

Have your say



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The Advertiser

Schools need less meddling, more learning

IT is hardly surprising a proposed Education Department policy which leaves the door open to schools dropping Christmas carols has been overwhelmingly rejected.

In a survey of 1179 people conducted by the South Australian Association of State School Organisations, 98.38 per cent said carols shouldn't be banned in public schools. Of these, only 19 people backed a ban and 86.98 per cent of respondents were parents.

The Advertiser in late June revealed details of the proposed policy, which says public schools are secular and, "therefore, Christmas carols, singing and performing, for example, is not regulated by the department".

Immediately after that, the draft policy expresses "clear policy requirements" to ensure schools are not "promoting a commitment to a specific set of religious beliefs". The Education Department denied this would result in a carols ban but, clearly, it left this prospect open to school principals.

As respondents to the SASSO survey emphatically

declared, this policy represents totally unnecessary political correctness. It seeks to unduly impose a clinical view about Christmas, which is almost universally regarded as a time of peace, joy and celebration for all - even if the religious aspect has become muted over time.

Again, it's unsurprising another common survey response was that the Education Department should stop trying to tinker at social issues and, instead, do something to strengthen learning in public schools.

This focus should start with turning around SA's continuing poor results in the NAPLAN literacy and numeracy tests.

As The Advertiser reported this month, SA has recorded NAPLAN results below the national average in every test at every participating year level.

Of course, education is about more than reading and writing.

Expanding young minds is critical. But politically correct advertisement should be avoided when our state is lagging in vital national measurements.

Having put the Liberals to the sword in previous elections for proposing public sector job cuts, Labor cannot afford to be axing positions so close to the poll at which it seeks a fifth term in power. There might have been valid reasons to cave to union pressure and suspend the job cuts. But with the election months away, it is easy to believe the political imperative was dominant.

It appears this self-interested pattern has been repeated - with the State Government's decision to shelve, until after the election in March next year, plans to cut 196 jobs from SA Pathology.

The sudden backflip before cuts were due to start next month was explained by Health Minister Jack

Woe is me

EVERYONE knew that the NBN technology could quickly become outdated. Why spend millions of dollars encouraging us to join a system that does not work?

I foolishly signed up, expecting better and received far worse. My wi-fi regularly drops out, no matter the time of day. Sometimes this lasts for more than three hours.

My experience is that the NBN is a monumental failure, nowhere near as good as the previous system. I don't care that it is slow (and indeed it is slower than before), all I want is for it to stay on.

We sometimes go longer than an hour without a drop out but this is rare. Other times it drops out three or more times in an hour - twice while I have been writing this letter.

My provider cannot solve the problem. Many phone calls, plenty of tech support and months of tech advice, four new modems but no improvement.

The NBN people say it is the wiring and they have no schedule for fixing it. They refuse to send a tech person out to help - obviously they are run off their feet.

Now we have advertisements promoting how great the NBN is. Instead, why not spend this advertising money fixing the problem.

Does anyone care that my local member doesn't care? Can anyone help? I would have sent this electronically but I'm offline at the moment and, yes, I have tried turning it on and off again.

CHRIS BROWN,
Hawthorndene.

What a waste

AFTER much hassle and being without internet and home phone for days, I am now connected. I expected, and was promised, a much faster service.

But it turns out to have about 75 per cent of the speed of the old ADSL2 system and is less than half the speed of the 4G mobile network. What a waste of \$40 billion!

TERRY BOSWELL,
Surrey Downs.

TEXT TALK

I BET a few more clubs will now be giving their players chardonnay and apricot slices.
HOW SWEET.

CAN someone please run a workshop for AFL umpires to teach them what 15m is.
IAN.

WHY do today's "celebrities" think we enjoy seeing their pregnant bellies? Please, ladies, pregnancies have been going on



NBN MIA

WE are currently trying to get NBN connected - a service we never wanted but were told we had to have.

I have to say we are delighted by the NBN staff as none have managed to be present at any appointment, yet.

I am sure they will next time - and might even tell us where they were and how they got lost in the depths of Grange.

DENNIS SPARROW,
Grange.

No way back

DURING the many decades I have been using computers, there have been remarkable improvements to their size and what they can do. I've appreciated these technical advances until three weeks ago - when I connected to the NBN.

I now have a very slow connection, slower than pre-NBN - that is when it doesn't keep dropping out.

I've spent hours on the phone to my provider who has tried to be helpful but there has been no improvement. I discover, too, there is no way back from this mess.

ROB PATTISON,
Hackham.

Bad connection

WE have finally connected to the NBN, which for us is slower than the "old" copper wire system. Unfortunately, we are linked via the hybrid fibre coaxial system which is also a

copper link and not true NBN.

Our telco did hard selling of this sub-optimal system without being transparent about providing us with HFC. This technology predates ADSL-2 and is 20 years old. The so-called rollout never reached us so we can pay \$10,000 to have NBN-fibre connected.

MARCUS MICHEAUX,
Glandore.

Screw little guy

AS soon as the NBN announced it wouldn't be installing fibre optic to the premises, this was the first clear sign of incompetence and a looming waste of taxpayers' money.

I have cable internet and have had it for 10-plus years. If I pay for speedboost (extra cost per month) my internet speed is faster than the fastest NBN plan by 15Mbit/s.

Tasmania is the only state where they have fibre to the premises (initial NBN promise) and customers can get up to 1000Mbit/s downloads.

What Tasmania was supposed to be rolled out for the rest of the country but, uh oh, the NBN blew the first balloons the government gave them on setting themselves up with various assets so they can sell them off once the job is complete.

Then they have the nerve to ask the government for more money due to underestimating the rollout costs. If the NBN didn't pay its top executives million-dollar pay packets and spend the initial money on ac-

quiring property assets to set up the company, then we might have had the initial promise: fibre to the premises.

Now the NBN isn't paying their workers properly, just another sign of greed/selfishness and incompetence from a multi-million dollar company. "Screw the little guy over" must be their company motto.

DANIEL ROOKE,
Parafield Gardens.

What a go slow

I DIDN'T think the NBN could get any slower, yet it has. My phone goes through the same modem as my computer and I could play a round of golf in the time between dialling a number and it actually ringing.

I gather from all the publicity that we are supposed to be eternally grateful to Labor for introducing the NBN. I'm so sorry that I'm not.

JUDITH M. BROWN,
Walkerville.

Paying for what?

I'VE had an annoying, frustrating three weeks of phone calls with Telstra. One call lasted an hour and I still didn't get the problem solved.

The "customer service officer" (if you can call them that) just wanted to keep his script and at one point even asked me, "How is the weather in Australia?"

Now Telstra inform me my costs are going up. It might be only \$2 a month, but what?

KEVIN TURNER, Tonsley.

Healthy scepticism

GOOD government should be about acting in the state or national interest.

Unfortunately, when elections approach, the government of the day, keen to be returned to power, all too often makes decisions in the political interest.

It appears this self-interested pattern has been repeated - with the State Government's decision to shelve, until after the election in March next year, plans to cut 196 jobs from SA Pathology.

The sudden backflip before cuts were due to start next month was explained by Health Minister Jack

Snelling as due to the looming move to the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and introduction of state-of-the-art technology. This meant the time was "not right at the moment".

Having put the Liberals to the sword in previous elections for proposing public sector job cuts, Labor cannot afford to be axing positions so close to the poll at which it seeks a fifth term in power.

There might have been valid reasons to cave to union pressure and suspend the job cuts. But with the election months away, it is easy to believe the political imperative was dominant.