



Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of New South Wales

# e-Bulletin

Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011 – Term 2, Edition 1

## THIS WEEK'S THOUGHT

Welcome back to Term 2.

### Post Election view

Now the State has voted in the elections and we have a new government in office, it is time to take a look at what this may mean for education.

Education has a new Minister in The Hon. Adrian Piccoli. He is part of a 'super ministry' which includes Aboriginal Affairs, Veteran Affairs, Sport and Recreation. Minister Piccoli will work with Minister Dominello and Minister Annesley in this very busy portfolio.

Mr Piccoli is from a regional background and Federation is keen to ensure that all students under his care, including those from regional and remote areas have access to the best educational resources available. We will be working towards regular meetings with the Minister to allow for discussions around current and topical issues such as bus safety, the recent funding to students with disabilities from the Federal government, ongoing antibullying and cybersafety initiatives and the effect of teacher performance pay on the staffing of all schools across the state.

### NAPLAN testing

The NAPLAN are due to take place next week in schools across the state. This can be a trying time for students as they sit in classrooms everywhere attempting the literacy and numeracy papers. It is also a time when parents can become distressed by the pressure their child is feeling. It is essential to remember that this assessment is only one part of the picture which shows how your child is performing at school. While it is important to have your child attempt these tests, bear in mind that your child's class teacher can provide you with a regular update of their progress, their achievements and any challenges they may be facing in their learning.

Take care

Helen Walton  
PRESIDENT 2011

## LOCAL NEWS

### **TEACHERS CRUSHED BY EXPECTATIONS**

TEACHERS spend their time passionately divulging information to a young, captivated and grateful audience - at least that's the dream.

But many find a harsher reality, with a heavy workload, difficult student behaviour and immense pressure to produce academic results.

Teachers made more than 500 mental stress claims last year, according to figures from NSW WorkCover obtained through freedom of information legislation.

Read the rest of this story at:

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/education/teachers-crushed-by-expectations-20110416-1dike.html>

### **NEW BER NUMBERS SHOW FULL MARK-UP**

**THE premium paid by NSW public schools for buildings delivered under the \$16.2 billion schools stimulus program is almost 50 per cent higher than the already huge excess initially reported by the inquiry into the scheme.**

Analysis of the data published by the taskforce, headed by former investment banker Brad Orgill, shows NSW public schools are paying on average 35.7 per cent more for buildings compared with Catholic schools in the state, up from a 24 per cent difference reported by the inquiry in December.

The overspend on buildings delivered to NSW public schools compared with buildings delivered to Catholic schools -- which the Orgill inquiry has said are of no different quality -- is now about \$925 million, up from the \$620m previously thought.

Read the rest of this story at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/schools-watch/new-ber-numbers-show-full-mark-up/story-fn56ulhe-1226039936764>

### **PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLMENTS UP**

REGIONAL director Jim White is delighted that public school enrolments in New England are mirroring a state-wide increase.

Mr White said the increase was a vote of confidence in the region's public schools and the public education and training system across NSW.

"It shows that parents value the quality of education provided by our schools," he said.

"We have dedicated staff committed to providing quality education for every individual student's needs.

<http://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/news/local/news/general/public-school-enrolments-up/2135595.aspx>

### **BOB CARR SLAMS CHAPLAIN FUNDS**

BOB Carr has described the Federal Government's funding of school chaplains as "abhorrent".

In a blog on the eve of the next step in a High Court challenge to the funding of the school chaplain program, Mr Carr said he strongly believed in a "wall of separation" between church and state. "I don't want to see squabbles at P&C meetings about whether a minister, priest, imam or rabbi gets the gig for a school," he said.

"The notion of the state funding religious activity is abhorrent." Queensland father of six Ron Williams is due to appear in the High Court next week to argue his claim that government funding of chaplains is unconstitutional. "My view has always been that government funding for school chaplains is wrongheaded and should have been abandoned with the election of the Rudd government," Mr Carr said. The funding program was introduced by the Howard government in 2001 and Kevin Rudd expanded on the program when he became prime minister in 2007. Jenny Dillon

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/bob-carr-slams-chaplain-funds/story-e6freuy9-1226047968524>

## IS AUSTRALIA ON THE RIGHT PATH TO EDUCATION REFORM?

What do the school systems in Finland and Korea have in common? They lead the developed world in numeracy, literacy and science. They don't have standardised testing for students until year 12, they don't segregate children into different school systems and they respect teachers. The big question is why Australia would want to emulate a country like the US where academic performance standards are, on average, much lower and where educational opportunity for many children depends on the luck of a lottery draw.

