorpe accused the Government of "penny-pinching".

## United stand to solve pressing problems

**JESSICA HURT**  
TRAVEL EDITOR

UNITED minds from across the Asia Pacific have come together to tackle some of the most pressing issues, from climate change to human rights.

About 500 students from more than 20 countries, including Singapore, China, Sri Lanka and New Zealand, are in Adelaide this week for a simulated United Nations conference.

The 14th annual Asia-Pacific Model United Nations Conference, is being held in Adelaide for the first time.

The students will spend the week debating topics which include the treatment of refugees and how to minimise the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Organised into 15



**CONCERNED:** Asser Gregersen, Yasas Thalagala, Harini Amarasinghe, Brooke Wylie and Alan Man at the Asia-Pacific Model United Nations conference yesterday.

Picture: BRENTON EDWARDS

UN-style committees, their solutions will later be presented to the UN. Some students have spent thousands of dollars to attend the event, paying for their own air fares, accommodation and a

registration fee of \$190. Yasas Thalagala, 20, from Sri Lanka, is taking part in the Human Rights Committee.

The law student said there was a lot of "emphasis on issues like the environment and

technology but basic human rights are being neglected".

Conference organiser, Andrew Antenucci said the conference emulated the way the UN worked. "We aim to

raise the profile of the United Nations, its functions and processes and bring some new perspectives to the dilemmas facing our world."

University of Adelaide Vice-Chancellor

and Professor James McWha said: "University life is not just about academic studies, it's about building broader life skills through opportunities such as this conference".