



This week's stories from the media

- Language teaching in SA schools a failing system
- SAASSO Survey: TAFE
- Primary schools with hundreds of spaces as others overflow
- SA preschooler attendance rates are sliding
- Teachers need to learn maths
- Review: could tradies be teachers
- Poor literacy biggest threat

**SAASSO Survey: TAFE**

**Political parties are demanding local action on the ongoing crisis which has engulfed TAFE SA.**

A current inquiry is being held in New South Wales; in a move labelled as 'bizarre'.

Nick Xenophon is demanding a South Australian parliamentary inquiry be convened immediately after the election to get to the bottom of the TAFE debacle.

Additionally, the state Liberals have announced they will sack the entire TAFE SA Board, if elected, and implement new stricter selection processes and rigorous performance reviews.



[Complete the survey](#)

**Language Teaching In SA Schools A Failing System**

**The proportion of South Australian students choosing to study a language in Year 12 has fallen by more than half in the past 10 years, prompting a new strategy and a staffing overhaul of the Education Department's languages team.**

In 2006, 10.9% of Year 12 students undertook language studies as part of their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

Latest figures from the SACE Board show that number dropped to just 4.9% in 2016.

Education Minister Susan Close said she found the decline in language enrolments in the state "concerning."

"It's very important to me personally – myself being a secondary language learner – that we address this," she said.

"It's essential that we improve the languages offering and provide the support to teachers to do that, and that's why we announced the Languages Strategy in October."

Language enrolments showed a particular decline from 2010 (9.8% of students) to 2011 (7.5% of students), coinciding with sweeping changes to the SACE at the end of 2010.

As part of these changes, minimum study requirements for Stage 2 were cut from five subjects to four, with the fifth choice subject replaced by the compulsory Research Project.

SACE Board chief executive Professor Martin Westwell said the Research Project was not solely to blame for the drop in language enrolments, adding enrolments have been on the decline in the state for decades.

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***“...Literature was our “best shot” at promoting understanding of difference, and that relied on boosting literacy levels....”***

### **Primary Schools With Hundreds Of Spaces As Others Overflow**

**Primary schools in Adelaide’s east with hundreds of vacancies between them are just a few kilometres from those bursting at the seams.**

Yet the Education Department does not maintain an up-to-date register of all schools’ capacities against their enrolments - at least not one available to the public.

The Advertiser reported last week that parents were complaining about Parkside Primary classes being taught in the school’s library, music and staffrooms.

The department, which has dropped a plan to review school zones across the eastern suburbs, has told The Advertiser there are 243 vacancies between Unley, Glen Osmond and Highgate primary schools.

Parkside Primary library is double classroom size, so suitable for the 58 students in it, the department says.

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### **SA Preschooler Attendance Rates Are Sliding**

**Attendance rates at South Australian preschools continues to slide, particularly among the state’s most vulnerable youngsters, data reveals.**

Australian Bureau of Statistics’ latest preschool attendance release shows almost 6500 four-year-olds were missing out on the recommended 600 hours of pre-school last year – 21,734 were enrolled but only 15,263 were meeting attendance standards.

Preschoolers who come from the most disadvantaged families had the worst attendance rate, with 358 fewer making it to class.

Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham said the data showed the Weatherill Government was “failing to ensure our littlest learners get the best start”.

“The data shows the greatest failures among some of SA’s most disadvantaged children,” he said.

State Education Minister Susan Close described the figures as “unrefined”.

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### **Teachers Need To Learn Maths**

**The key to improving Australian school students’ maths performance could be through helping early childhood educators overcome their own difficulties with maths.**

Australia rates poorly compared with other OECD countries in its level of maths skills for children aged three to five.

Children of those ages needed “intentional teaching to expose them to concepts they may not learn through spontaneous play”.

A recent study of three early childhood education centres in Perth found 17 out of 21 educators had a negative view of maths and were not confident teaching it.

[Full Story](#)

### **Review: Could Tradies Be Teachers**

**The federal government has launched a national review of teacher registration to improve consistency and teacher quality across the country.**

“There’s inconsistency in our teacher registration systems across the country and we need to understand what’s working and what’s not in key areas to set a bar everyone can work towards,” Minister Birmingham said.

“Having a former tradie or nurse as a teacher can bring more perspective to a classroom and be especially beneficial; teachers who have been working in other jobs can be a great way for students to learn about life after school and the different options open to them.”

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### **Poor Literacy Biggest Threat**

**Children from disadvantaged backgrounds hear tens of millions fewer words than their peers by the time they turn three.**

American neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf says poor literacy is the biggest threat to democracy, because much of the population lacks the reading capacity to be informed citizens and not fear others different from themselves.

Children from “welfare” families were exposed to a total of 10 million words by age three, compared to more than 30 million for those from “professional” families.

40% of people “never get past fourth grade levels of fluency that allow the critical, analytical brain to be formed”.

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