



This week's stories from the media

- Teaching non-maths teachers to teach maths
- Schools target for ransomware attacks
- TAFE revolution: review finds system failed
- OSHC services warned on quality
- China to limit children's smartphone time to 2 hours
- Department criticised for \$1.2m ad spend

Schools Target For Ransomware

The education sector reported its highest rate of ransomware attacks in 2022 with cybercriminals targeting 80% of K-12 schools.

The 2023 State of Ransomware in Education report released by Sonos shows K-12 schools experienced an almost 25% increase in ransomware attacks from 2021 to 2022.

The report indicates a troubling trend where nearly half of Australian schools are paying a ransom to cybercriminals to minimise the impact of a data breach.

The report showed schools that paid the ransom had on average \$810,000 more in recovery costs than schools that didn't pay the ransom.

"By hacking into school databases, cybercriminals can access Personally Identifiable Information (PII) of not only students but also parents, teachers and administrators."

"Hackers can use information obtained from school databases to facilitate fraudulent financial transactions....," Dr Phelps said.

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Teaching Non-Maths Teachers To Teach Maths

Southern Cross University is tackling Australia's math teacher shortage with a new online course for teachers to learn to teach maths.

Next year, SCU will launch an online Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching Mathematics for Out-Of-Field Teachers.

The course is aimed to increase the skills and confidence of teachers who lack formal maths qualifications but are called upon to take maths classes.

David Lynch, a professor at SCU, said maths qualified teachers were in very short supply, especially in regional and rural Australia.

He said that out-of-field maths teaching was now a chronic issue in most secondary and primary schools and affected Australia's capacity to produce graduates who were well-qualified in STEM.

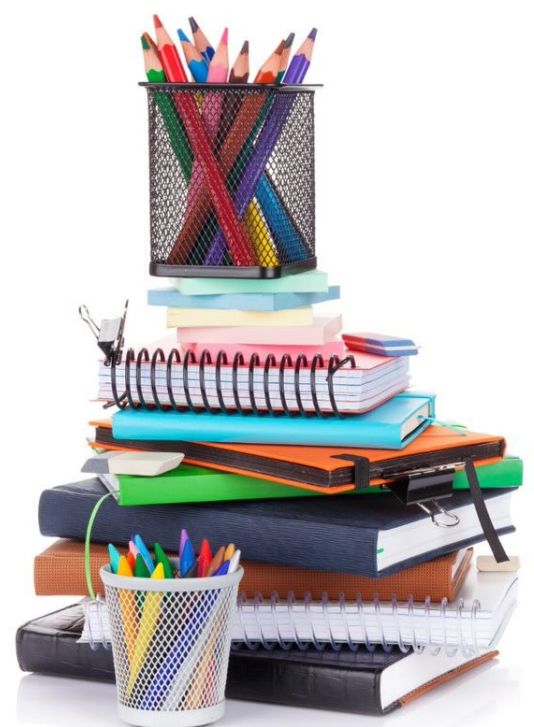
Professor Lynch said that the postgraduate certificate would not only give teachers math teaching skills, but would also improve the way maths was taught.

"We aim to shake-up the profession."

The maths microcredential is one of 28 short courses recently funded by the federal government in areas of national importance.

The certificate is expected to be available online through Southern Cross University from term 1 2024.

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“...By hacking into school databases, cybercriminals can access Personally Identifiable Information of not only students but also parents, teachers and administrators....”

TAFE Revolution: Review Finds System Failed

Tens of thousands of TAFE SA students would have greater course choice and study at potential new campuses as part of a regional push to revolutionise vocation training and help solve the skills crisis.

In a rare public admission of Labor failures, Training and Skills Minister Blair Boyer admits the state government wrongly “corporatised” the embattled agency in 2012 to chase profits.

In one of the biggest overhauls in a decade, Mr Boyer will publish a new TAFE SA blueprint and new laws, after an independent review found the troubled system failed the public.

The taxpayer-funded training provider has a chequered history, with multiple crisis including a 2017 accreditation scandal, campus closures, course chaos, staff cuts and board turmoil.

Mr Boyer announced changes to TAFE’s charter from a government “corporation” – which chases “large profits” – to an authority with a “stronger focus” on education results.

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OSHC Services Warned On Quality

Education Minister Blair Boyer has written to every public school offering out of hours care to remind them that “high quality and safe” care of children must be their “number one priority”.

More than 47,000 children attend 155 public and 232 privately-run OSHC centres – most in the primary years.

Some are operated by schools and governing councils and others by private companies.

The sector is being examined as part of a royal commission into early childhood education and care, which is due to report by the end of this month.

Mr Boyer said OSHC “plays a vital role” for families and the economy by enabling parents to work past school pick up time, but the availability and quality of services was not consistent.

Many centres are at capacity or have waiting lists due to increasing demand from working parents.

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China Limits Smartphone To 2 Hours

China’s internet watchdog has laid out regulations to curb the amount of time children spend on their smartphones.

Draft guidelines state that minors would not be allowed to use most internet services on mobile devices from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., and that children between the ages of 16 and 18 would only be able to use the internet for two hours a day.

Children between the ages of 8 and 15 would be allowed only an hour a day, while those under 8 would only be allowed 40 minutes.

The restrictions are Beijing’s latest efforts to attempt to limit internet addiction, a problem it views as widespread among its youth.

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International Left Handers Day

August 13 is International Left Handers Day



Department Criticised For Applications

The Education Department boss has told parliament \$1.2m spent on attracting 43 students so far to a new technical college was money well spent.

The funding for the campaign, including television advertising, came from the federal government’s Gonski allocation, designed to support schools.

Mr Westwell admitted it was “unusual” for the department to use Gonski funding to advertise but maintained it was necessary.

“It was worth it, it was an appropriate spend of the money in order to make sure South Australians were aware of this opportunity.”

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