



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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[Signs Announcing School Capital Funding to be Amended](#)

In order to avoid possible breaches of the law, the Australian Government will alter the signage for schools that have received funding under the economic stimulus plan.

[National Curriculum to be Considered for Senior Secondary Students](#)

The states and territories are considering the introduction of a single Australian Certificate of Education for students in years 11 and 12.

[Business Group to Conduct Research on Workplace Literacy and Numeracy](#)

The Australian Industry Group has argued that poor literacy and numeracy standards are leading to productivity and safety concerns in Australian workplaces.

[Science Teachers Release Draft Professional Standards](#)

A set of professional standards have been released by Teaching Australia, outlining the knowledge and skills that science teachers would be expected to have.

[Legislation Introduced to Increase Victorian Minimum School Leaving Age](#)

Under legislation being considered by the Victorian Parliament, all students under the age of 17 years would be required to be in school, training or employment.

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Australian and Victorian Parliaments.

[Passport to Democracy Educational Resource](#)

The Victorian Electoral Commission has developed a civics and citizenship educational resource for students in years 9 and 10.

[Future Shots Sustainability Film Challenge](#)

Sustainability Victoria has invited youth aged 21 years or below to participate in a competition on what sustainability means to them.

[Seminars for the week beginning 7 September 2009](#)

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Signs Announcing School Capital Funding to be Amended

Media Release, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP, 31/08/09; The Advertiser, Mark Kenny, 04/09/09; The Age, Dan Harrison, 04/09/09; The Australian, Matthew Franklin, 04/09/09; Herald Sun, 04/09/09

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has advised the Australian Government that signage associated with the Australian Government's *Building the Education Revolution* Program (BER) should carry an official authorisation to ensure that they did not contravene the Electoral Act. The announcement follows the release last week of BER guidelines, requiring schools that receive funding under the BER to display signs publicising the program until at least 31 March 2011. The Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, MP, subsequently argued that the signs may have breached the Act because they represented political advertising without authorisation and political advertising within six metres of a polling place, and referred the matter to the AEC. While the AEC did not rule that the signs would contravene the Act, they expressed concerns about the possibility of a breach. The Special Minister for State, Senator The Hon. Joe Ludwig, therefore announced that all signs would be updated to include the statement 'Authorised by the Australian Government, Capital Hill, Canberra' and that any signs that were less than six metres from the gate of a potential polling place would be moved. He stated that the Australian Government was acting 'out of an abundance of caution' and indicated that the Australian Government would investigate the need to alter any other forms of government advertising.

National Curriculum to be Considered for Senior Secondary Students

Sunday Herald Sun, Laurie Nowell & Stephen Drill, 30/08/09

According to the *Sunday Herald Sun*, state and federal education ministers are considering the implementation of a single national senior secondary curriculum. A paper prepared by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has recommended that the current Prep to Year 10 national curriculum be extended to introduce national subjects and standards in years 11 and 12 as part of a new 'Australian Certificate of Education' (ACE). The Chairman of ACARA, Professor Barry McGaw, indicated that ACARA was already developing details of the national curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history in years Prep to 12, and that these would be introduced in 2012. He stated that a national ACE might be introduced after that. Advocates of the proposal have argued that it would enable students to compete on an equal basis, and for universities to accurately compare student performance across jurisdictions. However, others have expressed concern about the possible creation of a 'homogenised' curriculum that failed to allow for legitimate state-based differences. The Victorian Minister for Education, The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, MLA, confirmed that the ACARA paper was the first step towards a national senior secondary curriculum and indicated that it was 'inevitable that we move towards a national [senior secondary] certificate'. The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs will consider the proposal at a meeting on Monday 28 September 2009.

Business Group to Conduct Research on Workplace Literacy and Numeracy

Media Release, Australian Industry Group, 31/08/09; Media Release, Senator The Hon. Mark Arbib, 31/08/09; The Age, Dan Harrison, 31/08/09

The Australian Industry Group (AIG) has announced that it will undertake research into the impact of 'endemic' literacy and numeracy problems on Australian business productivity and ways in which workers' literacy and numeracy levels can be improved. The Chief Executive of AIG, Mrs Heather Ridout, quoted the Australian Bureau of Statistics' contribution to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey 2007*, which found that 'almost half of working Australians have less than the minimum literacy and numeracy levels required to meet the demands of everyday work'. She argued that poor literacy and numeracy affected both business productivity and worker safety. The AIG project will include surveys and focus group meetings to determine the extent of the problem in Australian business, as well as a trial of strategies to improve worker literacy and numeracy in 10 companies. Participating workers will receive between 80 and 120 hours of literacy and numeracy training over two years. Mrs Ridout claimed that 'it's important to get the basics right at the school level and to ensure school leavers are job ready. Additionally, the solutions that we identify in our national project will provide a model for addressing existing endemic literacy and numeracy problems in many workplaces.' The Australian Government has announced that it will provide AIG with more than \$400,000 to conduct the research.

