



This week's stories from the media

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- High speed Internet for SA schools
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- Fear preschoolers left behind ahead of critical year
- Girls score the same as boys in maths but higher in arts
- Teaching fees to be slashed under new uni scheme
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High Speed Internet For SA Schools

Around 500 public schools across South Australia are now benefiting from high-speed internet after connecting to a Telstra fibre optic network capable of speeds of 1Gbps and up.

Education Minister John Gardner said the government was nearing the completion of the state's \$80 million Schools With internet Fibre Technology internet program.

The Department of Education began the state-wide rollout of fibre optic cable to schools early last year after signing with Telstra.

It aims to connect 514 of the state's 518 public schools to high-speed fibre optic cable under the program by the end of this year.

The remaining schools, including the remote Oak Valley Aboriginal School, will also receive high-speed internet, though this won't be delivered by fibre optic cable.

Gardner said the high-speed internet connections would help deliver better educational outcomes for students.

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Lack Of Home Internet Leaving Students Behind

New research prompted by the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the serious digital gap faced by many school students from poorer families.

Internet connection was vital for students learning from home during COVID-19 restrictions.

But new research commissioned by the Australian Education Union found public school students were 2.5 times more likely than their private school peers to have no home internet access.

About 125,000 public school students had no internet at home, even through a mobile or gaming device, the report by researcher Barbara Preston found.

Nine times as many students from the nation's poorest families had no internet access than those from the richest families.

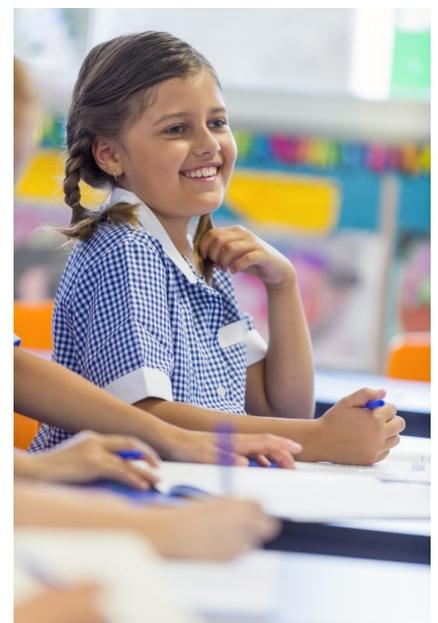
One in eight students in remote areas had no internet at home, as did a third of those living in very remote areas.

Union federal president Correna Haythorpe said this highlights the deep inequality students from disadvantaged backgrounds face.

The union wants the government to do a "digital equity" audit of what resources and hardware students can access and the impact on those who lack an internet connection.

Research done for the federal education department in April found poorer children were most likely to be impacted by the disruption to regular schooling as states closed schools and required students to learn from home.

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“About 125,000 public school students had no internet at home, even through a mobile or gaming device....”

Warm Teachers Shape Students

Research has found that strong student-teacher relationships can lead to productive and positive interactions with future teachers, and students' memories of 'good' teachers are mostly consistent.

The students interviewed comprised a wide spectrum: students with disruptive behaviour in mainstream schools, as well as pupils attending "behaviour schools".

The commonality among all groups was that teachers with whom they shared the most positive relationships were the ones who were "kind, caring, helpful, or humorous".

"For students with a disruptive behaviour, a kind or caring teacher could make the difference between engaging with their schoolwork and walking out of class".

Others can confuse warmth & permissiveness, even though they are quite different.

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Fears Preschoolers Left Behind Ahead Of Critical Year

The end of free childcare has raised concerns about preschoolers who have had early education interrupted and may have to pull out of care.

The childcare crisis could have serious repercussions for the COVID-kids class of 2021 who head into school next year with disruptions to learning vital preschool skills.

Under-resourced childcares admit they have dropped education programs in order to keep up cleaning protocols and some of the big childcares chains have put a 60% cap on enrolments, forcing families to scale down their days.

The Parenthood have reported that their data shows 34% of parents will need to reduce days or remove their children altogether when out-of-pocket fees return in July and Early Childhood Australia CEO Sam Page said preschoolers would be adversely affected if parents are forced to scale down their hours or pull them out.

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Girls Score Higher In Arts

A recent study found while women perform at the same or higher level in maths & science as men, their performance in the humanities is markedly better.

This may be the reason they're choosing not to pursue STEM careers.

Girls' scores in maths and science were around 4% higher than boys. But their scores in humanities subjects were around 13% higher.

Girls are 34% less likely to chose a STEM-related specialisation in their last years of high school.

The study showed students decided which fields they want to specialise in by comparing their academic strengths and weaknesses between subjects and with their classmates.

[Full Story](#)

Teaching Fees To Be Slashed

School leavers wanting to study humanities will have to foot a bill double that of their predecessors.

On the flip side of the coin, those who want to study teaching will counter annual cost that's 46% lower than those enrolled this year.

Under the plan, the government will fund an extra 39,000 uni places by 2023 and will restructure the fees for courses to push students towards "areas where there is expected growth in job opportunities".

"We know we're going to need more teachers, we're going to need more nurses ... we know there are jobs there."

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What Is Family Day Care

Choosing care for your child when returning to paid work can be challenging and the terms can be confusing.

One alternative to long day care in a larger child care centre is known as family day care.

Family day care is where a child is educated in a small group in a family style atmosphere at an educator's home, seeing the same educator or educators each day.

The ratio in family day care is one educator for a maximum of 7 children, and there can be no more than 4 children who are preschool age or under.

The educator's children must be counted in those seven children if they are under 13 years and not being cared for by another adult at the premises.

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