



Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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[National Solar Schools Program Suspended](#)

The Australian Government has suspended the National Solar Schools Program indefinitely.

[Bushfires - Code Red Day School closures](#)

The Victorian Government has announced the formulation of a list of schools and children's services facilities that will be required to close on Code Red (Catastrophic) Fire Danger Rating days.

[Productivity Commission draft report on *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector*](#)

The Australian Government Productivity Commission has released a draft research report on the contribution of the not-for-profit sector.

[National Schools Chaplaincy Program](#)

The National Schools Chaplaincy Program is in its second year, with principals and staff welcoming the program, according to a new report.

[Research suggests National literacy and numeracy tests are unreliable](#)

A Melbourne University researcher has argued that literacy and numeracy tests are unreliable.

[Underage Drinking](#)

Two research papers have come out this week analysing the affects of underage drinking, and the affects that binge drinking has on behavioural patterns for children and young adults.

[Australian Government Funding Announcements](#)

[Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Australian and Victorian Parliaments.

[Seminars for the week beginning 19 October 2009](#)

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National Solar Schools Program Suspended

The Australian Government has suspended its \$480 million *National Solar Schools Program*. The announcement was made on the Program's website. A spokesperson for the Environment Minister, the Hon. Peter Garrett, MP, indicated that of the 700 applications currently under review would be funded if eligible.

Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water, the Hon. Greg Hunt, MP, has derided the Government's decision.

"We have a Government that can waste \$16 billion on unwanted schools halls but suspends a key solar program for schools. What message does that send to our kids about helping the environment?" he said.

Association of Independent Schools of Victoria Chief Executive, Ms Michelle Green, said that she had not received any formal notification about the Government's decision, and was disappointed that school communities would miss out on funding.

[Sun goes down on solar schools](#) – The Australian (16/10/2009)

[Rudd Government Suspends the Solar Schools Program](#) – Media Release, The Hon. Greg Hunt MP (15/10/2009)

Bushfires - Code Red Day School closures

Following the Victorian Government's adoption of a new fire danger rating system, the Premier, the Hon. John Brumby, MP, has announced that schools and children's services would need to close on Code Red (Catastrophic) Fire Danger Rating day.

Whilst services in the fifty-two areas have been identified by fire authorities as being at high risk in the coming fire season, other schools outside of those areas may be placed on the register due to geographic and environmental factors.

A full register of services will be finalised in the next two weeks following consultation with individual schools.

[Schools in high risk areas to close on code red days](#) – Media Release, the Premier of Victoria (15 October 2009)

Productivity Commission draft report on *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector*

A draft research report released this week by the Productivity Commission on the *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector* has revealed the need for reform and a reduction in compliance costs faced by the not-for-profit sector. The Association of Independent Schools of Victoria has previously made a submission to the study. A copy of the Association's submission can be accessed [here](#) (.pdf).

Amongst the findings in the draft report:

- Regulatory reporting can be disproportionate, complex and costly, particularly after increased government accountability measures are put in place
- Deductible gift recipient arrangements have a positive inducement effect on philanthropy
- There is an untapped potential for greater social innovation through collaborative ventures between NFPs and business, but the enabling environment for social investment and social enterprise activity needs to be strengthened

The Australian Government has welcomed the draft report, a copy of which can be accessed [here](#) (.pdf).

The draft report has been released for public comment to inform the Commission's Final Report, submissions for which are due by 24 November 2009.

Ms Green said that the Association will examine the draft report in order to make further comment to the Commission.

[Reform needed for the Not-for-Profit Sector](#) – Media Release, Australian Government Productivity Commission (14/10/2009)

[Contributions of the Not for Profit Sector](#) – Media Release, the Hon. Jenny Macklin, MP and Senator Ursula Stephens (14/10/2009)

National Schools Chaplaincy Program

After its second year of operation, the Australian Government's *National Schools Chaplaincy Program* has been met with overwhelming support from Government School principals, a report commissioned by the National Schools Chaplaincy Association has found.

Dr Philip Hughes, of Edith Cowen University, who conducted the review, has claimed that 97 per cent of principals were affirming of the contribution that chaplains were making.

