



This week's stories from the media

- Experts warn as students follow Ukraine war on TikTok
- Government to cut school fees for parents
- Study: disadvantaged students more excluded at school
- Improving education standards the only way to compete
- STEM Girls Academy
- National survey on consent education

### School Fees To Be Cut

**The state government has promised to cut school fees for parents.**

Premier Steven Marshall announced a \$100 reduction in the Materials and Services Charge that parents who send their children to public schools pay.

The \$24 million cost of the promise would come from the existing Education Department budget.

Families with multiple children could save hundreds of dollars, the Premier said.

Refunds would be offered to parents who had already paid the full fee this school year.

"This is going to mean more money in the pocket of South Australian families so that they can spend it on the things that are important to them," he said.

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### Experts Warn Of Harmful Effects As Students Follow Ukraine War On tikTok

**Teachers, parents and carers have been warned to be wary of their kids' social media use as graphic footage of the Ukraine war is broadcast across TikTok, Snapchat & Instagram.**

Clips showing terrified civilians hiding in bunkers, bombs exploding on urban streets and soldiers yielding guns have garnered millions of views online over the past three weeks.

Constant and prolonged exposure to disturbing content can affect children and young people in a number of ways, according to digital literacy expert Dr Joanne Orlando.

"No one really has been exposed to this extreme graphic content 24/7 like this before," Orlando told Education Review.

"Some children can get really deeply saddened by it. Some kids can get really physically hyped by it."

Others will feel quite helpless.

"Long-term, it can lead to things like a desensitisation towards violence or a lack of empathy towards the people who are obviously being hurt in the videos or in the scenario."

TikTok, which has over two billion users worldwide, has become an important source of news and information for young people, with over a third of US users aged 14 and under.

Children and young people are spending on average nearly five to seven hours a day on social media apps.

Studies have shown kids aged between four and fifteen spend around 80 minutes per day scrolling on TikTok, which is 30% more time than the average adult user.

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**“...No one really has been exposed to this extreme graphic content 24/7 like this before....”**

### Disadvantaged Students More Excluded At School

**Disadvantaged young people experience significantly lower levels of teacher support and life satisfaction at school than their more affluent peers, research has shown.**

A new study, led by Flinders University, analysed survey responses from over 3,500 young people aged between 13-14.

Adolescents who lived with a disability, cared for a family member, spoke a language other than English at home, or identified as Indigenous, were found to be more likely to be living in poverty.

They also reported higher levels of bullying, classroom participation, and overall lower levels of school satisfaction.

“The risk factors for social exclusion at school are worse for young adolescents who live in low income households or who experience poverty,” said sociologist Professor Gerry Redmond.

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### Improving Standards Only Way To Compete With China

**With Australia sliding in the global education rankings and China on our doorstep, we need to invest in our children’s education, say experts.**

McKell Institute chief Michael Buckland said analysis of the education sector found more government investment was needed if Australia wanted to remain competitive on the global stage.

Australia would never be able to match China on wages, so producing innovative students was the only way forward, he said.

Successive Coalition governments would argue they have funnelled billions of extra dollars into education.

Despite this, Australia’s education world rankings have continued to slide.

Australia was now in 16th place for reading, 17th for science, and 29th for maths.

Advocates for change said the government needed to back evidence-based solutions.

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### STEM Girls Academy

**A newly expanded program is helping find young regional female engineers, scientists and mathematicians.**

The UniSA STEM Girls Academy, with support from Santos, has expanded to Eyre Peninsula, where 25 Year 11 girls took part in last year’s program.

It included face-to-face learning at UniSA Whyalla campus

Whyalla Secondary College year 11 student Chloe Dickin, 16, has applied to join the program, hoping it might be a stepping stone to her dream career in criminology.

“It will help me get a better understanding of the science I’ll need in my university studies.”

[Full Story](#)

### National Survey On Consent

**The government announces a national survey exploring consent education.**

Australia’s Human Rights Commission will conduct the survey, collecting information about the extent of secondary students’ consent education and the understanding, experience, nature and reporting of sexual harassment among students.

Teach Us Consent founder Chanel Contos, whose committed advocacy has helped put the issue of consent education in schools on the national agenda, will be a Special Advisor to the project.

The findings will be reported to government and the public, including to children and young people.

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