

# The Advertiser

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FINAL

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS JOURNAL

# LEARNING DISORDER

## Teachers, schools condemn new SACE

LAUREN NOVAK  
POLITICAL REPORTER

SCHOOL leaders and teachers have launched a scathing attack on South Australia's new high school certificate, saying it has lowered standards and increased pressure on students.

Submissions to an independent review of the SACE say it does not

deliver the maths skills needed for most jobs, has cut the number of language students and reduces learning time.

City and western suburbs schools and associations representing maths, language and vocational education teachers have made the criticisms.

Continued Page 4

## Divers shoot for Olympic gold

TOM DOUGHERTY

THE nation's top swimmers flocked to Marion's new SA Aquatic and Leisure Centre to battle for Olympic selection last month.

This week, Australia's premier divers are at the same centre with the same goal in mind as they compete in the 2012 Olympic diving nomination trials.

South Australian platform diver Rachel Bugg, 23, is among the elite group of divers vying for a spot on the Olympic squad.

She said the aquatic centre boasted the best facilities in the country, and gave divers the perfect chance to show what they could do.

"It's fantastic here in Adelaide, I love it," she said.

"It was by far the best pool I've ever dived in until I went to the Olympic pool in London for the World Cup in February."

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TOP PLUNGE: South Australian hopeful Rachel Bugg at the national Olympic diving nomination trials in the SA Aquatic and Leisure Centre yesterday.

Picture: MATT TURNER



## DIANA AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE

P3

# Call to teach Kaurna at every city school

THE Kaurna language should be taught in all schools across the Adelaide Plains to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, experts say.

Aboriginal students who learn their traditional language become more confident, have more pride in their identity and find a passion for learning, a committee heard yesterday.

For non-Aboriginal students, learning the language of their Aboriginal peers promotes a higher level of cultural understanding.

Representatives of the

EDUCATION  
EDITOR

SHERADYN  
HOLDERHEAD



Kaurna Warra Pintyandi group provided evidence of the value of teaching Aboriginal languages in schools to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into language-learning in indigenous communities.

Kaurna language teacher

Jack Buckskin said this year he was teaching at two schools but knew of many more who wanted to teach their students Kaurna – but the teachers and resources were not available.

Elder and educator Dr Alitya Rigney said there were three issues standing in the way of having the Kaurna language taught in more schools – a lack of teachers, resources and funding.

“It’s so important for our kids to learn the language of their ancestors from the beginning to the future,” she

said. “It’s like you are pouring in strength, identity, culture and power.”

Dr Rigney said she hoped the inquiry would result in a government policy that would allow every school to teach the Aboriginal language of that area.

“We need a place of our own, a language centre; we need lots of resources and we need the ability to employ enough people to specifically teach the language,” she said. This was echoed at the hearing by representatives of other SA Aboriginal languages.

Federal Labor MP Shayne Newman, who chaired the committee, said recommendations were due in the second half of the year.

He said through the hearings it was clear that ensuring access for Aboriginal students to learn their ancestors’ language was vital to closing the gap.

“While I can’t foreshadow what (measures) will be, they will probably include more funding, more co-ordination of efforts and more whole-of-government approaches,” Mr Newman said.

## Divers shoot for the Games

From Page 1

Bugg, born in Belair and now training with the Australian Institute of Sport squad in Queensland, will compete in the final of the women’s 10-metre platform event today after the preliminary rounds yesterday.

She hopes to join backstroke swimmer Hayden Stoeckel as the only competitors representing South Australia in the pool at the London Games.

“Everyone wants to make it but I just have to do what I can on the day and give it my all, so I have no regrets,” Bugg said.

Her diving partner in the 10m synchronised, Loudy Wiggins, 27, is on the Olympic comeback trail after winning bronze medals at both the Sydney and Athens Games.

“It’s very inspiring, I feel very privileged to be her synchro partner when we compete on Wednesday,” Bugg said.

Australia’s best male diving hope for gold in London is Queenslanders Matthew Mitcham, who produced the highest scoring dive in Olympic history to win gold at the Beijing Games back in 2008.

