

My job: The path from a degree to a career

Audiologist

NAME: Jena Mayne

AGE: 30

DEGREE: Master of Audiology, Flinders University

LENGTH OF COURSE: Two years (postgraduate)

STUDY: Audiology involves the assessment of hearing and balance function and the rehabilitation of both children and adults with difficulties in these areas. The Master of Audiology course at Flinders University is the only such program in South Australia and is highly regarded and internationally recognised. The two-year, full-time coursework program includes clinical placements and a research project. The program encourages independent study, integrates theoretical knowledge and clinical applications and is highly valued by employers.

CAREER: I enjoyed one of my regional clinical block placements so much that I began my audiology career in Darwin, working with both urban and regional clients. I spent time working in remote Indigenous communities. There are so many opportunities in audiology all over Australia that my partner and I next decided to move to country WA, where



I worked in a private-practice audiology clinic, which included a lot of travel around southern WA. After we got married and

decided to start a family, we chose to move back to Adelaide. I began work at Hearing Loss Solutions, Deaf Can Do's audiology clinics in Adelaide and Blackwood, as a private practice clinician, focusing on adults. In my current role as an adult rehabilitation specialist, I assess hearing, fit technologically advanced hearing aids and provide other rehabilitation solutions for a range of clients in a not-for-profit setting. As a mother of a young child, with another on the way, I have found audiology to be a rewarding professional career that offers the flexibility of part-time work and allows me to maintain a high level of technical and clinical skill.

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Big changes and bigger schoolyards

The State Government is planning to build six new "super schools" across Adelaide, but is bigger necessarily better? Education Reporter **LAUREN NOVAK** looks at the pros and cons.

NEXT year, hundreds of students will move into two new "super schools" in the northern suburbs, becoming the first to benefit from new equipment, modern classrooms, and "green" building features.

The following year, hundreds more children will move into another four such schools across Adelaide.

They will have come from 20 primary, secondary and special schools where numbers were dwindling and - faced with the choice of accepting a new school or trying to keep a dying one afloat - parent communities voted to close the campuses and merge.

The Education Department says the new schools, with student populations of up to 1375, will offer better and more integrated facilities, more curriculum choice and a "change in the way learning takes place".

It says the new "purpose-built" schools will attract the best staff and, by combining childcare, health and education services on one campus, will be convenient for families and help smooth transitions between year levels for students.

However, there are concerns over whether creating hub schools like this, with larger enrolments across broader age groups, will provide better outcomes for students.

Teachers are concerned about losing staff in the mergers, the impact of cuts to existing school budgets to fund the new buildings, and that behavioural issues will worsen with larger student cohorts.

The state's peak parent body says there is no evidence to show super schools are the way to go and little understanding among parents of the finer detail of the Government's plans.

Internationally, there is even a move away from larger schools.

In the US city of Chicago, the government there was allocated money in 2001 to convert five large public schools to 15 or 20 smaller schools while a US longitudinal study found students be-

came more isolated and were more likely to "engage in risky behaviours" when a school's student population reached 1200.

In the UK, children at schools of more than 1000 students were shown to be three times more likely to be excluded than students in smaller schools.

tive David Knuckey said. The director of the South Australian Association of State School Organisations, which represents parents and governing councils at public schools, said parents were not against having new schools, but felt they were not being kept in the loop.

"I still think too many people aren't particularly clear about what they'll be getting," Mr Knuckey said.

"As we enter the formation of this, people are still asking 'what's the benefit to us?'"

The State Opposition has criticised super schools as a cost-saving measure.

Opposition education spokesman David Pisoni disagrees with the notion of super schools and said a Liberal government would "immediately" stop the project.

Instead, it would review how existing large state schools were operating successfully and how this could be mirrored statewide.

"There may be a need for some school amalgamations ... but we wouldn't make them (new schools) as big," he said.

"Schools need upgrading.

"The Government's policy of forcing parents to vote to close a school is based on a carrot-and-stick approach.

"The schools are run down, parents stop sending their kids there, parents are forced then to vote to close the schools to amalgamate them and the Government can say to parents 'Well, you chose this option'."

However, the Government says the rationale stemmed from a growing number of schools with too few enrolments to offer proper curriculum choice, ageing school buildings and a "significant and long-standing backlog" of maintenance work.

Launching the \$323 million six-school public-private partnership in September, 2006, Premier Mike Rann said: "To deliver on our education commitments we now need a higher standard of buildings and we need to rethink the way we offer education".

Concept plans for the first two schools at Munno Para West and

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- parent representative David Knuckey

Melbourne University research found student achievement increased among student populations of up to 600, plateaued at 900 students and then dropped with increasing school size.

