



This week's stories from the media

- SA schools hit 90% attendance
- Push to open doors to foreign students
- Parents fed up with speed-dating teachers
- SA schools get \$66m in new buildings and upgrades
- Gender imbalance threatens Covid-19 recovery
- Cyber threats at home
- Getting back to school will help

Open Doors To Foreign Students

Hundreds of international students, blocked by the COVID-19 travel ban, are likely to be allowed into Australia in July following a state push, led by South Australia, to readmit overseas students to boost their economies.

The federal government is prepared to open up quarantine facilities to house incoming students for a two-week isolation period after their arrival.

The July arrivals would be a pilot for larger groups of students to arrive later in the year and early next year to restart the education export industry, which earned \$40bn last year and supported 250,000 jobs.

Currently, 18% of Australia's nearly 700,000 international students are blocked from coming to Australia by the travel ban, although some are studying remotely from overseas.

South Australian Premier Stephen Marshall has pushed hard for the readmission of overseas students, backed by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, who is responsible for Australia's largest student destination city, Sydney.

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South Australia's Schools Hit 90% Attendance

For the first time in Term 2, more than 90% of South Australian students attended schools.

The numbers have increased from 64% when school returned two weeks ago.

In the final week of term one, only 34% of students were in the classrooms.

Premier Steven Marshall said only about 4% of students were still learning from home, based on Tuesday's numbers.

"This compares with some states where they only have three or four per cent of students studying in schools so I know our students will benefit from having that face-to-face education," he said.

Education Minister John Gardner said he was pleased with the results for state schools.

"This puts our students in the box seat to get the best education opportunities this year," he said.

"We know schools are the best environments for our children and young people for their learning, wellbeing and social opportunities."

Gardner said like Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the state government stood firm on its position, based on health advice, that schools were safe and children should attend.

"It's a credit to SA teachers who've done a great job adjusting to an at-home learning environment when that appeared to be a likely necessity and now they've adjusted back in our schools, offering a face-to-face learning environment," the minister said.

"It's enabling teaching and learning to be offered in a much more regular way which is great news for our students."

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Parents Fed Up With Speed-Dating Teachers

The home learning era should be a catalyst for schools to overhaul the way they communicate – with “speed dating” parent-teacher interviews no longer good enough, say mums and dads.

Parents were feeling shut-out of their child's education even prior to COVID-19 with parent-teacher nights like “speed dating” and most communication confined to outdated methods in a digital age.

Australian Parents Council president Jennifer Rickard said the home learning era should be a catalyst for schools to overhaul the way they communicate with parents, with new survey findings revealing parents do not feel like active participants in their child's schooling.

Ms Rickard said parents were experts in their own child and had a lot of insights to offer – but particularly now after being the key ‘teacher’ implementing the school work.

“It has become really apparent that you don't know what they are doing in classroom,” she said. “Let's use this as a lever to go forward.”

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SA Schools Get \$66m In New Buildings And Upgrades

Ten schools will share in \$66m of upgrades and new buildings – one will get SA's second planetarium and three will get performing arts centres.

The planetarium, only the second in South Australia, will be installed at Hamilton Secondary College, the state's leading space education school.

Hamilton Secondary College also will gain a 150-seat theatre, one of three performing arts centres in the capital works program along with John Pirie and Wirreanda secondary schools.

“We are pleased to be revealing these designs to families across SA, whom I am sure will closely monitor the progress of construction as these concepts come to life,” Education Minister John Gardner said.

“Construction on these sites will begin in the coming months, creating local jobs and contributing to the massive boost to our economy that our education capital works program will bring to the state, at a time when these jobs are so sorely needed”.

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Gender Imbalance Threatens Recovery

The Australian Mathematical Science Institute's latest report argues that gender inequity & imbalance will compromise both post-coronavirus recovery and future responses to pandemics.

The AMSI data provides a snapshot of female participation in mathematics across Australia, covering school classrooms, higher education, research and the workforce.

According to the AMSI paper, redressing this gender imbalance is critical in ensuring an appropriately skilled workforce is in place during the pandemic, and to help with the road to recovery.

In 2018 only 7.25 of female Year 12 students took higher maths compared with 12.2% of male students.

[Full Story](#)

Cyber Threats At Home

Before COVID-19, children would spend a lot of the day at school. There they would be taught about internet safety and be protected when going online by systems that filter or restrict access to online content.

Schools provide protective environments to restrict access to content such as pornography and gambling. They also protect children from various threats such as viruses and unmoderated social media.

But with many children learning from home, parents may not be aware of the need for the same safeguards.

Many parents are also working from home, which may limit the time to explore and set up a secure online environment for their children.

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Getting Back To School Will Help

Five studies released by the Education Department on Monday reveal online education is holding back students, with vulnerable children and those in early years facing severe long-term impacts.

Literacy and numeracy results are set to slide by one-sixth if pupils are kept at home for six months.

More than one million at-risk students face social, emotional and behavioural setbacks.

Some Year 5 students would effectively lose six weeks of learning in reading and almost 11 weeks in numeracy if schools failed to reopen this year.

The shutdown was especially hard on already disengaged students and those from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

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