



# Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

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No: 36/2009

Week Ending: 23 October 2009

## [Analyst Calls for Changes to Literacy and Numeracy Benchmark Testing](#)

An education analyst has argued that national benchmark tests should be used to track changes in student performance over time, rather than comparing school performance.

## [Australia and USA to Collaborate on School Improvement](#)

Australia and the USA have signed an agreement to work closely in the future on issues of educational reform.

## [University Calls for the Introduction of Aptitude Tests](#)

A Victorian Government round table has heard a proposal for universities to implement attitude tests as a selection technique to improve access for disadvantaged students.

## [Victorian Government Releases Disability Guide for Government Schools](#)

A guide has been launched, offering parents of students with disabilities with advice on how to support their children at school.

## [Union Expresses Concern about Stress for Teachers](#)

The Victorian Independent Education Union has claimed that increased pressure is leading to a greater number of injuries and stress claims in non-government schools.

## [Australian Government to Provide Scholarships for Indigenous Teachers](#)

Indigenous students will be able to access scholarships from 2010 to undertake teacher training courses.

## [National Languages Plan to be Updated](#)

The National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools will be updated in 2010.

## [Parliamentary News](#)

Forthcoming sitting dates for the Australian and Victorian Parliaments and details of legislation under consideration.

## [Seminars for the week beginning 26 October 2009](#)

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### **Analyst Calls for Changes to Literacy and Numeracy Benchmark Testing**

*The Australian, Justine Ferrari, 13/10/09*

A former education analyst with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has argued that national literacy and numeracy benchmark testing should be used to measure student progress over time, rather than comparing school performance. Dr Bert Jensen claimed that comparisons of raw test scores represented a snapshot of student performance in a single test and called for National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data to be used to measure the value added by schools and teachers to students' performance from year to year. Dr Jensen also claimed that NAPLAN data should be used to assess government programs and policies, as well as student and school progress over time.

### **Australia and USA to Collaborate on School Improvement**

*The Age, Dan Harrison, 19/10/09; Sydney Morning Herald, Dan Harrison, 19/10/09*

The Australian Government Minister for Education, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States Secretary for Education, Mr Arne Duncan, to foster collaboration between the two countries on methods of improving schools. Under the MoU, political and departmental officials from each country will meet regularly to discuss issues of education reform. Minister Gillard argued that both countries faced similar challenges and shared common views on methods of tackling these challenges. However, the *Save Our Schools* group was critical of the announcement, asking 'why would you sign a memorandum of understanding with a country that's so far behind us on average results and on dealing with low socio-economic students and minority students?'

### **University Calls for the Introduction of Aptitude Tests**

*The Age, Natalie Craig, 18/10/09*

The University of Melbourne's Centre for the Study of Higher Education has proposed that universities introduce aptitude tests as an alternative selection criterion to performance in a senior secondary certificate. As part of a Victorian Government round table that was held this week, Professor Richard James argued that aptitude tests would provide students who had the intellectual capacity to undertake tertiary study, but who lacked the appropriate knowledge base, greater access to tertiary studies. He argued that, while a high ENTER score was a good indicator of success at university, the reverse did not necessarily hold true for low ENTER scores. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) supported Professor James' argument, claiming that aptitude tests were one of the best ways to increase the proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds attending university. The Victorian Minister for Education, The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, MLA, and the Minister for Skills, The Hon. Jacinta Allan, MLA, indicated that any proposals to improve university participation for disadvantaged students would be considered in a forthcoming report.

### **Victorian Government Releases Disability Guide for Government Schools**

*Media Release, The Hon. Maxine Morand, MLA, 12/10/09*

The Victorian Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, The Hon. Maxine Morand, MLA, has launched a guide for parents of children with disabilities for when their children start at a government school. The *Positive Education Planning* booklet provides information for parents on support services in government schools for children with disabilities, practical tips on setting learning goals, how parents can become involved in and connected to their children's education, and how parents can support their children at home. Copies of the booklet have been distributed to all Victorian government schools and can be obtained from the Association for Children with a Disability. While the booklet has a strong government school focus, the principles regarding the support of students with disabilities are applicable to all schools. Visit [www.acd.org.au/information/education\\_planning.htm](http://www.acd.org.au/information/education_planning.htm) to access a copy of the booklet.