Recent injuries have prevented him from performing at his peak but he said yesterday he was feeling fit and healthy.

Other divers hoping to impress the judges include diver and ex-gymnast Alexandra Croak, one of the only Australian athletes to have a Commonwealth medal in two different sports, and Mitcham’s synchronised diving partner, Ethan Warren.

Diving highlights today include the final of the men’s 3m springboard, women’s 10m platform and women’s 3m synchronised events from 11am.

Tomorrow will feature the final of the men’s 10m platform, women’s 3m springboard and women’s 10m synchronised events.

# Schools and teachers slam SACE

From Page 1

In submissions seen by *The Advertiser*, they say the revamped Year 12 program’s “success for all” mantra is holding back high-achieving students.

The review’s public consultation process closes at the end of this week and is expected to attract more submissions from schools in the public, Catholic and Independent sectors, as well as from parents and students.

The submissions seen by *The Advertiser* express concerns that the SACE does not prepare students to be competitive in an increasingly global labour market due to a decline in language studies, gives students less time to learn the same amount of information and has led to “little or no improvement in learning”.

The Modern Language Teachers Association of SA points to stark falls in the number of schools offering language programs and the number of students studying languages.

Trade school teachers have criticised a requirement that students need only complete a minimum of 10 maths credits, which they say will not impart “the numeracy skills to succeed in most levels of employment”.

A submission on behalf of more than 80 teachers from the Mathematical Association of SA warns that students may begin choosing easier subjects to gain a higher tertiary entrance score and ignore pure mathematics courses.

Teachers are “exhausted” by greater workloads, are unclear about marking standards and feel the moderating process is not transparent.

The majority of the submissions want the compulsory personal learning plan and research project subjects made optional.

## CONCERNS RAISED

The new SACE is “not a credible certificate” compared to other models nationally or internationally and has “less depth and breadth” than its predecessor.

Students will be less prepared to compete in a global labour market because of a drop in languages study. Twenty-six schools have stopped offering languages and 306 fewer Year 12 students studied a language last year compared to 2010.

Increased demands on teachers to meet marking requirements.

Students given less time to learn the same amount of information.

Uncertainty about marking standards and a lack of transparency in moderation process. Teachers are unclear about marking standards, passing students who were later failed by moderators.

Schools forced to schedule extra classes for students who couldn’t complete personal

learning plan or research project in time.

Students spending “disproportionate time and energy” on the 10-credit research project to the “detriment” of 20-credit subjects.

Disadvantaged students

“highly challenged” to complete SACE because of a lack of support from home.

A requirement that students only need complete 10 credits of mathematics mean they will not have “the numeracy skills

to succeed in most levels of employment”.

Students feel it is unfair that a student who passes every subject “gains the same qualification as a student who can fail the majority of their subjects”.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Abolish research project and personal learning plan and incorporate key elements into other courses, or at least make the subjects optional.

Consider re-introducing a fifth subject in Year 12, and a sixth subject in Year 11.

Allow each discipline (ie. maths, science, humanities etc.) to choose the way their assessment method to best suit the tasks.

*\* Submissions from Adelaide High School, School of Languages, Western Adelaide Secondary Schools Network (representing VET and trade schools), Mathematical Association of SA and Modern Language Teachers Association of SA.*



The class of 2011 was the first to complete the revamped SACE, which introduced the research project to replace a fifth subject in Year 12.

It also dropped the number of Year 11 subjects from six to five.

In mid-February the government announced former senior public servant Bill Cossey would head an independent panel reviewing the SACE.

The body representing parents of students in public schools is also in

the process of making a submission to the panel.

SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey said parents wanted to see more core skills in the SACE.

“They’re looking at their children, concerned about their skills, seeing them do less subjects and instead, like one student, doing a project on their favourite guitarist,” he said.

Education Minister Grace Portolesi

said she welcomed the “contributions and interest” of teachers, students, parents and the wider community.

She said the independent panel would consider the submissions and produce an evaluation report, after which she would comment further.

Opposition education spokesman David Pisoni said budget figures showed the “out of touch” government had spent at least \$70 million developing the new SACE.



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