



This week's stories from the media

- Former PM to lead SA Royal Commission
- Expert panel to review teaching degrees
- Childcare workers staff shortage
- Call for free school lunches
- School backs down on fingerprint scanning for toilets
- Dangerous TikTiok trend

Panel To Review Teaching Degrees

A panel of experts will tackle the teacher shortage crisis at the university level after the Government announced a review into teacher education.

In an effort to address the teacher shortage and the plummeting numbers of teaching graduates, a panel of experts will review how education degrees are taught at universities.

Education Minister Jason Clare said the review will improve initial teacher education (ITE), boost graduation rates and better prepare young educators for the classroom.

"There aren't many jobs more important than being a teacher, and we don't have enough of them," Clare said.

Modelling forecasts that more than 4,000 new high-school teachers will be needed before the end of 2025, while enrolment in teaching courses has declined by 8%.

In addition, the number of students completing their ITE education has declined by 17%.

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Former PM To Lead SA Royal Commission

Former PM Julia Gillard is set to lead a royal commission into SA's early childhood education sector to look at how the state can bring forward access to preschool by one year.

Gillard's appointment follows a pledge made by the state government, which promised to introduce universal preschool to three and four-year-olds by 2026.

The royal commission will also look into how to better support families during the first 1000 days of their child's life, and how to increase access to out-of-school-hours care at a preschool and primary school level.

It will also investigate the benefits of increasing parents' workforce participation.

The final version of the report is expected to be concluded by August 31, 2023 with a preliminary report to be presented in April.

Gillard's appointment has been welcomed by the early education childhood sector, which has long called for a universally accessible, high-quality early learning system.

Gillard, who served as education minister from 2007 to 2010 and commissioned the landmark Gonski report, has welcomed the new challenge.

"I am delighted to now have the opportunity to support the next important steps to improve the early childhood education systems in South Australia," she said.

SAASSO called for an increase in preschool in its 2014 election submission.

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“...to introduce universal preschool to three and four-year-olds by 2026....”

Childcare Workers Staff Shortage

A Sunshine Coast childcare provider says parents won't be able to take advantage of a proposed federal government subsidy unless more workers enter the industry.

Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland president Majella Fitzsimmons said federal government subsidies to reduce the cost of childcare could go to waste if centres couldn't accommodate demand.

"If there's nowhere to put children while they're at work then what we're going to have is those people aren't going to go into the workforce," Ms Fitzsimmons said.

"So all these great economic incentives the government is bringing in won't actually happen."

"There's been wage increases, early childhood teachers are now earning anywhere between \$35 to \$45 an hour," she said.

Ms Maclean said the staffing situation was the worst she'd seen during her 40 years in the industry.

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Call For Free School Lunches

South Australia needs to extend a free breakfast program in state schools to include lunches for an estimated 75,000 children living in poverty.

Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly has called for the Education Department to examine providing lunches in primary and secondary schools to improve educational performance.

Ms Connolly said teachers in SA's most disadvantaged schools were regularly reporting "that they are providing large numbers of children with lunch, as well as sending them home with food for dinner".

"Food insecurity is a chronic issue in South Australia and a symptom of chronic poverty, with one in four families below the poverty line," she said."

"We have 75,000 thousand children living in the poorest of South Australian households.

"The majority are school aged, and they would all benefit from a school lunch program being introduced at their school."

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School Backs Down On Fingerprints

A Sydney high school has backed down on a plan to start scanning students' fingerprints when they use the toilets, after claiming it would stamp out "vandalism".

The proposed measure by Moorebank High School, west of Sydney, raised alarm with one of Australia's leading digital rights groups over concerns it was an "unreasonable" invasion of privacy.

But the school has since backflipped on the proposal.

The group said the move created an "unnecessary" digital security risk by storing such data.

Samantha Floreani said students were at risk of identity fraud should the stored data be hacked or leaked.

[Full Story](#)

Dyslexia Awareness Month

October is Dyslexia awareness month.



Dangerous TikTok Trend

RSPCA calls out kids for deliberately agitating magpies for TikTok content.

Since the beginning of spring, magpies and other nesting birds have been out more than usual defending their young.

Victims of swooping birds have since taken to social media app TikTok to share their reactions to angry magpies, but some are taking it a little further than just warning others.

In Queensland, a group of local teenagers have posted videos to TikTok "terrorising" the distressed birds in order to make content for their followers.

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