



This week's stories from the media

- Girls only push for CBD school
- Half-hearted reform
- 100 teachers without police clearances
- Australia falls behind Kazakhstan
- VIC want 70 ATAR for teachers
- Government accepts 196 recommendations
- Education costs surge

Half-Hearted Reform

A state welfare agency has warned a child protection overhaul will be “set up to fail” without including renewed consideration of scrapping the existing mandatory reporting framework.

One area unlikely to be reformed is the current mandatory notification regime – despite both sides of politics recently questioning its effectiveness.

Nyland's report recommends that the Government “maintain the current mandatory reporting threshold”.

Indeed, the report urged the existing regime be broadened, by making mandatory notification training compulsory for all teachers, police officers, and GPs, and restricting access to the Government's online notification hub “to notifiers who have completed mandated notifier training”.

But Uniting Communities says scrapping mandatory reporting “needs to come back on the table if we're wanting substantial reform”.

[Full Story](#)

Girls Only Push For CBD School

An overwhelming majority of principals and many parents are calling for the new Adelaide CBD high school to be an all-girls institution.

A survey by public school parent body the SA Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO) found almost half of more than 900 respondents want the Frome Rd school to be exclusively for girls.

More than three in five survey respondents said there should be more, citing better academic performance, higher science, maths and sport participation, reduced gender stereotyping and building the confidence of girls as major benefits.

SAASSO director David Knuckey said the survey results, coupled with educational research, showed there was “an obvious need and demand for public, all-girl schools”.

Mr Knuckey said there was growing evidence they boosted academic achievement as well as girls' “confidence, assertiveness ... and body image”.

All-girls schools may also be the “safest option” to counter “the epidemic of bullying and sexual victimisation of girls in schools”.

Mr Knuckey said making the new city high school all-girls would provide “a realistic option for at least some of those in Adelaide's western and southern suburbs”.

70% of women and 44% of men wanted more girls schools.

Alliance of Girls Schools Australasia executive officer Loren Bridge said the State Government should listen to the “pretty clear” message the survey delivered.

The Education Department has no plans for more single-sex schools and said the new CBD school would be co-ed.

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“...an obvious need and demand for public, all-girl schools...”

100 Teachers Without Police Clearances

100 education workers have had police clearances lapse - and dozens are still working with children under supervision.

Dozens of education staff whose police clearances have lapsed were reassigned or allowed to work with children under supervision, rather than being sent home as per Education Department policy.

The staff are supposed to be banned from working as well as volunteering with children until police have declared it is safe for them to do so, based on whether they have had criminal convictions since their previous clearance.

But the department has not enforced its own policy, banning only three of the 101 staff when their child-protection police clearances lapsed.

But instead of being sent home on paid or unpaid leave when their clearances lapse, a FOI investigation has revealed that about 100 staff have continued to work in department workplaces.

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Australia Falls Behind Kazakhstan

Australian students are falling behind those in Kazakhstan and Bulgaria in international science and maths testing, while South Australia is the worst performing state in Year 4 maths.

SA improved its scores in all categories of an international testing system involving more than 60 countries, but was below national averages in most categories.

Among the states and territories, South Australia was 7th in Year 4 maths, ahead of only the Northern Territory. The state's best result was equal 4th in Year 4 science.

The Australian Council for Educational Research, which administers the tests around the country and released its results report tonight, said Australia was “slipping backwards”.

Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham said the results, along with nationally flatlining NAPLAN scores, showed “evidence-based” reforms were needed.

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VIC want 70 ATAR For Teachers

The Victorian Government has unveiled a policy that would require aspiring teachers to have an ATAR of at least 70 before enrolling in teaching degrees, from 2019 onwards.

The reforms would also make it compulsory for Victorian universities to base entry requirements on the ATAR cut-off and on a test to ensure the student has a suitable personality to become a teacher.

A new vocational course will also be developed as a stepping stone for students who don't meet the ATAR cut-off.

Victorian education minister James Merlino said the reforms aim to ensure that the state has the best quality teachers available.

[Full Story](#)

Govt Accepts 196 Recommendations

New ways to report suspected abuse and neglect of children, funding to better train social workers and stricter monitoring of carers are the centrepieces of the State Government's full response to the Nyland Royal Commission.

Jay Weatherill has promised the new Child Protection Department will focus on early support for at-risk families and take action based on the best evidence in the field.

He announced on Tuesday the Government has accepted 196 of Royal Commissioner Margaret Nyland's 260 recommendations to reform the state's child protection system.

It has agreed to a further 60 recommendations in principle but has ruled out four.

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Education Costs Surge

Education costs are rising at twice the pace of wages and inflation, and are likely to surprise most families - even those sending children to government schools.

Research found that public education costs an average \$1700 in primary and \$3500 in secondary school when out-of-school tuition and other charges are included.

Add to that \$1000 a year for extra-curricular activities, \$1000 for technology, \$800 for clothing and \$400 for text books and even the youngest children cost households on average \$5000 a year.

“Fee schedules are only part of the cost. And governments are doing less.”

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