



This week's stories from the media

- Commissioners fail to agree on education segregation
- Staggering rise of gambling among school children
- Year 12 students lack sleep before final exams
- \$14 million funding for 10 schools across the state
- Urgent warning over bullying using AI
- Two thirds of US schools struggling with absenteeism

Staggering Rise Of Gambling

MPs have called for an urgent inquiry into the impact of advertising on children and young people by harmful industries.

Guardian Australia has revealed a 16% rise in young people seeking help for gambling in the last financial year.

“It’s staggering that we have allowed gambling to become so normalised and advertised so widely in this country that gambling harm is now increasingly common in school-age children,” said Dr. Sophie Scamps, a former emergency department doctor.

Young people told Guardian Australia they are grappling with depression, debt and relationship breakdowns after gambling from as young as 10.

Schools also reported that they are increasingly tackling the impacts of gambling on students’ education & brain development.

Scamps said gambling addiction leads to major individual and social harms such as crime, violence, job loss, debt, mental distress and even loss of life.

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Disability Commissioners Fail To Agree On Education Segregation

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was unable to agree on an approach to phasing out ‘special schools’ .

The Commission released its final report after four and a half years of investigation, including 32 hearings, 8,000 submissions, 1,785 private sessions and a total cost of \$600m.

The report includes 222 recommendations for creating a more inclusive Australian society; however, the commissioners couldn’t reach a consensus on an inclusive education path.

Dr Rhonda Galbally AC and Dr Alistair McEwin AM were the only disabled commissioners with close ties with the disability community, and both want special schools closed.

Ms Galbally and Mr McEwin argued that “the deliberate and systematic separation of people based on disability constitutes segregation”.

Along with Barbara Bennett PSM – who has a child with disability – they recommended phasing out segregated education by 2051.

In an interview following the report's public release, Galbally expressed her disappointment that the commissioners couldn’t reach a consensus.

“So long as you have a dual system, there will be no incentive by the mainstream schools to improve, or make their schools more accessible,” McEwin said.

“Those who are in segregated schools are more likely to go into a group home ... in other words, you’re almost condemned to a lifetime of segregation and being hidden away from society.”

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Year 12 Students Lack Sleep Before Final Exams

In the countdown to final exams, an August survey of 1,000 young people found that year 12 students in Australia are struggling to get a good night's sleep because of exam stress.

Of the 500 16 to 25-year-olds who said their sleep was suffering in the ReachOut survey, 59% said they had difficulty waking up, and 57% said they were staying up late to study.

The anxiety-inducing final exams start in October for most states, which can be sabotaged by a lack of sleep.

"Sleep, in particular, can be an important indicator of how the stress associated with Year 12 might be impacting a student's wellbeing and mental health."

The research also found 55% of students said they had felt extremely stressed about study in the last two weeks, and 88% said they had felt stressed about study sometime in the past 12 months; with most worried about 'not being able to live the life they've planned in their senior years' or 'worried about how they will perform in exams compared to peers'.

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\$14 Million Funding For 10 Schools Across State

School upgrade projects across the state have been given a boost with the announcement of \$14.3m in extra funding from the state government.

Education Minister Blair Boyer announced that 10 public schools and preschools will receive the additional funding.

"We need to make every school a great school regardless of where it is located," Mr Boyer said.

"What we want is a situation where families don't feel they need to travel across town to their school of choice."

Mr Boyer said that in addition to funding for metropolitan schools, regional areas have been in particular need of refurbishment.

"It has long been the experience of both students and communities in regional areas that they haven't had the investment that schools in metropolitan areas have had," Mr Boyer said.

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Warning Over AI Bullying

Australia has recorded its first-ever case of school students using artificially generated sexually explicit material to bully others.

eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant alerted education ministers that the first case of AI-generated sexually explicit content produced by school students to bully others was reported in August.

"The issue of generative AI really accelerates the ability to manipulate voice and images, which increases the risk of cyberbullying to students and to teachers," eSafety's Paul Clark told a hearing.

Ms Inman Grant said the case was "just the tip of the iceberg."

[Full Story](#)

65 Sleeps Until Christmas



US Schools Struggle With Absenteeism

The Washington Post reports two thirds of the US's schools faced severe absenteeism in 2021-22.

Before Covid, 25% of schools saw high or extreme levels of students repeatedly missing classes, but that number more than doubled to 66% in the first full year of in-person learning.

Research shows that the spike in absenteeism is linked to a marked drop in student test scores.

Only 7% of elementary schools had extreme levels of chronic absenteeism in 2017, compared to 38% in 21-22.

For middle schools the jump was from 8% to 40%.

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