



# Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

A9210 ABN 44 711 074 857  
20 Garden Street, South Yarra VIC 3141  
PO Box 2138, Prahran VIC 3181  
Phone: 03 9825 7200 Fax: 03 9826 6066  
Email: [aisv@ais.vic.edu.au](mailto:aisv@ais.vic.edu.au)

No: 29/2009

Week Ending: 28 August 2009

## [Australian Government Announces Changes to Stimulus Funding for Schools](#)

The Australian Government has allocated an additional \$1.5 billion to its economic stimulus funding for primary schools and has released new guidelines for the funding program.

## [Victorian Government to Pilot Performance Pay for Teachers](#)

Victorian government schools and government school teachers will be eligible to receive performance bonuses in a pilot program which will commence in 2010.

## [Underperforming Victorian Teachers to be Encouraged to Leave the Profession](#)

Principals in Victorian government schools will be encouraged to identify underperforming teachers who would receive financial support to leave the profession.

## [Coalition Forum Recommends Portable Funding for Students with Disabilities](#)

A forum organised by the federal Coalition has discussed changes to the funding for students with disabilities to ensure that all students have the same educational opportunities.

## [Mathematics and Science Strategy Announced by Victorian Government](#)

A new Victorian Government strategy will aim to encourage school students to undertake careers in mathematics and science.

## [Seminars for the week beginning 31 August 2009](#)

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### **Australian Government Announces Changes to Stimulus Funding for Schools**

*The Advertiser, Mark Kenny, 28/08/09; The Age, Tim Colebatch & Carol Nader, 28/08/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin & Miki Perkins, 28/08/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 28/08/09; The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 28/08/09; The Australian, Matthew Franklin, 28/08/09; Herald Sun, Ben Packham, 28/08/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Jacob Saulwick & Anna Patty, 28/08/09*

The Australian Government has announced that it will need to re-allocate over \$1.5 billion in order to meet its commitments under the *Primary Schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (P21) element of the *Building the Education Revolution* program (BER). The *Nation Building: Economic Stimulus Plan Progress Report* by the Australian Coordinator-General, Mr Mike Mrdak, announced that initial costings for P21 had been based on outdated enrolment numbers and had assumed that only 90 per cent of Australian schools would take up the funding. In actuality, less than one per cent of primary schools failed to receive a grant and the Australian Government had failed to budget for 70 new schools and more than 100,000 students. As a result, the Minister for Employment Participation, Senator The Hon. Mark Arbib, announced that the Australian Government would reduce its public housing stimulus funding by \$750 million, cancel a \$620 million scheme to enable landlords to insulate tenants' homes and re-allocate \$178 million from the *Science and Language Laboratories in Secondary Schools* element of the BER because of lower than expected costs. The Australian Secondary Principals' Association and the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals both criticised the announcement, arguing that additional funding for primary schools should not come at the expense of reduced funding for secondary schools.

The Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP, also criticised the Australian Government after new BER guidelines indicated that schools that received funding were required to display signs publicising the program from the commencement of construction until at least 31 March 2011. Mr Pyne claimed that the requirement represented 'the best compulsory publicity that \$16 billion of taxpayers' money can buy'. The amended guidelines also required schools to ensure that local tradespeople and small business have the opportunity to participate in funded projects, that projects provide 'value for money' and that they are compliant with local government building laws. Finally, the Australian Government has relaxed some of the construction deadlines for schools, to ensure that excess demand for labour does not increase building costs. The Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, stated that the changes to the guidelines would ensure greater flexibility and accountability, and were a response to issues that had arisen in earlier funding rounds.

### **Victorian Government to Pilot Performance Pay for Teachers**

*Media Release, The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, MLA, 22/08/09; Media Release, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, 23/08/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 22/08/09*

The Victorian Minister for Education, The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, MLA, has announced that the Victorian Government will trial a performance pay scheme in government schools in 2010. Over 2010 and 2011, 25 government schools in the northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne will pilot the *Teacher Rewards* program, under which high performing teachers will be eligible to receive annual bonuses of up to \$7000. A 'school leadership panel' will assess teachers and will award bonuses to those who display 'exceptional classroom practices, leadership skills and improvement to students' results'. It is estimated that the top 30 per cent of teachers in the pilot schools will be eligible to receive a bonus payment of 1.5 per cent of their total teaching base salary plus superannuation.

Under the associated *School Rewards* pilot program, schools that can demonstrate the greatest ongoing improvement in student learning, pathways into further education and/or training and student engagement and wellbeing will also be eligible to receive additional funding. Up to 50 government schools in Melbourne's eastern suburbs and the Loddon Mallee region will trial *School Rewards*. Successful schools will receive bonuses equivalent to 7.5 per cent of their total teacher salaries. It is expected that the top 20 per cent of schools would receive bonuses, which would be shared between teachers at the school. Minister Pike claimed that the scheme was designed to encourage continuous performance in schools, and stated that 'this is not about rewards for results. I'm interested in rewarding people for passion, commitment and professional competency.' The Chief Executive of AISV, Ms Michelle Green, welcomed Minister Pike's announcement. She stated that 'excellent teaching is a major factor in lifting student achievement. Better salaries for effective teachers are likely to be the best way of improving student learning and certainly more cost-effective than many other strategies. Developing and implementing ways of valuing high quality teachers is critical to raising the profile of excellent teachers. In addition to providing students with a better education, this will also improve career paths and encouraging the best graduates into teaching.' The Australian Education Union (AEU) have criticised the scheme, arguing that the bonuses merely represented 'a quick and easy fix'. Funding for the scheme will be provided through the Australian Government's *Smarter Schools – Quality Teaching National Partnership*.

