



This week's stories from the media

- SA's pandemic youth homelessness spike
- Reminder to wear masks at school
- School bag checks could make vaping harder to detect
- Children's Commissioner vaping survey
- Early Childhood strike
- Kids lose interest in reading

Reminder To Wear Masks

Parents of children heading back to school on Monday will get a letter with advice on wearing masks – once the child has arrived at school.

The information noting masks are strongly encouraged when indoors but not mandatory for students in years 3 to 12 also has been sent out by the Education Department.

Mask requirements in schools have not changed and stay the same as it was in term 2, and the department will continue to provide face masks to schools.

Education Minister Blair Boyer's office released a statement noting the communication is a reminder that mask wearing is strongly recommended to help reduce the spread of Covid-19.

Read SAASSO's Covid Mask bulletin.



SA's Pandemic Youth Homelessness Spike

More than one in 20 young people aged between 15 and 19 in SA are homelessness for the first time during the Covid pandemic.

The 2021 youth survey from Mission Australia found a "significant & worrying increase" in the proportion of young people experiencing homelessness for the first time across the country.

The South Australian rate is 0.8% higher than the national rate of 4.8%.

The national rate has increased from the 2017 survey, which saw a first-time homelessness rate of 3.9%.

Mission Australia state director Mychelle Curran said the report shows "just how harmful the experience of homelessness can be for a young person's wellbeing, their life and their future".

Three in five young people in the survey who experienced homelessness for the first time were women.

"The need for a comprehensive approach to end youth homelessness in Australia has never been more urgent," Curran said.

"Early intervention is key and we urge governments and others to take action so young people are adequately supported and help them avoid homelessness, reach their full potential and thrive."

"It's clear that for young people, homelessness can often be incredibly isolating, destabilising and traumatic. This can have a ripple effect on their lives without access to the right intervention."

[More](#)



“...Three in five young people who experienced homelessness for the first time were women.....”

School Bag Checks Could Make Vaping Harder To Detect

Mandatory bag checks in Australian schools could push student's vaping habits "further underground" a health expert has said, as calls to address rising rates of youth e-cigarette use amplify.

This week, the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland launched a bid to introduce mandatory bag checks and pocket searches at the start of the school day.

Dr. Michelle Jongenelis, a senior researcher in health promotion at the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences, said bag searches could make the issue harder to address.

"Kids are really innovative in the sense that they will just look for other means to use these devices and use sneakier tactics," Jongenelis told Education Review.

"It's still a fairly new issue and I think a lot of schools are grasping at straws to try and figure out exactly what they should be doing."

[More](#)

'Until we get equity in education we will not have equality in society.'

Justice Sonia Sotomayor - US Supreme Court

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Children's Commissioner Vaping Survey

Searching schoolbags, dobbing in mates and taking off toilet doors won't end the school vaping problems, kids say, but they think they know what will.

South Australian schools have adopted the wrong tactics to reduce vaping by students.

Two out of three South Australian teenagers have told the Children and Young People Commissioner they had used electronic cigarettes at least once.

Only 30% of 950 students aged between 13 to 19 said they had not tried vaping.

However, two thirds believed schools needed to educate young people more about associated health risks, rather than taking punitive action.

This had included removing toilet doors, expelling students caught vaping or selling e-cigarettes and conducting random searches.

Early Childhood Strike

Childcare workers across Australia will go on mass strike in September to highlight poor wages and industry conditions.

A damning industry report last year found that 37% of Australia's child care workers planned to leave their jobs in the next 12 months.

Of 4000 educators surveyed, 70% said they "always or often" worried about their financial situation, while 81% of centre directors said they had difficulties in recruiting new staff.

The average hourly pay for a childcare worker in Australia is around \$24, and nearly 97% of early childhood educators are women.

[Full Story](#)

Schools Tree Day - July 29

Friday July 29, 2022 is National [Schools Tree Day!](#)



Kids Lose Interest In Reading

Parents already fighting cost of living and work stress can add another uphill battle to the list, as Australian children in their prime learning years switch off from reading.

A survey by reveals that 98% of parents believe reading is very or quite important to their child's writing and spelling skills.

But nearly half of school aged children are reported as only enjoying reading books a little (46%), and one in five teens aged 14-18 is reportedly not enjoying reading at all.

Professor John Munro said the phenomenon was more pronounced in boys.

"At about grade 5 or 6 ... a lot of boys are turning away from engaging in reading," he said.

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