"I haven't heard of anybody who's saying that a school with 2000 children is a better environment for children than a school with 300 kids," parent represen-

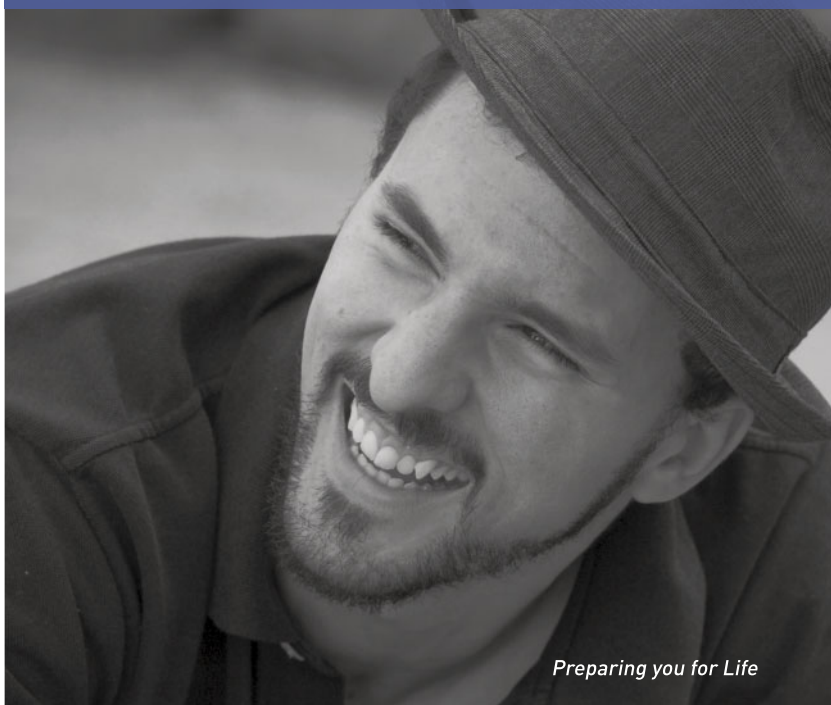
NEW FEATURES

Each school will feature:

- Modern classrooms and new equipment.
- Playgrounds dedicated to different age groups.
- Vegetable and native gardens and new sporting grounds and ovals.
- Parking spaces for bicycles and cars.
- Outdoor eating and learning areas.
- Sustainable features such as skylights and water harvesting for toilets.

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SUPER SOLUTIONS



Playford North

Birth to Year 7 school at Playford North - opening 2010

■ Up to 575 students and 45 child care places, Kooranowa Reserve, Smithfield Plains.

Birth to Year 12 school at Munno Para West - opening 2010

■ Up to 1375 students and 45 child care places, Newton Boulevard, Munno Para West.

Merging schools

- Davoren Park Primary School
- Smithfield Plains Junior Primary School
- Smithfield Plains Primary School
- Smithfield Plains High School
- Smithfield Plains Kindergarten
- Davoren Park Kindergarten
- Smith Creek Primary School

Birth to Year 7 school at Blair Athol - opening 2011

■ Up to 440 students and 45 child care places, on the site of Gepps Cross Primary School, Stanley Ave, Blair Athol.

Merging schools

- Blair Athol Preschool
- Kilburn Primary School
- Gepps Cross Primary School



Munno Para West

Multi-Sport campus Year 8 to 12 school at Gepps Cross - opening 2011

■ Up to 1300 students and 30 child care places, at State Sports Park, Main North Rd, Gepps Cross.

Merging schools

- Ross Smith Secondary School
- Gepps Cross Girls High School
- Enfield High School
- Gepps Cross Senior Special School

Birth to Year 7 school at Woodville Gardens - opening 2011

■ Up to 665 students and 45 child care places, on the site of the current Ridley Grove Primary School, 18 Ridley Grove, Woodville Gardens.

Merging schools

- Ferryden Park Primary School
- Ridley Grove R-7 School
- Mansfield Park Primary School
- Woodville Gardens Preschool
- The Parks Childrens Centre

Special school at Taperoo - opening 2011

■ Up to 80 students, beside Ocean View College, Gedville Rd, Taperoo

■ Special education services for children with disabilities from Reception through to Year 12.

Merging school

- Regency Park School



Blair Athol



Gepps Cross

Playford North were released in late May. The schools will be built by Pinnacle Education, a joint venture between South Australian builder Hansen Yuncken and financiers Commonwealth Bank Investments and HJB Investments.