### **Union Expresses Concern about Stress for Teachers**

*The Age, Farrah Tomazin, 19/09/10*

According to the Victorian Independent Education Union (VIEU), the number of non-government school teachers receiving WorkCover support for stress or injuries could increase in the future, as classroom demands and parental expectations increase. *The Age* obtained WorkCover information demonstrating that Catholic and independent school teachers made claims worth \$14 million between 2004 and 2009, with stress being the most expensive issue. Information was not provided for WorkCover claims for government school teachers. The Chief Executive of AISV, Ms Michelle Green, acknowledged that stress could be a problem for some teachers, but expressed her belief that there had not been a significant increase in the number of teachers claiming stress in recent years. She praised the work of those schools that took the opportunity to survey staff wellbeing regularly through AISV's LEAD report structure.

### **Australian Government to Provide Scholarships for Indigenous Teachers**

*Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 13/10/09*

Minister Gillard has announced the establishment of a new scholarship program to assist indigenous students to become teachers. The *Governor-General's Indigenous Student Teacher Scholarship* program will offer a scholarship to one indigenous student in each state and Territory to undertake university studies in education. Scholarship recipients will receive \$25,000 per annum for the life of their teaching degree, up to a maximum of four years, as well as support and mentoring from a highly accomplished teacher or teacher educator. Details of the criteria, application and selection process will be determined by the Department of Education, Employment and Youth Affairs in conjunction with indigenous groups. Applications for 2010 will open in mid-November 2009. Go to [www.deewr.gov.au/indigenousteacherscholarships](http://www.deewr.gov.au/indigenousteacherscholarships) for further information about the scholarship program.

**National Languages Plan to be Updated***Media Release, The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, 21/10/09*

The Australian Government will update and extend the National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools. The 2005-2008 Plan aimed to provide a framework and long-term direction for school languages education. Minister Gillard announced that she would allocate \$46,000 for the University of South Australia to extend the Plan to 2012, indicating that the aim of the extension was to increase the number of Australian students who are proficient in a language other than English when they graduate from school.

**Parliamentary News**

The Australian Parliament (House of Representatives and Senate) resumed on Monday 19 September 2009. The House of Representatives commenced sitting on Monday 19 October 2009 and will rise on Thursday 29 October 2009. The Senate did not sit this week, but instead considered the Supplementary Budget Estimates. The Senate will 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.

On Monday 19 October 2009, the House of Representatives passed the *Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Re-Registration of Providers and Other Measures) Bill 2009*. The Bill will require all institutions that are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to re-register in 2010 under tighter guidelines. Universities, colleges and schools will be required to demonstrate that their main purpose was to provide education and to demonstrate that they had the capacity to provide education of a satisfactory standard. They will also be required to publish lists of any overseas or Australian-based education agents that they had used to recruit international students. Minister Gillard has previously announced that the associated regulations may require registered institutions to use only agents who are trained and registered in their own country and may require institutions to maintain websites that allow international students to make anonymous comments about agents. The Bill has passed to the Senate for its consideration.

**Seminars for the week beginning 26 October 2009**

Day	Seminar Name	Time	Venue
Monday 26/10	Developing a Comprehensive Mathematics Curriculum Anaphylaxis Management (Day 6 of 8)	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	Training Centre West Melbourne
		9.00 am – 5.00 pm	
Tuesday 27/10	Anaphylaxis Management (Day 7 of 8) Extracting, Understanding and Using NAPLAN Data – Session A	9.00 am – 5.00 pm	West Melbourne Training Centre
		2.00 pm – 4.30 pm	
Wednesday 28/10	Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) – One-Day Program Extracting, Understanding and Using NAPLAN Data – Session B Getting Connected: Using Technology in the LOTE Classroom TAA 40104: Certificate IV in Training and Assessment Beyond the Daily – An Opportunity to have Sustained, Ongoing Professional Dialogue for Leaders of Curriculum and Professional Learning	9.00 am – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room Training Centre Kew Shepparton
		9.30 am – 11.30 am	
		9.30 am – 3.30 pm	
		9.30 am – 3.30 pm	Seminar Room
		4.00 pm – 6.00 pm	
Thursday 29/10	VIS BGA 2011 Capital Grants Program Application Briefing	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm	Seminar Room
Friday 30/10			

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 workshops in West Melbourne will take place at the Asthma Foundation, 491-495 King Street West Melbourne. The Kew workshop will take place at Genazzano FCJ College, 301 Cotham Road Kew. The Shepparton workshop will take place at Berry Street Hume Regional Office, 110 Wyndham Street Shepparton.

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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