



This week's stories from the media

- Calls for minister to resign
- Labor scores own goal
- SA reading abilities worst in the nation
- TAFE report another government crisis
- Rescue rashie
- Bad apples tossed from schools
- Push for compulsory suicide prevention training

Labor Scores Own Goal

The State Government has made a “humiliating backdown” on its refusal to join a national education funding deal, conceding that its standoff with the Federal Government would have forced schools to close their doors.

SA Education Minister Susan Close on Friday told her federal counterpart Simon Birmingham she had changed her mind and would agree to the new scheme.

Schools around the state had been left in limbo about whether they would receive millions in expected funding for the 2018 school year.

Senator Birmingham thanked Dr Close for “coming to her senses” but accused her of hiding the “humiliating backdown in vitriol and venom”.

“It was clear from the start the Weatherill Government just wanted to pick a fight with Canberra, but they did it without considering the suffering it would have caused South Australian schools,” Senator Birmingham said.

[Read the story](#)

Calls For Minister To Resign

A top public servant appointed by the State Government to overhaul the TAFE system says poor funding and leadership doomed its reform, and the minister must resign.

The damning critique comes as the Federal Parliament launches an inquiry to judge the SA Government’s policy failings, budget cuts and effect on students.

But Premier Jay Weatherill is standing by Higher Education Minister Susan Close.

Former Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology chief executive Greg Black took on the role in 2002, immediately after Labor took office.

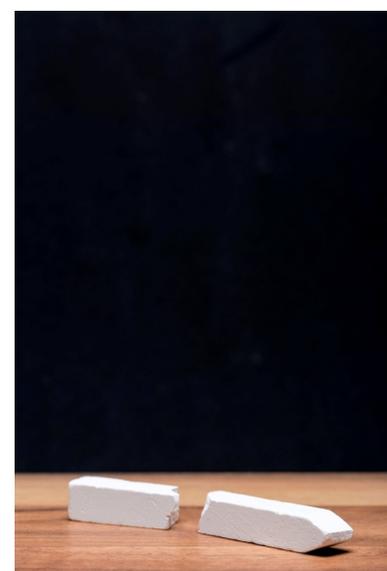
Mr Black told The Advertiser that the “disaster” engulfing the public training provider has roots in failed policies of more than a decade ago, and embattled Minister Susan Close “must take responsibility for 15 years of neglect and resign”.

Mr Black contradicted Dr Close’s claim that TAFE SA’s structure, which keeps it at arm’s length from Cabinet, meant she and the Government should avoid blame.

“This disaster has been 15 years in the making,” he said.

“Since then, there has been a litany of poor government leadership and constant cuts to funding exacerbated by redundancy schemes that managed to remove much TAFE talent, not poor performers. It’s sickening to think of the impact on students.”

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“...This disaster has been 15 years in the making....”

SA Reading Abilities Worst In The Nation

The reading results of South Australian Year 4 students are now the worst in the nation, the latest international literacy test reveals.

The alarming results show the reading skills of the SA students was now the equal-lowest in Australia, sharing the unwanted position with the Northern Territory.

Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham has blasted the SA Government for being more focused on politics than policy.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy study tested the skills of about 580,000 Year 4 students in 50 countries.

SA students ranked below 26 countries including the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovenia and Hungary. But the average Australian student only trailed 13 countries.

State Opposition education spokesman John Gardner said: “Fifteen years of Labor failure has left our students at the back of the class - they deserve better.”

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TAFE Report Another Government Crisis

Minister Susan Close has lost confidence in just about everyone who's running TAFE, and can't be surprised if the public does the same.

Their fury won't stop with a couple of bureaucrats and board members, but run right to the top as students and parents dump the blame for this latest bungle right on the Cabinet table.

There's now a well-practised crisis management script for State Government ministers that has been perfected through disasters in energy, employment, child protection and health.

The names and titles change each time, but the performance is always the same.

When a Royal Commission found Families SA to be a complete basket case, after more than a decade of warnings, Premier Jay Weatherill claimed ignorance as his defence.

[More](#)

Rescue Rashie

The Rescue Rashie, printed with CPR instructions, aims to educate parents on resuscitation.

More than half of Australian parents say they wouldn't know how to resuscitate their child if they stopped breathing so Westpac is taking action.

Drowning deaths peaked at 49 nationally last year, so the time is right for the Rescue Rashie, a children's rash vest printed with step-by-step instructions for how to perform CPR.

Developed with the help of paediatric first aid training and awareness organisation CPR Kids, the bright red rash vests provide thorough instructions for how to save a child's life.

[Full Story](#)

Bad Apples Tossed From Schools

Bad teachers have been caught sexually exploiting children, producing and possessing child porn and forming inappropriate relationships with students.

Others were disciplined for alcohol addiction.

Among the most serious was a male teacher who was disqualified after pleading guilty to four counts of aggravated indecent assault.

Two others were banned for producing child pornography.

Another male teacher was made to complete an ethics course after extensive messaging with two female students.

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Push For Compulsory Training

Schools are referring rapidly growing numbers of primary students at risk of suicide to an intervention service, prompting calls for compulsory training for all school staff.

Currently, referrals often rely on a friend noticing a student's troubling Facebook posts and telling a teacher.

“(Staff training) should be compulsory in all schools. What if the child is showing signs to the teacher who doesn't recognise them? They are the first responders.”

Common risk factors were a “clash of cultures” between home and school life, family splits, sexuality and gender identity issues, and bullying.

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