



This week's stories from the media

- Free Laptops and Internet for some students
- Fewer males choosing to study teaching in SA
- How SA's phone ban is transforming schools
- New child sex offender laws
- Schools asked to watch for signs of forced marriage
- Teachers vote on pay deal

Fewer Males Study Teaching

Fewer boys are pursuing teaching degrees after leaving school, prompting calls for greater efforts to attract men to the profession.

Latest data shows 220 boys who finished school last year made a teaching degree their first choice when applying to study at university, down from 318 in 2018.

The number of Year 12 girls who listed teaching qualifications as their first preference at one of the state's three universities also fell from 780 to 591.

The proportion of men working in early childhood education is as low as 2% of the workforce, rising to about a quarter of primary school teachers and 40% in secondary schools.

Data released by the SA Tertiary Admissions Centre shows that, in addition to the applications from school-leavers, 176 adult men applied to study education degrees, down from 435 in 2018.

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Free Laptops And Internet To Close The Digital Divide

Thousands of students are starting the year with free computers and internet access under a new program bridging the digital divide in SA schools.

The state government has committed \$14m to provide free laptops, iPads and chromebooks to students from low-income families to ensure they can keep up with their school work.

Almost 5000 households have also been connected to the internet, either through the federal government's NBN program or state-funded WiFi dongles that can be plugged into laptops.

Premier Malinauskas said all students "deserve access to a quality education and resources, no matter their background".

"Devices like laptops are essential for learning but for so many families they cannot afford the cost," he said.

So far, the state government has delivered 15,200 devices to students at 226 schools to start the 2024 school year.

It has pledged to provide free devices to every secondary student on school card access at a public school by 2026.

At primary schools there will be one device for every three students.

And children who do not have internet access are still able to sign up for a free connection throughout the year.

A report commissioned by WorkVentures found 44% of Australian Year 6 students and 25% of Year 10 students did not have access to a computer outside of school.

More than 80% of students with inadequate access to a computer had trouble finishing assignments, it found.

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“...Devices like laptops are essential for learning but for so many families they cannot afford the cost....”

How SA's Phone Ban Is Transforming Schools

The state government banned mobile phones in SA schools from term 3, 2023. Now the first report on the policy has been released, giving it top marks for boosting student safety.

In the second half of the school year, incidents of schoolyard brawls in SA plummeted by 29% compared to 2022.

That's a drop from 319 to 228 reported cases of physical altercations – think punches and kicks – among high school students.

Since the ban, teachers have observed a significant uptick in physical activities and club participation during breaks.

Principals have talked about the big change in schoolyard behaviour, with students now more engaged in real-world interactions, like playing and chatting, rather than being glued to their screens.

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New Child Sex Offender Laws

New laws to be introduced to parliament would see serious repeat child sex offenders locked up for life.

Planned laws that would see SA's serious repeat child sex offenders locked up indefinitely or permanently monitored would be the toughest of their kind in the country.

Under the state government's proposed changes, if a pedophile is jailed for a second time for a serious child sex offence, they would automatically receive a sentence of indefinite detention.

The onus would then be on the offender to demonstrate to the court that they can control their sexual instincts in order to be considered for release.

If they were released, they would face lifetime electronic monitoring.

“Our community is rightly sick of seeing pedophiles offending again and again and then being released back into the community,” Premier Malinauskas said.

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School To Watch For Forced Marriage

The Australian Federal Police are calling on schools to watch for signs of child exploitation and forced marriage as children head back to school.

Police said those who are closest to school-aged children, such as teachers, carers and students, are often the first to notice the warning signs.

Online child exploitation reports hit 40,232 in the 2022/23 financial year, an average of 110 a day, up from 36,600 in 2021/22.

There was also 340 reports of human trafficking in the 2022/23 financial year, an increase of 13 per cent from 2021/22, with forced marriage the most common incident of the crime type.

[Full Story](#)

Women & Girls In Science

February 11 is the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.



Teachers Vote On Pay Deal

Teachers are voting on the SA government's \$1.6bn offer in one of the final steps before the new pay deal can go through.

The ballot for all Education Department employees covered by the new enterprise agreement is set to opened in January after 68% of union members voted in favour of the deal in December.

The voting period closed at 5pm on February 7 and a majority of employees must support the proposed deal for it to be lodged with the SA Employment Tribunal.

Education Minister Blair Boyer said he was looking forward to “taking the next steps to finalise the agreement”.

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