Under the terms of the agreement, Pinnacle will be responsible for the physical maintenance of the schools for the next 30 years – at which point ownership will revert to the State Government.

The Department of Education and Children's Services argues the schools will offer students more opportunities and closer links with business, local government and community groups.

Principal of the school planned for State Sports Park at Gepps Cross, Sandy Richardson, said the schools would create "learning environments for today's young people and the next generation of children".

"What differentiates the schools is the purpose-built facilities, the 'schools within schools' concept and a leadership structure that supports this model of schooling. For many students this will offer them a whole new environment to shine."

Under the "schools within schools" concept, students will be placed into learning groups of about 120 students for teaching but will have access to the resources of the larger campus.

For instance, the multi-campus secondary school planned for Gepps Cross will feature specific co-educational, girls-only and special education campuses.

At the two to open next year, the proposed leadership structure will be for each school to have a principal overseeing the whole school, with up to four "dedicated leaders" in charge of each level of schooling; that is, separate leaders for birth-to-Year 2, pri-

mary years (Years 3 to 6), middle years (Years 7 to 9) and the senior years (years 10 to 12).

Despite this, many of the concerns about super schools rest with their size.

While the teachers union generally supports merging struggling metropolitan schools to provide more choice for students, it worries the size of the student populations at the super schools will magnify behavioural problems and make it more difficult for parents to remain involved in the school community.

"Amongst educators there's a fear that there could be an intensification of behavioural problems when you're herding large numbers of students into small spaces," Australian Education Union state vice-president Anne Crawford said. "Also, one thing that is greatly valued by parents is access to the principal but if you have a principal of a school

with 1600 kids, parents would have great difficulty even having a conversation with the principal." The union is also worried about a potential loss of school service officer hours, which are allocated per school, not per class or student. This would likely increase the workload of teachers and principals, Ms Crawford said.

However, the department has guaranteed current class size formulas will apply to the new schools and argues they are "comparable" in size to other metropolitan schools.

The state's largest public school, Hamilton Secondary College, has 1605 students.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith has previously said the super schools are "no bigger than our most popular public schools with waiting lists, and will provide families with a host of education, health and childcare services at a single location".

Webcam



CAMERON ENGLAND

ON YOUR BIKE

IF the recent Tour de France has inspired you to get on a bike, you might also want to get on the net for some tips on where to ride, how to plan your training and how to look after your machine.

A great website for training and riding routes is **MapMyRide.com**.

The site's most obvious feature is the ability to map and share rides with other people using Google Maps technology.

It is possible to search other people's rides and set up your own, with the site calculating the distances involved.

Members can go a step further, setting up a training calendar, or signing up for one of the fitness challenges such as committing to cycle 300 miles in 30 days or walk a marathon in 30 days.

Regular group and competitive rides are also listed on the site.

Looking closer to home, the Bicycle SA website **bikesa.asn.au** offers a mix of riding routes, cycling advocacy information and courses on bicycle maintenance and riding technique.

Information can be found here on a number of organised rides such as Amy's Ride – a ride down the Southern Expressway which raises money for the Amy Gillett Foundation – the Mutual Community Challenge Tour and offroad events such as the Melrose Fat Tyre Festival.

For the more enthusiastic, the Bicycle SA free rides program is also a great way to find group rides, both on and off road, around the state.

The Adelaide Mountain Bike Club site, **amtbc.com** is mainly a resource listing the club's events schedule, as well as the results of races.

Both the Bicycle SA and Adelaide Mountain Bike Club sites have regular emails you can subscribe to, which will keep you in the loop on upcoming events.

And, finally, bicycle maintenance. Youtube is awash with videos on how to maintain everything from derailleurs to brakes.

If you prefer a step-by-step approach, **about.com** has good guides on maintenance and even guides on how to buy the best bike on your budget.

STAY PATCHED IN

KEEPING tabs on all of the cool stuff you find on the internet can be a chore.

Using your favourites folder and sites like Delicious can help, but for sites that are regularly updated there is a better solution.

RSS, or Really Simple Syndication, is a way of keeping tabs on content such as blogs or podcasts.

Using an RSS reader, which can be web-based, for example as part of the Google suite of tools, or set up as a stand-alone program on your desktop, you can be notified whenever the sites you have selected publish new content.

Once you have installed an RSS feeder, you can easily subscribe to new content by clicking on the RSS logo on a website.

The YouTube video, *RSS in Plain English* has a good explanation of how RSS works and how to set it up.

Naturally, if you have your own website and want to ensure that people viewing it will stay involved, adding RSS capabilities is a good idea.