Science Teachers Release Draft Professional Standards

Media Release, Teaching Australia, 02/09/09

Teaching Australia (TA) and the Australian Science Teachers' Association (ASTA) have launched draft standards for science teachers. The *National Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science* describe the knowledge and skills that 'highly accomplished' Australian science teachers would be expected to possess. TA and ASTA indicated that the standards represented 'a step closer to recognising outstanding teaching'. The Chairman of TA, Dr Gregor Ramsey, claimed that the standards represented 'a benchmark to which teachers can aspire. They are clear about what is involved in outstanding professional practice and can be used to guide professional learning and recognition of excellence.' Dr Ramsey also indicated that TA was working with other professional associations to develop national standards for early childhood teachers, primary teachers and school principals. The draft standards have been released for comment and will be tested and validated 'with major stakeholders'. Go to www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go/home/op/edit/pid/526 to access a copy of the standards.

Legislation Introduced to Increase Victorian Minimum School Leaving Age

Media Release, The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, MLA, 01/09/09; The Age, Melissa Fyfe, 20/08/09

The Victorian Government has introduced legislation to increase the minimum school leaving age from 16 to 17 years, as part of Victoria's commitment to implement nationally-agreed reforms. The *Education and Training Reform Amendment (School Age) Bill 2009*, which would come into effect in 2010, would require all Victorians to complete Year 10 or its equivalent and for youths up to the age of 17 years who were not in school to be in training, employed or a combination of both for at least 25 hours per

week. Schools would be required to track early leavers to ensure that they met these conditions and, as under the current legislation, parents of children who failed to meet these requirements could be fined. Minister Pike stated that the Bill was 'not a punitive approach', but was designed to 'set a high bar for the community'. The Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP) was critical of the additional responsibility for schools. VASSP indicated that schools were currently required to monitor early school leavers for six months but argued that they lacked the resources to track and to assist teenagers after that time. The Shadow Minister for Education, The Hon. Martin Dixon, MLA, claimed that 'we shouldn't be keeping these kids at school artificially, when it is not the right place for them'. The Bill received its First and Second Readings in the Legislative Assembly and debate was adjourned until Wednesday 16 September 2009.

Parliamentary News

The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) rose on Thursday 20 August 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Monday 7 September 2009 until Thursday 17 September 2009. The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) sat from Tuesday 1 September 2009 until Thursday 3 September 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Tuesday 15 September 2009 until Thursday 17 September 2009.

Passport to Democracy Educational Resource

The Victorian Electoral Commission has released an education resource to assist students to make the connection between elections and issues that are important to them. The VEC developed the *Passport to Democracy* program after a Youth Electoral Survey found that only 50 per cent of students surveyed would vote in a federal election when they turned 18 if voting was not compulsory. The program has been mapped to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and prompts students in years 9 and 10 to consider the ways in which they can engage with the community to make a positive change. In addition to the teacher resources, schools are able to access an outreach officer and on-site professional development through the program. Go to www.passporttodemocracy.edublogs.org for further information or contact Alex Markham, Senior Education Officer, at education@vec.vic.gov.au or on (03) 9299 0599 to receive a sample resource pack.

Future Shots Sustainability Film Challenge

Sustainability Victoria is running a competition for young Victorians to make a short film about what sustainability means to them. The *Future Shots Sustainability Challenge for Young Victorians* is open to Victorian residents aged below 21 years. Participants are required to make a film of three minutes duration or less on the topic of *Sustainability – What's It All About?* that investigates what sustainability means to them and to the community and how the student believes that sustainability could be achieved. Participants may submit individual or group entries. Applications for the competition close on Monday 12 October 2009 and winners will be invited to attend an awards night in December 2009. In preparation for the competition, Sustainability Victoria is also running a workshop for teachers on how to support students entering the competition. The workshop will be held at Global Vision Media, 371 George Street Fitzroy on Wednesday 9 September from 4.00pm to 5.30 pm. To register to attend the workshop, contact Jane Saunders at jane@futureshots.com.au or on 9412 7629. Go to www.futureshots.com.au for further information about the competition.

Seminars for the week beginning 7 September 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 07/09	Anaphylaxis Training Course (Day 4 of 9)	9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Board Room
	The Implications of Family Law in Schools	1.00 pm – 4.30 pm	Training Centre
Tuesday 08/09	How to Differentiate the Curriculum to Cater for All of the Students in Your Class (Day 4 of 4)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
Wednesday 09/09	Integrated Pedagogy and Web 2.0 Technologies for Authentic Learning in the Early Years Classroom (Day 1 of 3)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre
	First Steps Reading – Second Edition (Day 2 of 2)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
	French: From Grammatical Theory to Writing – A Big Leap	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Board Room
Thursday 10/09	Financial Health Assessment Framework Briefing	10.00 am – 12.30 pm	Ballarat
Friday 11/09	Financial Health Assessment Framework Briefing	10.00 am – 12.30 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. The Ballarat briefing will take place at Ballarat Clarendon College, 1425 Sturt Street, Ballarat.

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
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