"Certainly some of the staff that I spoke to in case studies said that at first they were very wary of chaplains, but the feedback from them has been overwhelmingly positive." He said.

The Government is currently conducting a review of the Program to consider whether it should be extended beyond the current three-year funding cycle.

The Association of Independent Schools of Victoria will be making a submission to this review. Member Schools have provided positive feedback on the program so far.

[Schools back chaplain program](#) – ABC News (13/10/2009)

Research suggests National literacy and numeracy tests are unreliable

University of Melbourne Associate Professor Margaret Wu has claimed that the proposed test results to compare schools and to identify those struggling to improve student performance are unreliable and will not be able to accurately compare school performance.

Associate Professor Wu's report analysing results from the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* saw changes in student scores in one-third of the tests than could be statistically expected between the last two years.

Australian Council for Education Research Chief Executive, Geoff Masters, claimed that changes had occurred due to efforts made by states to pay attention to the NAPLAN testing in its second year of operation, particularly in Queensland and Western Australia.

The Australian Government has declared its confidence in the NAPLAN testing procedure.

[National literacy and numeracy tests 'not reliable'](#) – The Australian (12/10/2009)

Underage Drinking

Research on pre-teen drinking

An Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) has reported this week that one in five Year 6 boys had admitted to consuming alcohol in the previous month (leading to the study). Whilst the rate was lower for girls at the same age, both increased by the time they reached Year 8.

Of the study of 8000 Year 6 and 8 students, one in 20 students in the Year 6 group indicated that they had drunk more than five alcoholic drinks in a row in the previous fortnight. This is classified as binge drink.

The number of children who had binged doubled by Year 8.

The ARACY study has identified a clear link between alcohol consumption, and violent and antisocial behaviour amongst students, and has analysed the impact of 20 risk factors and nine protective factors that were associated with the behavioural changes.

A copy of the report can be accessed [here](#) (.pdf).

[Target pre-teens to prevent youth violence](#) (.pdf) – Media Release, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (14/10/2009)

[Primary school kids 'binge drinking'](#) – The Advertiser (16/10/2009)

Research ties unwanted teen sex to binge drinking

The *Secondary Students and Sexual Health – Results of the 4th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health* from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) based at La Trobe University has revealed that 60 per cent of Year 12 girls admitted to binge drinking three or more times in the fortnight prior to the study. One in three Year 10 females admitted to the same.

The rate of binge drinking for Year 12 students have more than doubled since a similar survey four years ago.

The study surveyed nearly 3000 male and female students, with a quarter of Year 10, and half of Year 12 students indicating that they had had sex. Alarmingly, 38 per cent of young women had stated that they had endured unwanted sex.

ARCSHS Research Professor Anthony Smith stated said that the most common reason for the increase in unwanted sex was "pressure from a partner and the next was being drunk."

A copy of the report can be accessed [here](#) (.pdf).

[Unwanted teen sex tied to binge drinking](#) – The Courier Mail (14/10/2009)

Australian Government Funding Announcements

[Asian literacy grants for 141 schools](#) – Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP (14/10/2009)

[Adding \\$2 million to maths education](#) – Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP (13/10/2009)

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 15 October 2009. Both Houses will next sit from Tuesday 10 November 2009 until Thursday 12 November 2009.

Seminars for the week beginning 19 October 2009

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
19th October	French – Music, Film and Internet in the French Classroom	9:30-3:30	Seminar Room (20)
20th October	Integrating Pedagogy and Web 2.0 Technologies for Authentic Learning in the Early Years Classroom	9:00-3:30	Training Room (30)
21st October	Authentic Learning Integrating Pedagogy and ICT for more accomplished Schools	9:00-3:30	Training Room (30)
	A Whole School Approach to Tobacco Education	9:30-12:00	Seminar Room (20)
	Reading Recovery Seminar	1:30-4:00	Seminar Room (20)
	Governance Seminar Series - Session 4: Governance and Board Performance	6:00- 7:30	Training Room (30)
22nd October	Writing Good Tests and Using Assessment Data	9:30-3:30	Training Room (30)
23rd October	Modern Awards Briefing	9:30-12:30	Training Room (30)

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

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