Like America, Australia has an embarrassingly widening gap in education standards between students from socially and economically advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. Both countries have talked a lot about education reform. Julia Gillard modelled her transparency agenda – standardised national literacy and numeracy tests and reporting of school results on the My School website - on New York education chief Joel Klein's example. Like George Bush junior's No Child Left Behind policies (based on the discredited "Texas miracle"), the Joel Klein improvements, according to respected academics, have amounted to little more than smoke and mirrors - demonstrations of academic improvements where there were none.

Read the rest of this story at: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/blogs/learning-curve/is-australia-on-the-right-path-to-education-reform-20110502-1e3oi.html>

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING IN CLASSROOMS

The NSW government's rollout of interactive whiteboards will see 26 public schools in the Burrinjuck electorate benefit from the new whiteboards.

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell announced recently that a total of 4,300 digital whiteboards will be installed in 1,000 schools across the state. Within the Cowra area interactive whiteboards will be installed at Greenethorpe, Reids Flat, Holmwood, Woodstock and the Holman Place Public School in Cowra.

Member for Burrinjuck, Katrina Hodgkinson said she is very pleased that public schools in the Burrinjuck electorate will be included in the government's rollout.

<http://www.cowraguardian.com.au/news/local/news/general/interactive-learning-in-classrooms/2149579.aspx>

## 2011 HSC EXAM TIMETABLE RELEASED TO STUDENTS

Students who will sit HSC exams in 2011 can now view their personalised HSC examination timetable by logging into the Board of Studies' *Students Online* website.

Chief Executive of the Board, Carol Taylor, said that the exam timetable would be released in full on 2 May, but students could preview their own schedule in advance.

"We want students and schools to have as much time as possible to start preparing and planning for their exams," said Ms Taylor.

"The exam timetable is different every year because the Board works hard to minimise the number of conflicts for individual students and to make the flow of exams practical.

Read more on this at: <http://news.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY A PRIORITY - Gladys Berejiklian MP Minister for Transport

A new committee is being established to examine school bus safety in regional and rural NSW, Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian announced today.

The School Bus Safety Community Advisory Committee – comprising road safety experts, transport operators, parents and school representatives – will closely examine all issues relating to the safe transportation of children to and from school.

More than 60,000 students across regional and rural NSW travel on a fleet of 1485 dedicated school buses each day. Those buses clock up more than 250,000 kilometres each day, or more than 50 million kilometres each year.

"School children travel a tremendous number of kilometres getting to and from school and the O'Farrell Government is committed to ensuring their travel is as safe as possible," Ms

Berejiklian said. "The establishment of this committee fulfils a commitment made by the NSW Liberals and Nationals in Opposition but more importantly it takes a step towards maximising travel safety for our youngest students.

"Today, letters have been sent to relevant organisations asking them to participate in this important committee.

"I want the committee to meet for the first time as soon as possible."

Ms Berejiklian said the committee's terms of reference were to:

- Assess the status of school bus safety in regional and rural NSW;
- Consider the full range of school bus safety measures, with reference to national and international experience;
- Recommend the most effective ways to make school bus travel as safe as possible.

Ms Berejiklian said the installation of seatbelts in school buses, and other relevant issues, would be considered by the new safety committee. "The vast majority of school travel occurs without incident – buses are a very safe way to get to and from school. "In fact, according to Austroads data, bus travel is the safest mode of transport for our school children – seven times safer than travelling in a car." "I know bus operators share my resolve about ensuring children are as safe as possible as they travel to and from school."

"I look forward to consulting widely and receiving the findings and recommendations of this committee," Ms Berejiklian said.

Media: Sam Fairlie-Cuninghame 0407 795 782

Friday 29 April 2011

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### UNSW INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGES - FREE ENGLISH COURSES

for eligible migrants under the AMEP, starting 27 April

The University of New South Wales Institute of Languages offers:

[General English](#) - Beginner to Upper intermediate – leading to Certificates in Spoken and Written English I-III.

[IELTS Preparation](#), [Occupational English Test \(OET\) Preparation for Overseas Health Professionals](#), [Business English](#) and [Pronunciation](#).

