

Donation education



SIGNING UP: Daycorp director Travis Day with Littlehampton Primary School student Caitlin and one of the new whiteboards.

Picture: RUSSELL MILLARD

LUCY HOOD
EDUCATION REPORTER

PUBLIC schools are being forced to rely on corporate donations to fund infrastructure projects, key school groups say.

South Australian Primary Principals Association president Steve Portlock said budget cuts had meant many schools depended on donations to build or upgrade facilities.

"Schools which have had their funds reduced are struggling and are looking at every way they can to increase their budget," he said.

Mr Portlock said halls, gyms, playgrounds, library renovations and such IT equipment as interactive whiteboards were among the projects for which schools were seeking corporate donations.

He said the State Government's decision to raid the interest generated from schools' bank accounts had added to the problem. Schools, which had balances greater than \$1 million, could earn interest worth close to \$100,000 a year. That often was used to fund large-scale projects.

SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey said the "desperate need" for corporate sponsorship only would escalate. "Sadly, the need for school governing councils to try to secure corporate sponsorship is only going to increase with school budgets across the state

being strangled to pay for super schools," he said. "Schools only have three options - fundraising, chasing a grant or corporate sponsorship."

The Education Department's Capital Works Assistance Scheme allows schools to seek financial support for constructing extra facilities that have a "community-use" component.

The department's website states support is given to

adelaidenow.com.au

Classroom champions

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schools for the cost of providing "standard" facilities.

"It is a requirement that the total cost of 'non-standard' facilities, or the expansion of standard entitlements will be borne completely by the community or the school," it says.

The Government has spent \$665 million in public school infrastructure improvements over the past five years but it

does not provide such funding to private schools. Association of Independent Schools of SA director Garry Le Duff said, as a result, donations from parents and the extended community made up more than 85 per cent of their capital works funding.

"Donations must save the State Government massive amounts of money and there is an imbalance as they assume the community should pick up the cost," he said.

"It is important the community and industries realise they have a responsibility to contribute to society."

Property development company Daycorp last month donated \$15,000 to Littlehampton Primary School to buy interactive, or electronic whiteboards. Director Travis Day said their donation was a way of giving back to the community. School principal Jenny Lewis said being able to buy more whiteboards for the school was "just fantastic".

"It really has opened up a new world for the children," she said.

"I think many schools are welcoming corporate donations as it makes that added difference."

Year 3 student Caitlin Melville, 9, said: "They are a lot of fun. You can use the pen and drag stuff around the screen on them."

COUNCIL ASSESSMENT \$180m city tower

THE latest building proposed for the \$750 million City Central project will be considered tonight by the city council's development assessment panel.

If approved, Tower 8 will be a 17-storey, \$180 million office block on the corner of Franklin St and Post Office Place. The building will have about 34,000sq m of space including ground floor retail tenancies and a basement carpark.

Designed by Woods Bagot and developed by the Aspen Group, Tower 8 will be the fourth major development in the precinct within King William, Waymouth, Franklin and Bentham streets.

GULF BRINE Desal plant protest

ABOUT 150 people concerned about the effect a desalination plant would have on St Vincent Gulf held a rally at Brighton yesterday.

The Save our Gulf Coalition rally kicks off 90 days of action to protest against the proposed desalination plant at Port Stanvac. A spokeswoman said the group was worried that up to 50 gigalitres of hypersaline water from the plant would be emptied into the gulf.

"We would prefer to see the Government look at options... already available, like stormwater harvesting or recycled water," she said.

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Date: Wednesday, 9th July 2008
Time: Registration 6.45pm for 7.00 start
Venue: Ironfish Adelaide Office (Optus Building)
Level 6, 439 King William St, Adelaide



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