### **Underperforming Victorian Teachers to be Encouraged to Leave the Profession**

*Sunday Herald Sun, Stephen Drill, 23/08/09*

According to the *Herald Sun*, Minister Pike has also allocated \$7.5 million to encourage underperforming teachers to leave the classroom. Under the scheme, government school principals will be encouraged to identify teachers who are performing poorly or who are unhappy. Minister Pike indicated that individual teachers would not be permitted to apply for the scheme in order to prevent it from becoming a 'golden handshake'. An independent recruitment company will be retained to find nominated teachers more appropriate postings or alternative career paths and the teachers will receive up to \$50,000 for re-training or until they find another job. Minister Pike stated that 'there are very occasionally teachers who have become negative about the task. We want schools to be full of teachers who are on fire for the task, who love the job and love the kids.' The initial funding will provide support for 150 government school teachers but Minister Pike indicated that the program could be expanded if there was greater demand. The AEU argued that teachers should have the right to nominate for the scheme if they wanted to change

careers and expressed their hope that school principals would not 'use the program to victimise hard-working teachers'. The Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon. Martin Dixon, MLA, argued that the scheme was 'long overdue'.

### Coalition Forum Recommends Portable Funding for Students with Disabilities

*Media Release, The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP & Senator Mitch Fifield, 25/08/09;  
Media Release, Independent Schools Council of Australia, 25/08/09*

The Coalition has held a forum in Melbourne to discuss educational opportunities for students with disabilities. The leader of the federal Opposition, The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP, told the *Major Stakeholders Forum – Equal Access to Education: Choice for Parents of Students with Disabilities* that 'even the best intentioned governments at both state and federal level had failed to provide adequately for the 250,000 young people living with a disability across Australia' and stated that he wanted 'to work with you, the parents, the educators, the providers to find the solutions to ensure each and every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential'. In his address to the forum, the Executive Director of the Independent Schools Council of Australia, Mr Bill Daniels, argued that equitable funding arrangements for students with a disability should be introduced 'as a matter of urgency'. He recommended that funding for students with disabilities should become portable, arguing that 'support for students with disability should be based on the level of funding required to allow them to achieve their educational goals'. At the end of the forum, the Coalition announced in principle that:

- funding for students with disabilities in different school sectors was 'unfair and unsustainable' and that funding should follow the child
- additional training was required for teachers and teachers' aides to support students with disabilities
- parents with children with disabilities required additional support and a reduction of administrative red tape
- different definitions of students with disabilities in different sectors and jurisdictions had led to 'too many children falling through the gaps'.

The Coalition indicated that the outcomes of the stakeholder forum would be used to develop future policy considerations.

### Mathematics and Science Strategy Announced by Victorian Government

*Media Release, The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, MLA, 21/08/09*

The Victorian Government has announced that it will allocate \$90 million over five years to implement a new mathematics and science strategy. The *Energising Science and Mathematics Education Strategy* aims to make students 'workplace ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' and to inspire students to undertake specialist careers in the fields of mathematics and science. The strategy includes:

- \$46 million to employ 200 specialist mathematics and science teaching and learning coaches
- \$12 million to construct three new specialist science centres in Ballarat, Geelong and Heidelberg to complement the three existing centres
- \$2.8 million to connect the ICT facilities of the specialist science centres with science laboratories funded through the Australian Government's *Building the Education Revolution* program
- \$1.4 million to improve access to the specialist science centres by rural and disadvantaged students
- \$7.6 million through the Teach for Australia program to attract high-performing graduates into teaching
- \$3.45 million to provide Mathematics and Science Graduate Scholarships and to support the Career Change program to encourage mathematics and science graduates into teaching
- \$1 million to introduce partnerships between schools and business and industry
- \$1 million to introduce a summer school for high-performing science and mathematics teachers
- \$1 million to provide professional learning opportunities for mathematics and science teachers in regional areas
- \$400,000 to allocate awards and scholarships for schools that implement best practice in science and mathematics.

### Seminars for the week beginning 31 August 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 31/08	Anaphylaxis Training Course	9.00 am – 12.00 pm	Seminar Room
Tuesday 01/09			
Wednesday 02/09	Turning Behaviour Around – Continuing the Management Process First Steps Reading – Second Edition (Day 1 of 2)	9.00 am – 5.00 pm 9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre Seminar Room
Thursday 03/09	A Practical and Sequential Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Fractions to Develop Conceptual Understanding	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
Friday 04/09	How to Differentiate the Curriculum to Cater for All of the Students in your Class (Day 3 of 4)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre

The Seminar Room is located at 20 Garden Street South Yarra. The Training Centre and Board Room are located at 30 Garden Street South Yarra.

*Note: The AISV Weekly Briefing is also available on the AISV web site, including back issues. The AISV web site is at <http://www.ais.vic.edu.au>.  
To obtain further information on any of the above matters, please contact AISV  
Ph: (03) 9825 7200 Fax: (03) 9826 6066  
Email: [aisv@ais.vic.edu.au](mailto:aisv@ais.vic.edu.au)*