Flexible part time and full time courses, in the day and evening.

Fee paying courses also available.

Details of programs and online applications go to [www.languages.unsw.edu.au](http://www.languages.unsw.edu.au)

Call [02 9385 0469](tel:0293850469) to book a free language assessment

For more information email [c.silove@unsw.edu.au](mailto:c.silove@unsw.edu.au)

23-32 King Street, Randwick NSW 2031

### INNOVATIVE WEBSITE EDUCATES KIDS ABOUT EYE SAFETY

A children's interactive website, [www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au](http://www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au) has been launched in an effort to halt the increasing number of eye injuries children suffer each year.

Although most eye injuries are preventable, research from the Children's Hospital at Westmead uncovered a doubling of childhood eye injuries over the past decade. The research also revealed a sharp increase in the incidence of the more serious "penetrating" eye injuries that can seriously affect vision.

The research also identified boys aged between three and nine years are at greatest risk of suffering an eye injury. Most injuries occurred in and around the home or while children were playing sport.

Developed by a team of professionals with backgrounds in eye health, health promotion and education, [www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au](http://www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au) is a fun and educative website for children between the ages of five and nine years, teaching them how to protect their eyes through playing interactive and entertaining games.

[www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au](http://www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au) can also be used in the classroom by Teachers as it includes resources developed specifically to be used with an interactive whiteboard story book. The development of [www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au](http://www.eyeplaySAFE.org.au) was sponsored by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, and funded by The Statewide Ophthalmology Service (SOS), a network of the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), a statutory health corporation of NSW HEALTH. Media contact: Calli Brown, Public Relations, Ph 02 9845 3580

## 2011 AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM EUREKA PRIZES

Australia's premier national science awards program, are now open.

**Celebrating school science in two ways:**

### 1. For the students

Have your students create a short film on any science topic to be in the running for cash prizes and fame. Enter the University of Sydney Sleek Geeks Science Eureka Prize for primary and secondary students.

For info go to <http://eureka.australianmuseum.net.au/enter> and select the primary or secondary category. And don't forget that there are resources online to help get you started <http://eureka.australianmuseum.net.au/news/sleek-geeks-science-eureka-prize-teacher-resources>

### 2. For the teachers

Do you know an outstanding secondary science or mathematics teacher, one who motivates and inspires students? Enter yourself or nominate a colleague for the Industry & Investment NSW Eureka Prize for Science or Mathematics Teaching.

For info go to <http://eureka.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka-prize/science-or-mathematics-teaching>

Entries close midnight AEST Friday 6 May.

Do you have a question about our school science program, or need help with an entry or nomination? Please contact us at [eureka@austmus.gov.au](mailto:eureka@austmus.gov.au) or phone 02 9320 6483.

## NATIONAL WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY

On Friday 20 May, 2011

It's nearly that time of year again when parents and primary school aged children from right around Australia are being asked to make those important steps towards a healthier childhood by participating in National Walk Safely to School Day.

Now in its twelfth year, the Walk Safely to School Day initiative will be celebrated on Friday 20 May 2011.

Walk Safely to School Day promotes the vitally important message: *Active Kids are Healthy Kids*. The event asks parents, carers and their children to build regular walking into their daily routine, because children need a minimum of 60 minutes exercise per day. It also encourages parents to drive less and walk more, aiming to decrease dangerous vehicle congestion around schools and reduce carbon emissions from idling cars.

### HOW PARENTS CAN PARTICIPATE

For most parents, the rush to get to school is stressful and hectic. But Walk Safely to School Day is the perfect opportunity to start a healthier, happier and more relaxed morning routine. By simply getting up half an hour earlier and walking all or part of the way to school with your child, you not only start the day with healthier exercise (so you and your child will feel great!) but you also start the day with some quality time with your child. Plus, it teaches your child the value of a healthy lifestyle and helps set them up for a day packed full of learning.

If you can't walk all the way to school, walk your child to the next bus stop away from your home. Or if you must drive, park the car a fair few blocks away and walk the rest of the journey.

### WHY NOT HOST A HEALTHY BREAKFAST TO CELEBRATE THE DAY?

Many P&C Groups have arranged some fantastic healthy breakfast celebrations in the playgrounds on the morning of Walk Safely to School Day. Using local suppliers, the breakfast

is a great way to mark the day and help educate children not only about the benefits of walking but also the advantages of healthy eating habits.

