



# Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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Week Ending: 2 October 2009

## [Online School Report Card to be Published in 2009](#)

An online report card outlining the performance of students in every Australian school is expected to be launched by the end of 2009.

## [Victorian Government Sued over Funding for Students with Disabilities](#)

The parents of a student with a severe language disorder are suing the Victorian Government for alleged discrimination.

## [Victorian Government Announces Changes to Anti-Discrimination Legislation](#)

The Victorian Attorney-General has announced that some of the exemptions for religious organisations from the *Equal Opportunities Act* will be retained following changes to the Act.

## [Discussion Paper Released on International Education](#)

A discussion paper on possible changes to the regulation of international education in Australia has been released for public comment.

## [National Teachers Institute to be Established](#)

Teaching Australia will be replaced by a new body established to accredit teachers across Australia.

## [Australian Government to Implement Indigenous Education Plan](#)

Australian, state and territory Ministers for Education have agreed to a plan to improve educational outcomes for indigenous students.

## [Education Resource Launched on Cyberbullying](#)

A new, free resource to teach students how to avoid cyberbullying situations has been released.

## [Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Australian and Victorian Parliaments.

## [Seminars for the week beginning 5 October 2009](#)

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**Online School Report Card to be Published in 2009**

*Communiqué, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 28/09/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 26/09/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 30/09/09*

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) has agreed on the format of the new online school report card that will be published at the end of 2009. Every school in Australia will have a report card published on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website, outlining the performance of its students on national literacy and numeracy benchmark tests. The school profile will also identify 60 'like schools' that enrol students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. A new national index called the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) will be used to determine 'like school' groups. The Chairman of ACARA, Professor Barry McGaw, stated that the school profiles initially would provide only limited information for parents, but argued that additional information would be added to the school profile in future years, including details on school resources, senior secondary outcomes and parent satisfaction surveys. Unions and teacher groups have argued that the publication of the report card will 'pave the way for league tables' and have indicated that they may consider boycotting national literacy and numeracy benchmark testing. They have also criticised the Australian Government for publishing the school report cards before information on school resources is available.

**Victorian Government Sued over Funding for Students with Disabilities**

*The Age, Miki Perkins, 29/09/09*

The parents of a government school student have taken a case in the Federal Court against the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), alleging that DEECD discriminated against their son, who had a severe language disorder. The family has claimed that a primary school and a secondary school both indirectly discriminated against their son by failing to provide him with ongoing speech therapy, by failing to develop an appropriate education plan for him and by failing to protect him from bullying. The statement of claim alleged that DEECD's lack of assistance for the student 'has led to his educational outcomes being severely diminished, to his participation in class being restricted, and to plummeting self-esteem'. DEECD has denied the claim, arguing that the student had been provided with access to education and that he was not at a significant disadvantage as a result of his condition. The chief executive officer of Speech Pathology Australia, Ms Gail Mulcair, expressed concern in the court hearing that DEECD could be discriminating against students with language disorders because they were required to demonstrate a 'critical education need' in order to qualify to receive additional funding support. The hearing follows another recent case, in which a government school student with a severe language disorder successfully sued DEECD for discrimination.

**Victorian Government Announces Changes to Anti-Discrimination Legislation**

*The Sunday Age, Melissa Fyfe, 27/09/09*

The Victorian Attorney-General, The Hon. Rob Hulls, MLA, has announced that the Victorian Government will introduce legislation to amend the *Equal Opportunities Act 1995* in 2010. Exemptions that permit religious groups to refuse to employ or provide services to people whom they believe may undermine their beliefs will be modified but retained. Under the arrangement announced by Minister Hulls, religious groups would not be permitted to refuse employment or services on the basis of race, disability, age, physical features, political beliefs or activity, or breastfeeding. According to Minister Hulls, where a religious group did attempt to use one of the exemptions, it would also need to be able to demonstrate how its decision conformed with its religious doctrines. Following discussions with stakeholders, Minister Hulls claimed that the arrangement 'struck the right balance' between anti-discrimination and religious freedom.

