

**VET Helping Close Indigenous Gap**

Indigenous youths are becoming more educated, according to a new report from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Increased Indigenous vocational completions are driving this change, though they remain behind non-Indigenous completions.

Not only are they closing the gap, in some instances Indigenous youths are outclassing their non-Indigenous peers. The report found that Indigenous trade apprentices, for example, were more likely to be employed, post-training, than others.

VET vastly outweighs other post-school education pathways in regards to its Indigenous popularity.

In 2015, Indigenous enrolments in TAFE and private training providers made up 79% of Indigenous education. By contrast, universities made up just 2.7% of enrolments.

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This week's stories from the media

- Liberals launch literacy guarantee
- VET helping close Indigenous gap
- Public parents back Turnbull's fair education reforms
- Teacher judgment key to cash
- Financial literacy decline
- OSHC essential for refugees
- SA students multiple suspensions

Liberals Launch Literacy Guarantee

Every SA school that wants a breakfast program would get one, under a new policy that Opposition Leader Steven Marshall says will drive better education outcomes.

The Opposition unveiled the details of a \$9 million literacy guarantee, which includes \$300,000 to make breakfast programs available to every school that needs one.

"Hungry children are distracted in the classroom, which leads to poor educational outcomes and poor health outcomes. They can also present behavioural challenges for other students in their classrooms."

"We will also ensure that specialist support is in place to help the most vulnerable children who need these programs most."

Mr Marshall said literacy and numeracy skills were "the foundation for success in learning and in life" and the State Government "must be able to guarantee those skills for our children".

The measures include employing literacy coaches with expertise in phonics and teaching dyslexic students, as well as reading checks for all Year One students to make sure they are on track.

The Liberals are also pledging free dyslexia workshops for parents across the state, to help with children who are at risk of falling behind.

Mr Marshall says he would also introduce literacy and numeracy testing of any new teaching graduates to be employed in SA government schools.

The Liberals say they would also work with non-government organisations to deliver "evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs targeted at disadvantaged children in their early years".

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“...Mr Marshall said thousands of disadvantaged students ‘fail to meet their academic potential because they arrive at school hungry’....”

Public Parents Back Turnbull's 'Fair' Education Reforms

The national body representing parents who send their children to public schools has backed the Gonski 2 reforms, saying it is “deeply gratifying” that progress is being made towards ending the “peculiar sectorial advantages” of private schools.

ACSSO president Philip Spratt said the group believed “education funding is a complex wicked problem with no absolute right or wrong answers — only better or worse outcomes”.

He said public-school parents and families had called for true needs-based funding and “an end to the special deals and legislated adjustments that create peculiar sectorial advantages for private schooling providers”.

The chairwoman of the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, Karen Spiller, said the body, which represents the principals of 425 independent schools, was “deeply concerned by the tenor of public debate”.

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Teacher Judgment Key To Cash

The nation’s largest provider for Australians with autism is calling for a review into the way federal funding for students with a disability will be linked to “unreliable data based on teacher judgment” from next year.

As part of the Turnbull government’s needs-based school funding, extra money for students with disabilities will be based on information compiled by schools.

Data reveals almost one in five students, or 18.1%, are receiving extra assistance in class to help them learn.

They are identified as disabled based on “teacher judgments”, medical reports and discussions with parents.

Autism Spectrum Australia told senators it “remains committed to a needs-based funding model to ensure that students on the autism spectrum have equitable access to schooling options, however linking funding to unreliable data that is based on teacher judgment needs to be reviewed”

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Financial Literacy Decline

The ability of Australian teenagers to understand the skills needed to navigate their personal finances has fallen compared with three years ago, an international snapshot finds.

Out of 15 economies taking part, Australia was beaten only by the participating Chinese provinces, Belgium, Canada and the Russian Federation.

However, the average score of Australian students in 2015 compared to when they were last tested three years previously fell by 22 points.

ACER chief executive Geoff Masters said the financial literacy of students partly depended on their overall maths and reading skills.

[Full Story](#)

OSHC Essential For Refugees

Five years ago, the Victorian education department started the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) to help the learning and well-being of young people from refugee backgrounds in schools.

“Out-of-school-hours Learning Support Programs play a critical role in supporting young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to succeed in their education.”

“Many students improved their reading, writing and spelling skills. This skill development contributed to their engagement, enthusiasm and enjoyment of classroom activities.”

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SA Students Multiple Suspensions

Close to 1000 public school students were suspended multiple times in a single term, sparking calls for more dedicated learning centres to tackle chronic behaviour problems.

SA Principals Association’s Peter Mader said students suspended three or more times in a short period likely needed “much more nuanced behavioural interventions” than mainstream schools could deliver.

“(Mainstream schools) are resourced to meet the behavioural needs of students who are able to learn quickly from their mistakes and not chronically reoffend,” he said.

[Read the story](#)