CONTACT: NSW PR Coordinator: Liza McNally: 0413273233 or [liza@lizamcnallymarketing.com.au](mailto:liza@lizamcnallymarketing.com.au) For more information visit: [www.walk.com.au](http://www.walk.com.au)

### **NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIME**

now in its 11th successful year, is organised by the [Australian Library and Information Association \(ALIA\)](#). It is a colourful, vibrant and fun event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy, using an Australian children's book that explores age appropriate themes and addresses key learning areas of the National Curriculum for Grades 1 to 6. The event receives favourable media coverage, generates a great deal of community interest and is held annually as part of [Library and Information Week](#).

National Simultaneous Storytime is an important annual national literacy campaign that guarantees more young Australians will 'Get Reading'. This year, reading takes place on Wednesday 25 May at 11am AEDT and we would love it if you could join us by sharing "Feathers for Phoebe" by Rod Clement, a wonderful Australian tale about self-esteem, self-acceptance and learning that appearances aren't everything. [Register now](#) to participate - it's free and we have some [great activities and resources](#) available to support your National Simultaneous Storytime event.

### **THE INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATE (IQ2)**

The Intelligence Squared Debate (IQ2) in Sydney will discuss the motion All drugs should be legalised.

The speakers FOR the motion are Dr Alex Wodak, Wendy Harmer and Nicholas Cowdery QC. The speakers AGAINST are Jade Lewis, Dr Greg Pike and Paul Sheehan.

This debate will be held at the City Recital Hall Angel Place Sydney on Tuesday 10 May and will commence at 6.45pm and end at 8.30pm Dr Simon Longstaff is the Chair.

Tickets are available from City Recital Hall Box Office on 02 8256 2222 or online at [cityrecitalhall.com](http://cityrecitalhall.com) Full details at [www.iq2oz.com](http://www.iq2oz.com)

Single tickets are \$32.00, students \$22.

### **2011 CENSUS – APPLY NOW TO BECOME A COLLECTOR!**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducts a Census of Population and Housing every five years, with the next one coming up on Tuesday 9 August 2011. The Census aims to accurately measure the number of people in Australia on Census night, their key characteristics and the houses in which they live.

To assist in the preparation and operation of the Census, the ABS is recruiting an army of over 29,000 Collectors nationally to assist with the delivery and collection of 14.2 million forms to Australia's 9.8 million households.

Quality Collectors are vital to the success of the Census and the ABS are looking for people from all cultural backgrounds who are passionate about their local community and want to earn some extra money as well.

Collectors, particularly those with bilingual skills, help to capture a full and accurate picture of Australia's diversity.

Working on the Census is more than just a job. It is a great community activity that can make a real difference. The Census provides crucial information for all levels of government, businesses and communities to make decisions on core services and infrastructure - such things as roads, schools, housing and much more.

This year the ABS has increased the pay for Collectors in recognition of the fantastic work that they do. Collectors earn around \$18 an hour, and could expect to earn a total of \$1,300 up to \$2,800, depending on their area.

Collectors need to be available for Census work from 1 July to 8 September 2011.

If you are interested in a flexible short term position, apply online [www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census) or call 1800 420 182.

Applications open 9 April and close on 5 May 2011.

### 2011 PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Each year parents and caregivers around the state give their expertise and many hundreds of hours of time to their local school: running events, raising money and generally helping out in whatever way they can.

#### **Do you know a parent who deserves special acknowledgement?**

The *Public School Parent of the Year Award* acknowledges and promotes the outstanding contribution that parents and caregivers make to their public school community.

Each year regions establish selection panels to consider local nominations and choose Award recipients. Each panel includes a representative of the P&C.

#### **Who can make a nomination?**

Any individual, school, parent organisation or similar group can nominate a parent for an Award.

#### **Nomination forms**

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the NSW Department of Education and Training website at [www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au) by following the links from *What we offer*.

#### **When is the closing date?**

The closing date for nominations in 2011 is Friday 3 June.

Where can I get further information?

Further information is available on the Department's website (as above), or from the Executive Officer for the Award on telephone 02 9244 5545.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2011

#### **When and where is it?**

Federation's Annual Conference is generally held at the end of July in Sydney. However, one out of every four conferences is held in a country region. Regional delegates are entitled to propose their own area as the site for that conference.

The time and place for each Annual Conference is determined by the previous conference.