**Discussion Paper Released on International Education**

*The Age, Dan Harrison, 24/09/09; Canberra Times, Emma Macdonald, 24/09/09;*

A preliminary issues paper has been released, following a review of the effectiveness of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*. The review was ordered by the Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, following concerns about violence against international students and the quality of education provided by some colleges, and the impact that these may have on Australia's education export market. The issues paper has claimed that many international students elected to study in Australia based on word of mouth, the internet and/or education agents. These students usually had little family or network support upon arrival in Australia, and risked being misled about issues such as the quality of courses or providers, the cost of living, opportunities for employment and further study or migration outcomes. The head of the review, Mr Bruce Baird, also argued that existing consumer protection mechanisms for international students were 'questionable'. Mr Baird also criticised some colleges for implementing inadequate English language entry standards and criticised legislative constraints that limited the ability of students to change providers where they were unsatisfied with the quality of a course. The paper proposes changes to current legislation to place limits on the number of international students that an institution could enrol, or the number of students from a single country. The paper is available for public submissions until Friday 30 October 2009, with an interim report to be made to the Council of Australian Governments in November 2009. Go to [www.aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ReviewESOSAct.htm](http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ReviewESOSAct.htm) to access a copy of the paper.

**National Teachers Institute to be Established**

*Communiqué, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 28/09/09; The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 28/09/09*

MCEECDYA has supported a proposal from Minister Gillard to establish an Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), to set standards and accredit teachers across Australia. AITSL would replace Teaching Australia and would be responsible for developing and overseeing a 'rigorous' national set of teaching and school leadership standards, implementing a national accreditation system for teachers based on these standards, and for the provision of 'high-quality'

professional development for teachers. AITSL's Board would include representatives from each state and territory, from the Catholic and independent school sectors, and from 'professional bodies'.

### Australian Government to Implement Indigenous Education Plan

*Communiqué, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 28/09/09; Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 28/09/09; The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 28/09/09; The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 29/09/09; Courier Mail, Margaret Wenham, 29/09/09*

MCEECDYA has approved a national action plan from Minister Gillard to improve educational outcomes for indigenous students. Under Minister Gillard's plan, the online school reporting system would be used to identify schools whose students were 'falling behind' and National Partnerships resources would be directed to schools in need of assistance. Schools will need to address students' attendance rates and to improve the quality of teaching and school leadership, the literacy and numeracy outcomes for students and their engagement with parents and the community. An additional \$16.4 million was also announced to support the Indigenous Leadership in Education Institute's *Stronger, Smarter Learning Communities Project*. Under the program, a network of experienced indigenous educators would be established to provide mentoring for teachers in indigenous education and to provide additional support for struggling and low-performing school principals.

### Education Resource Launched on Cyberbullying

*Media Release, Australian Communications and Media Authority, 25/09/09*

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has released a new resources to provide students with strategies to deal with cyberbullying. The *Let's Fight It Together* DVD resource is designed to enable young people to avoid or get out of cyberbullying situations and behaviours and to provide advice for on how to help others to deal with cyberbullying. The DVD is based around a short video story that presents a cyberbullying scenario derived from teenagers' real experiences, and includes resource materials that have been mapped to the Australian National Statements of Learning for Information and Communication Technology. All Australian schools are able to order a free copy of the resource by contacting the Cybersafety Contact Centre on 1800 880 176.

### Parliamentary News

The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) rose on Thursday 17 September 2009. The House of Representatives will next sit from Monday 19 October 2009 until Thursday 29 October 2009. The Senate will not sit in the week starting on Monday 19 October 2009, but will instead consider the Supplementary Budget Estimates. The Senate will then sit from Monday 26 October 2009 until Thursday 29 October 2009. The Victorian Parliament (Assembly and Council) rose on Thursday 17 September 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Tuesday 13 October 2009 until Thursday 15 October 2009.

### Seminars for the week beginning 5 October 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 05/10			
Tuesday 06/10	Modern Awards Briefing	9.30 am – 12.30 pm	Training Centre
Wednesday 07/10	Writing 'Good' Language Exams	9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
Thursday 08/10	Anaphylaxis Training Course (Day 4 of 8) Modern Awards Briefing	9.00 am – 12.00 pm 9.30 am – 12.30 pm	Seminar Room Training Centre
Friday 09/10	Anaphylaxis Training Course (Day 5 of 8) Stress Management	9.00 am – 12.00 pm 9.30 am – 12.30 pm	Seminar Room 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>.*

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