



This week's stories from the media

- Parents want checks on all volunteers
- Should year 7 move to secondary
- Teachers dodgy rego claims
- Teacher quality is priority
- Tough odds for SA youth
- Schools blame victims not bullies
- Finnish job before jetting off

Should Year 7 Move To Secondary

Endeavour College was expecting some reluctance from parents when it added Year 7s this year.

The Lutheran secondary school at Mawson Lakes planned for two Year 7 classes but, to its surprise, ended up with four – and its enrolments are already full for next year.

The shift in the non-government sector leaves SA's public system even more isolated as the only one in the country that mostly keeps Year 7s in primary schools.

The Opposition favours the move to high schools but Education Minister Susan Close says there is no evidence to justify the \$300 million it would cost to build the classrooms needed to accommodate Year 7s.

More than half of respondents to a Sunday Mail survey last year backed the move of Year 7s to high school, up from about one in three the previous year.

[Read the story](#)

Parents Want Checks On All Volunteers

The Sunday Mail reported on the SA Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO) survey, which shows volunteers must pass police checks.

The vast majority of parents & principals want all school volunteers to have to pass police checks before they can work with children.

A survey by peak parent body SAASSO found 94.4% of more than 1000 respondents wanted mandatory screening for all volunteers.

Nine out of 10 principals agreed all parents should be screened.

"It's clear from their votes and comments that parents and school staff believe this recent change was a mistake and they want everyone checked," SAASSO director David Knuckey said.

"Parents and staff were clear in their comments that the safety of their children far outweighs the financial costs of testing all volunteers."

"Hopefully, the Weatherill Government will heed this warning from the community and correct the situation before someone else slips through the cracks and a child suffers as a consequence."

More than three-quarters of survey respondents were school volunteers, close to a quarter worked in schools, more than 90% were parents and 95% had undergone a screening.

Their comments included: "You cannot have a half-cocked rule when it comes to the safety of children" and "the government is more concerned with saving money than protecting our children".

[More](#)



“...the government is more concerned with saving money than protecting our children....”

Teachers Dodgy Rego Claims

Teachers are wrongly claiming time spent on their hobbies and personal interests, and on basic duties such as preparing lessons, as “professional development” required to renew their registration.

Under a policy launched in 2012, teachers have to demonstrate they have completed 60 hours over three years of professional learning aligned with national standards.

The audit found there was inappropriate inclusion of hobbies or outside interests, such as volunteering in the local community, as well as time spent marking students’ work or attending parent-teacher nights.

Some teachers provided vague descriptions of their activities, failed to provide appropriate evidence of them or did not explain how they helped meet the national standards.

The audited summaries had not previously been scrutinised, despite being part of registration renewal applications that had already been approved.

[More](#)

Teacher Quality Is Priority

Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott has called for a cultural change in education towards improving teacher quality as a priority, warning that the nation has spent “far too long talking about class sizes”.

“We’ve spent far too long talking about class sizes, when an initiative on teacher quality should be at the top of COAG’s (the Council of Australian Government’s) agenda,” said Ms Westacott, a former head of Victoria’s Education Department.

Federal government figures show total federal education spending has risen by \$3 billion to \$16.05bn over the past four years.

Ms Westacott said the commonwealth should urgently phase out all the Gonski side-deals done with the states “to keep in place the promise that no school would be worse off”.

[More](#)

Tough Odds For SA Youth

Young South Australians are more likely to be victims of assault than anywhere else in mainland Australia, and their chances of being attacked if they live in rural areas are even worse.

They are among the findings of declining health and education outcomes for the state’s youth, according to the first Australian Youth Development Index report.

Among the states, SA’s young people are the least likely to do volunteer work and less inclined than most to be involved in the arts, cultural or political activities, though there are some signs of improvement in those areas.

[Full Story](#)

Schools Blame Victims Not Bullies

Parents believe schools are failing their children who are being bullied by taking no action or blaming the victims rather than punishing the bullies.

A national taxpayer funded study of bullying in schools by the University of South Australia has exposed the large gulf between what parents expect schools to do about bullying, and what schools actually do.

Half the parents interviewed whose child had been bullied said the school took no action, while 60 per cent said the school could have handled the problem better. “There is very real discontent among parents,” study author Ken Rigby said.

[More](#)

Finnish Job Before Jetting Off

Opposition Leader Steven Marshall has pulled out of a trip to Finland to tour a nuclear waste storage facility to attend the first sitting of State Parliament after the winter break.

In a letter to Premier Jay Weatherill, Mr Marshall said urgent action on the recommendations of Royal Commissioner Margaret Nyland’s report into the child protection system required immediate attention.

“The 260 recommendations made by the Nyland Royal Commission require the urgent attention of the South Australian Parliament,” Mr Marshall wrote to the Premier.

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