



This week's stories from the media

- Children should be banned from contact sports
- Plant-based canteen options thwarted
- Sports voucher program has 40% increase in a year
- Making higher education a choice for foster kids
- Performance pay
- Unis urged not to rely on international students
- Students using emojis for lesson feedback

**Plant-Based Lunches Thwarted**

**A motion by the Australian Greens sought to expand food options for those attending Canberra's schools.**

Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur's motion pushed for school canteens to provide plant-based food options for students, and hospitals to use plant-based foods as the default meal option for patients.

It also called for all school students studying health and wellbeing in primary school and food technology in high school to explore the environmental, ethical and human health implications of food choices in an age-appropriate way.

But the major parties voted it down in the ACT Legislative Assembly – opponents citing concerns for people with dietary issues.

In a statement, she said: "Given that children are becoming more aware of climate issues and many teenagers are choosing to be vegetarian, parents want to know that their children can access a balanced vegetarian meal when at school".

[Full Story](#)

**Dr Bennett Omalu Believes Children Should Be Banned From Contact Sports**

**A renowned doctor believes allowing children to participate in contact sport is a form of child abuse and should be banned.**

Doctor Bennet Omalu is credited with discovering the first cases of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in American footballers and the fight to have his research recognised by the National Football League was dramatised in the Will Smith film Concussion.

Dr Omalu told Today this week CTE was a disease that developed from repeated blows to the head.

"It's a disease that may take up to 41 years to manifest with diminishing intelligence, mood disorders, depression, drug abuse, chronic alcoholism, impulsivity, aggressive behaviour," he said.

He said a child could suffer blows to their head while playing rugby or football and would seem OK but then could start having problems 10 years later, up to 40 years later, impacting their higher education.

"It's always been my position, and in fact the position of doctors all over the world, beginning in 1957 that children should not engage in high impact, high contact sports like rugby, football, boxing, wrestling, mixed martial arts," he said.

"If a child plays rugby or football for only one season, there is a 100% risk exposure for that child to suffer permanent brain damage. This is the truth of science."

"We need to begin to learn to handle the inconvenience of the truth."

Dr Omalu made headlines in 2017 when he said allowing children to play football was child abuse.

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***“...If a child plays rugby or football for only one season, there is a 100% risk exposure for that child to suffer permanent brain damage....”***

### Sports Voucher Program Has 40% Increase In A Year

Parents have taken advantage of a State Government decision to double the amount of money they can get discounted from their child's membership and registration fees to take part in organised sport.

The Sports Voucher program has hit the \$5 million mark in just seven months this year, following a 40% increase in the amount of parents redeeming the vouchers than can now save them \$100 from fees for their children to take part in organised sport.

Figures provided to the Sunday Mail by the Officer for Recreation, Sport and Racing reveal that between January 1 to July 31, 53,367 vouchers have been used in South Australia, totalling \$5 million that have been redeemed by parents in the state.

This is a massive increase from 2018 where \$1.9 million worth of the vouchers - for primary school aged children from Reception to Year 7 - were used.

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### Making Higher Education A Choice For Foster Kids

There are close to 50,000 children living in out-of-home care in Australia. This experience will often represent a huge disruption to what other kids would consider normal life.

Many will face profound challenges that will ripple through into adulthood. Thirty per cent will at some point find themselves homeless, and many will end up in low paying, low skilled jobs.

Anastasia Glushko, who became a ward of the state at 12 years of age, considers herself one of the lucky ones. And, the biggest source of this luck she believes comes from her decision to enrol in university.

Her time at ANU and then later at Oxford she found utterly transformative. She wants more foster kids to have the same benefits that university gave her. In 2016 she founded Why Not You, a project dedicated to making higher education as accessible as possible for care leavers.

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### Performance Pay

The prospect of rewarding high performing school teachers with performance-based pay is an evergreen issue that has re-entered public debate.

In New South Wales One Nation MP Mark Latham recently floated the idea, asking: “Why aren't the best teachers, [who are] adding value in the classroom, given performance bonuses for their magnificent contribution?”

Mr Latham is now heading up a parliamentary committee looking into this and other issues in the state's education system, with a view to improving student results and investigating how rewarding high performing schools with funding incentives could help drive best practice and improved results.

[Full Story](#)

### Don't Rely On International Students

Australian universities have been warned against relying too heavily on any particular group of students to keep their coffers full.

Education Minister Dan Tehan has expressed the sentiment, after one of his colleagues said he believes some universities are too dependent on international students for their livelihood.

"What we do have to ensure though, is to make sure that universities understand that the more diverse the student mix they have, the better secure their financial forecasts will be, so the more diversity they can get, into their student mix, the better."

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### Students Using Emojis Feedback

Classrooms are introducing the Student Feedback tool, which helps teachers poll how students are feeling, whether they're keeping up with the lesson or if they need help.

For example, users who are confident during a lesson can send a sunglasses-wearing emoji to their teacher with the message 'I've got this'.

Conversely, if they're having some difficulties in class, they can use a frowny-face one with the note 'I'm so lost'.

The Age reported that Loreto Mandeville Hall in Melbourne, was in the early stages of using the tool. The school was trialling it across senior psychology, health and human development and general maths subjects.

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