



This week's stories from the media

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**SAASSO survey: Transgender Policy**

Over Christmas the South Australian State Government released a new policy and procedures relating to support for transgender and intersex children and students, at school.

The policy is mandatory for all SA public preschools, primary and secondary schools.

SAASSO is asking parents and school staff who should make decisions about children transitioning gender at school and at what age such transitions should begin.



[Take the survey](#)

**Uniform View: Parents Want School Dresses Gone**

**An overwhelming majority of public school parents say female students should not have to wear traditional "girl" uniforms, while many principals want to get rid of uniforms altogether.**

A survey by key parent group SAASSO found just above 90% respondents believed girls should not have to wear skirts and dresses.

Director of SAASSO, David Knuckey said a third of respondents thought girl-specific uniforms were discriminatory "in the context of sexism and the impact on female students".

While overall there was strong support for retaining uniforms in some form, particularly from mothers, many principals were against it.

The report revealed that a quarter of 68 principals surveyed and half of the 78 deputy principals, thought all uniforms should be canned.

Mr Knuckey said: "With negative gender stereotypes known to have disastrous impacts on female students, is it time to rethink making them dress like 'girls'?" he said.

"While schools have long held that uniforms improve discipline, experts, parents and students are now calling school uniforms sexist - a discriminatory disadvantage."



The survey report said some schools already had "flexible" options for girls, while there was a growing trend of schools choosing a dress code "rather than a specified school uniform".

The education department doesn't have the exact number of how many schools offer gender-neutral uniforms and what proportion still have separate boys and girls uniforms.

[More](#)

**“...With more than one-third of young women indicating they have experienced bullying, the importance of bullying prevention cannot be overstressed....”**

### Thousands Of Child Abuse Reports Go Unchecked

Unchecked written reports of potential child abuse hit a record peak of 3800 earlier this year, prompting the State Government to put on extra staff in a bid to clear the bottleneck.

The resources boost brought the total back to about 2500 outstanding reports but social workers fear there are children still at risk among them.

The Public Service Association, which represents child protection workers and monitors the backlog, estimates that some of the reports are more than two months old. It is likely that many raise repeated concerns about the same children.

These come in addition to the tens of thousands of phone calls made to the Child Abuse Report Line call centre each year, many of which also go unanswered.

Opposition child protection spokeswoman Rachel Sanderson said it was “extremely concerning that 2500 child protection concerns reported by teachers, nurses and police have yet to be investigated”.

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### Gonski Deal Hinges On Watchdog

The fate of the government’s Gonski 2.0 reforms could turn on its willingness to set up an independent funding watchdog to name and shame states and school systems that fail to pass on the full amount of funding to students.

Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young has indicated the Greens push to introduce a watchdog is pivotal in the party’s negotiations with the government, saying she did not see how the “Greens can agree to a package that doesn’t put in place genuine independent oversight”.

The original review into school education led by David Gonski, who briefed Greens MPs in a phone call yesterday, recommended the establishment of a national schools resourcing body.

“We need to know the schools that deserve that money, that need that money, are getting it,” Senator Hanson-Young said. “I think naming and shaming in this game is going to be very powerful.”

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### Minecraft Goes To School

The world of *Minecraft* is not flat, nor round. It’s square. Even the cupcakes at the computer game’s promotional stand at EduTECH were square.

But, despite their unusual shape, the baked goods weren’t the focus. Rather, teachers’ eyes were glued to a presentation on the game’s new, educational version.

Dan Bowen, academic programmes manager for Minecraft: Education Edition, gave Education Review the lowdown on the virtual world-building game, with a learning twist.

There are several features developed for teachers such as classroom management tools, like allow and deny blocks, and border blocks.

[Full Story](#)

### Devastating Impact Of Bullying

Women who were bullied at school are more likely to have alcohol or drug habits and be overweight or obese, with a study showing a strong association between bullying and poor health.

Those who were victims had lower levels of education and were less likely to be studying or employed.

In terms of health outcomes, a third of women bullied at school were either overweight or obese, compared to 25% of women never bullied.

Bullied women were also more likely to report fair or poor general health and very high levels of psychological distress – 42% versus 21%.

[More](#)

### Leaving School Means No Study

One in eight Australians will never get Year 12 qualifications. Some, but not all of these people, make up the one in eight Australians who will be disengaged from full-time work, study or training for most of their lives.

Completion of Year 12 or an equivalent qualification is an indication of whether young people have developed knowledge and skills to prepare them for further study or participation in the workforce.

Failure to complete Year 12 can also be in response to difficulties that emerge late in the schooling years, such as health problems (including mental health), family disruption and severe bullying or victimisation.

[Read the story](#)