



This week's stories from the media

- Mobile phone ban
- Staff pressures are challenging SA's preschools
- Golden Grove High School
- Australia's public schools ban chatbot
- Cutting teaching degrees won't resolve shortages
- Girls school bans footy

SA Preschool Staff Pressures

Recruiting and retaining staff, especially in regional areas, is a major issue for the pre-school sector, a royal commission has been told.

In a discussion at SA's inquiry into early childhood education and care, longtime preschool educator, director and now consultant Jane Lemon said fluctuating enrolments added to complexities for pre-school centres.

"If you're a centre with a small number of children and you're only operating maybe two days one week and three days the next, that's a big step for someone to move to the middle of the country to work in that kind of setting, for a half-time job."

Former prime minister Julia Gillard is heading up the royal commission which was a key promise of the incoming state Labor government last year.

That included a pledge to deliver universal preschool for three-year-olds by 2026, provide better access to out-of-school care and increase workforce participation through improved access to child care.

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Mobile Phone Ban

A ban on mobile phones in South Australian high schools will make it easier for students to focus on learning while also helping to cut bullying and harassment, Education Minister Blair Boyer says.

The ban, similar to that in place in Victoria since 2020, will begin rolling out in some schools from the start of term one next week and should be in place across all public schools by term three.

"This ban will contribute to making sure that kids can actually focus on their learning," Boyer said.

Under the rules, student phones must remain switched off or in flight mode, and out of reach all day including during breaks.

Schools may use lockers, special magnetic pouches or other ways to secure phones.

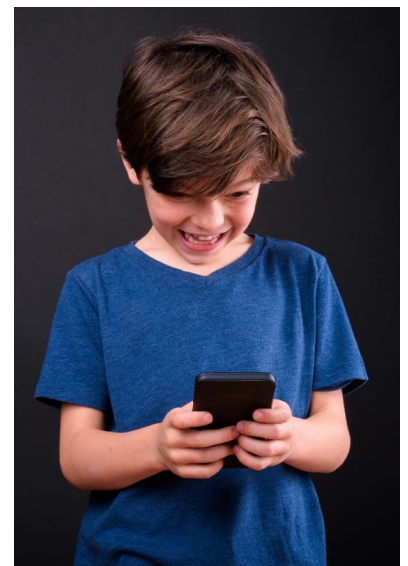
Some exemptions will apply including students who may need their phones because of medical conditions.

Meanwhile, videos of students smashing open their Yondr phone pouches and smuggling in extra phones and magnets to get around the new phone ban have gone viral on TikTok only a week after the ban took effect.

Mr. Boyer said it was no surprise students were looking for ways to dodge the ban, saying the videos highlighted the "lengths and extents" young people would go to stay "attached" to their devices.

"This shows why we need to (have a policy) – of course (students) will try to find a way to get around it, but there are strong disciplinary procedures in place that will come into effect immediately if students are found to have damaged their pouches and not complying with the policy."

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“...This ban will contribute to making sure that kids can actually focus on their learning....”

Golden Grove High School

It was in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons last year but Golden Grove High School is turning the corner.

Authorities have revealed major improvements at the northeastern suburbs school, where two star pupils scored near-perfect year 12 results last year.

Education Department data shows a 39% drop in year 8 incidents and a 10% fall for year 9 after a behavioural crackdown in term 4.

Suspensions also plunged by almost two-thirds in those two cohorts.

The school is also strengthening connections with families by holding various social events.

Principal Peter Kuss said a blitz on school-hour movement – policed by school leaders in high-vis vests – “dampened” much of anti-social activity.

He also held regular school assemblies that forced students to take responsibility and refocus on learning.

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Australia's Public Schools Bans Chatbot

Most public school students in Australia are now barred from using popular artificial intelligence technology over cheating concerns.

Students at most Australian public schools have been banned from using a popular artificial intelligence chatbot amid concerns of its possible uses for cheating.

This week Victoria became the latest in a growing list of states choosing to block access to ChatGPT as an interim measure.

The State's education department said the measure was put in place while the implications of the technology within a classroom setting are being explored.

NSW was the first state to ban the application from school grounds in late January ahead of the start of Term 1.

Other jurisdictions quickly followed suit including Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania.

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Cutting Degrees Won't Fix Shortage

Fast-tracking teaching degrees would only be a "small step" towards fixing urgent staff shortages in Australian, an education expert has said.

Professor Kim Beswick, head of UNSW's education department, said the NSW coalition's recent pledge to cut teaching degrees' length in half would only remove small barriers for a limited number of schools.

“Anything you do with teacher education is going to take a generation before it actually has an impact across the system,” Professor Beswick told Education Review.

“There are thousands of teachers out there who need better working conditions - the new graduates who come through are a tiny fraction of the workforce.”

[Full Story](#)

Day Of Women & Girls In Science

February 11 is the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.



‘We can all do our part to unleash our world’s enormous untapped talent – starting with filling classrooms, laboratories, and boardrooms with women scientists.’

Sydney Girls School Bans Footy

A Sydney girls school has moved to phase out Australian rules football over concerns its students could face brain injuries.

Principal Elizabeth Stone said there were decisive factors behind the move, including growing evidence that adolescents are at a greater risk of injury and that females experience concussions more frequently than males.

“This meant our students, teenage girls, were in the highest risk category,” she said.

“At Queenwood, we loved everything about AFL except for the risk of trauma to the brain.”

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