



This week's stories from the media

- Girl on a toilet door mission
- Extracurricular activities can drive academic success
- Year 12 student on mission to improve mental health
- Youth regional suicide rate highest in state and rising
- 7 in 10 teachers don't feel respected
- Department bans bullying short film

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities can close the educational gap between students in regional areas and city counterparts, a new study shows.

University of Tasmania lecturer Alexander O'Donnell says out of school activities can increase students' expectations for academic success and study pursuit.

Students in regional areas are, on average, ranked 5% lower than metropolitan students under the ATAR classification system.

"Extracurricular activities help students to learn how to manage their time, interact with varied people, it develops skills in management, leadership that can be translated into school life," O'Donnell told Education Review.

He believes out of school activities can also encourage regional students to continue their study at university, a trend that isn't common as "students often go straight to work after school."

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Girl On A Toilet Door Mission

Clare artist Holly Geyer has a unique way to help schoolkids cope with mental health issues.

Painting toilet doors and walls was based on a WA initiative, but with Holly's help it is now taking off in SA too.

"I approached one of the local schools and I said to the principal, 'I'm a local muralist do you have any walls to paint? And he said how about my toilet doors?'"

"... I was not aware that in Perth there was a teacher a couple of years ago that designed this Toilet Door Mission and painting toilet doors to uplift an environment that was probably daunting and scary for kids or where kids may retreat if they were being bullied."

Holly has completed seven school toilet door missions so far.

"If you can put some inspirational quotes and colourful designs and have the kids involved it can just transform a space."

"It's so empowering for young people. Everything I do has come from the kids' heads and their creative minds are wonderful once you get that conversation going."

From a koala driving a pink Cadillac to warrior women, sports stars, animals and inspirational quotes, there is really no limit to what Holly and the students might come up with through her bold, bright artworks.

"I remember going to the toilets at school and crying or having a fight with my friends, so I try to think about what I would have liked to have had back in those days."

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“...suicides among young people rose from seven deaths for every 100,000 young residents to 11.2....”

Year 12 Student On Mission To Improve Mental Health

India Ciura is sick of losing young friends to mental illness.

The 18-year-old struggled to find the right help when the black cloud of depression descended, but feels she was more “fortunate” than others still suffering alone.

“I have seen friend after friend struggle, pushing through each day and dreading the next,” the Port Lincoln Year 12 student said.

India is sharing her story as part of The Advertiser’s Can We Talk campaign, in a bid to encourage young people struggling with mental health to speak up and seek help.

India is asking for:

- Funding to lower the cost of mental health services and greater access through Medicare
- Initiatives to get more specialists working in rural areas
- A mandatory course for education and childcare staff, designed by a psychologist, to equip them to support mentally ill young people.

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Youth Regional Suicide Rate Highest In State And Rising

Suicide rates for young people across large parts of regional SA are considerably higher than the city. In most cases, they’re also rising.

The rate of deaths is highest in regions spanning the Eyre and Fleurieu Peninsulas, the Far North and the South East, where analysis of the latest data shows a rise over the past decade.

Young people say it is difficult to find support for more complex or severe mental illness and there are too few specialists in the regions.

Joe Hooper, CE Rural & Remote Mental Health, said telehealth services had increased options for country South Australians but they were “not a substitute” for face-to-face sessions.

In the region covering the South East, Riverland and Fleurieu there were 24 suicides by 5-24 year olds between 2016 and 2020.

It meant the rate of suicides among young people rose from seven deaths for every 100,000 young residents to 11.2.

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7 in 10 Teachers Don't Feel Respected

Teachers feel disrespected, overworked and unsafe, a new report shows.

The study revealed more than 70% of educators don't feel respected by the public, with one in four teachers feeling unsafe.

“This lack of trust for teachers filters through into everyday interactions and become regular incidents of disrespect, and challenging interactions with people in their communities, including their students and parents.”

The survey also revealed that 90% of educators pointed out feeling disrespected by policy makers in Australia.

[Full Story](#)

School Post

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Department Bans Bullying Film

A filmmaker says the Education Department banned his anti-bullying film from schools because it refers to “bullying”.

Gavin Crosby wrote to Education Minister Blair Boyer suggesting the film, *Monica’s Story*, should be screened at Whyalla Secondary College following violent assaults between students.

“All the schools which have shown *Monica’s Story* to their students have sent me letters saying how helpful it has been,” he said.

A reply from the Education Department saying the “wording” of his synopsis about the film and its lesson plans “were not aligned with the language used in department policy and resources”.

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