The 2011 Annual Conference will be held on **29th, 30th & 31st July** at The Quality Hotel Powerhouse, Tamworth.

Annual Conference forms and nomination forms will be issued to all affiliated P&C

Associations. If you do not receive your registration pack or have any inquiries please contact the Federation's office on 1300 885 982.

**AC11 Venue:** The Quality Hotel Powerhouse  
New England Highway  
Tamworth NSW 2340

### PARENT-SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT IN NSW

Over the coming months, parents and caregivers of primary and secondary school children in NSW will be invited to participate in focus group interviews for a research project entitled *Parent-School Engagement in NSW*. This study aims to learn more about the factors that influence parent-school engagement.

The study will seek views from parents and caregivers of children in primary and secondary schools across the range of public, independent and Catholic school sectors in NSW. This research is being conducted by Dr. Sue Saltmarsh, Associate Professor of Educational Studies at the Australian Catholic University. The study is sponsored by the NSW Parents' Council, NSW & ACT Council of Catholic Schools Parents, and the NSW Federation of Parents' and Citizens' Associations, who have commissioned Dr. Saltmarsh to develop teacher professional development programs and pre-service teacher education materials that will be used to prepare educators for engaging effectively with parents, caregivers and families.

If you would like to know more about this research, or would like to consider participating in a focus group interview, please contact the project Research Officer, Dr. Jenny Barr, at [jenny.barr@acu.edu.au](mailto:jenny.barr@acu.edu.au) for further details.

## **NEW GO PLAY IPHONE APP – HUNDREDS OF SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES**

Don't get caught out with nothing to do in the next school holidays. The free Go Play iPhone app helps you find hundreds of free and affordable activities all over Sydney.

The Go Play app and website – [www.goplay.nsw.gov.au](http://www.goplay.nsw.gov.au) – give you easy access to the range of arts, culture, sport and recreational activities offered by the NSW Government.

Go Play lets you search by age, venue, type of activity or cost. You'll find family-friendly information about cafes, baby change tables, disabled and pram access. When you select an activity, the Go Play calendar shows you what's on nearby. And the transport planner will get you there.

You can save a schedule of your favourite activities. Add events to your Google or Outlook calendar. Share activities with friends on Facebook, Twitter or by email.

So check the app store or visit the Go Play website for everything you need to plan a great school holiday on the run.

[www.goplay.nsw.gov.au](http://www.goplay.nsw.gov.au)

## **FAQs:**

### **FACT SHEET 15: SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings, or extraordinary meetings as they are sometimes called, provide a P&C Association with an opportunity to discuss one or more specific matter which cannot be dealt with at the next general (or ordinary ) meeting because of urgency or some other declared reason.

Special meetings can only deal with business of which notice has been given. While apologies can be accepted at a special meeting, not other formal business such as the minutes of the preceding meeting, correspondence, special reports or general business can be transacted.

#### **Who can call a special meeting?**

The P&C Secretary is constitutionally required to give formal written notice of a special meeting but can only issues a notice of special meeting if a request for such a meeting is received from the Executive Committee or by at least ten financial members of the organisation.

Requests for special meetings should refer to the specific matters which will be raised and discussed at the meeting.

#### **How much notice of a special meeting is required?**

The Secretary is expected to ensure that all existing financial members receive at least seven clear days notice of any special meeting. The notice must indicate the time and place of the meeting as well as the specific business which will be transacted at the meeting.

The actual meeting date and time should be designated by the Executive Committee but, in any case, it must occur within a month of the request being received by the Secretary.

The President should preside at special meetings. In the President's absence this task can be taken by one of the Vice- Presidents and in the absence of either Vice-President the meeting itself can elect a chairperson.

#### **Can new memberships be taken at special meetings?**

Special meetings provide an opportunity for existing financial members to discuss specific terms. It is not appropriate for new members to join an association immediately prior to or during a special meeting and expect to exercise voting rights and the other privileges of membership.

The Constitution provides for memberships lists to be updated after each general meeting. If a person pays a membership fee immediately before or during the special meeting he/she is not entitled to voting rights until after the next general meeting.

Special meetings are called because of an urgent need to address specific items of business. Most association business, including constitutional amendments, decision so to incorporate and no confidence motions, can be properly dealt with at general meetings. Referral of these matters to a general meeting ensures that requirements of due notice and wide-ranging consultation are better served.