



THIS WEEK'S THOUGHT – Di Giblin

BUDGET OVERVIEW 2009

This is a notable budget: the biggest one-year increase in recurrent funding since the late 1970s; the largest-ever annual school and TAFE building program; and the first budget in nearly a decade to assume that public schooling's share of all enrolments will not fall. The budget provides us with \$5.7 billion over the next four years for capital works in schools and TAFE.

CAPITAL WORKS

In 2009-2010 we have \$560 million of State funding for capital works in schools and TAFE, and a further \$244 million for school maintenance.

Our state-funded capital works are up over 20% in schools and almost 55% in TAFE.

This budget also ushers in some change to how we work together to maintain schools. So far, more than 300 principals have decided to manage their Commonwealth-funded maintenance work under the National School Pride Program.

Total recurrent investment in school education for 2009-10 is \$9.9 billion, an increase of \$870 million, or 9.6 per cent on last year's budget.

The increase for public education is \$850 million, or a bit over 10%. The state-funded increase to non-government schools is 2.7%.

DRAFT NSW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Commonwealth Government is currently considering a draft NSW implementation plan for a number of new national partnerships.

Under the partnerships in 2009-2010, the Commonwealth and NSW will provide:

- * \$120 million for schools serving low socio-economic status communities, which will include a range of plans to lift the educational attainment of students in disadvantaged communities;
- * \$44 million for literacy and numeracy, which includes monitoring student performance to identify when support is needed and implement effective evidence based support programs;
- * \$6 million for teacher quality, which includes plans to attract, train, develop and retain quality teachers and principals in schools; and
- * \$163 million for the Digital Education Revolution to continue the roll-out of wireless laptops in secondary schools and central schools.

The budget includes a substantial increase in equity funding consisting of:

- a \$51 million increase for children with disabilities and a further \$18 million in extra funding for the transport services that get them to and from school.
- \$271 million in capital and recurrent funding over the next four years, starting at \$18 million in 2009-2010, to support increasing the school leaving age to the end of Year 10 and introducing a participation phase to the age of 17.
- \$25 million over four years to implement the Government's Keep Them Safe initiatives, the response to last year's inquiry into the child protection system. This funding will allow us to establish a Child Wellbeing Unit as our point of contact for queries about or concerns of risk of harm to children that do not clearly require a report to DoCS. It will also allow us

to employ out of home care coordinators and more home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers.

- In 2009-10, the total recurrent investment in TAFE NSW and related services is estimated at almost \$2 billion, an increase of some 5% on the 2008-09 budget. This is the first year that NSW, through the Board of Vocational Education and Training, is managing the Commonwealth-State Productivity Places Program. The program will provide around \$670 million of new funding for the NSW vocational education and training sector, including a Commonwealth contribution of \$420 million.

Please visit <http://www.pandc.org.au/files/uploads/DG's%20Budget%20message%202009.pdf>
For the DG's message on the 2009 budget.

EDUCATION TAX REFUND – DON'T FORGET TO CLAIM

How do I claim the Education Tax Refund?

- In your tax return.
- If you don't lodge a tax return, claim on a separate form or over the phone.
- If you use a tax agent, make sure you ask them to claim for you.

The Education Tax Refund lets you claim up to 50% of eligible education expenses for school children. If you are eligible, you can get back up to \$375 for each primary student and up to \$750 for each secondary student.

You can claim things like text books, stationery and even internet costs.

If you receive Family Tax Benefit Part A for a child at primary or secondary school, you will be eligible. Some other people are eligible too, to find out more about this and other information such as what you can and can't claim go to australia.gov.au/educationtaxrefund or call the Tax Office on 13 28 61.

! Remember, you need to keep all receipts for expenses you claim.

In addition, the Tax Office has prepared, specifically for schools, some frequently asked questions and answers. These questions and answers can be found on the Tax Office website by following the link below.

<http://ato.gov.au/individuals/content.asp?doc=/content/00192105.htm>

Annual Conference 2009

The Federation's Annual Conference will be held at Penrith Panthers, Mulgoa Road, Penrith on July 31, August 1 and 2. P&C Associations across the state are encouraged to send up to three delegates to this conference.

Details and Notice of Intention to attend have been mailed and emailed to all Public Schools in NSW. Details are also up on our website: <http://www.pandc.org.au/annual-conference.seo>.

Take care
Di Giblin 2009.

JULIA GILLARD'S BILLION-DOLLAR EDUCATION BONANZA ROLLS ON

Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and her education juggernaut continued their cash splash around the nation yesterday, announcing more than \$3billion for primary schools in NSW, Western Australia and the ACT.

The handouts followed \$3.1bn for new libraries, halls and refurbished classrooms given to schools in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia on Tuesday. Millions of dollars will be handed to some of the nation's elite private schools, which will receive government funding for capital works for the first time. In NSW, 1354 primary schools were granted \$2.3bn while West Australian schools received \$579 million and ACT schools were handed \$140m. In the round of funding announced yesterday, schools receiving the maximum handout of \$3m included Ascham at Edgecliff in Sydney's eastern suburbs, which has schooled children of some of the nation's wealthiest, including Gretel Packer, as well as Cranbrook at Bellevue Hill, attended by James Packer. Knox Prep at Wahroonga on Sydney's north shore received \$3m while Moriah College, a Jewish school at Bondi Junction, was granted more than \$2.2m to replace demountables with six classrooms and almost \$800,000 for an early learning centre at Rose Bay. Newington received almost \$3m across its two primary school campuses and Scots College at Bellevue Hill also received \$3m. Ravenswood School for girls on the north shore received \$2.5m and the pin-up for rich private schools, The King's School at Parramatta, was granted \$2.5m. In Western Australia, Scotch College at Swanbourne received \$2.5m as did PLC at Peppermint Grove. Elite Catholic schools Aquinas College at Manning was granted \$2m and Iona Presentation College and primary school at Mosman Park received more than \$3m across two campuses. Ms Gillard said every school would benefit under the program, with more than 70 per cent of the funds going to public schools, 19 per cent to Catholic schools and 11 per cent to independent schools. "There is nothing more important to the future of this country than the quality of our schools," she said. "This is a program for all schools. We said we wanted to make a difference in every school and every community."

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25618364-5013404,00.html>

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A PERFECT CHILD WHEN IT COMES TO THE HSC ANNA PATTY EDUCATION EDITOR

Higher School Certificate students will no longer be able to get a perfect score of 100 with the highest university entrance rank to be pegged at 99.95. More than 65,000 year 12 students in NSW will receive letters from today explaining the change. The university entrance rank will change its name to the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, in line with other states which - apart from Queensland - will also adopt the ATAR name. NSW is the only state with a top university admission rank of 100, the others being pegged at 99.95. Andrew Stanton, managing director of the Universities Admissions Centre, said ATAR rankings would be higher than equivalent UAI ranks which may push up course entry scores at universities. For example, a UAI of 60 would convert to an ATAR of 63.4, a UAI of 93 would be 93.55 and a UAI of 99 would be 99.05. Mr Stanton said there was no need for students to worry about the change as it would make no difference to the way their marks were scaled or to their chances of gaining entry to preferred university courses. Larissa Treskin, the principal of James Ruse Agricultural High, which last year produced eight students with UAIs of 100, said she was sorry other states did not round up their top university entrance rank to 100. "I'm disappointed the top marks were compacted down rather than up," she said. "I think emotionally, for this year's students, it is a goal that has been snatched away."

Daniel Swain, who received a UAI of 100 in last year's HSC, said it felt weird to be one of the last students to get the top rank.

Mr Swain, who completed his HSC at Smiths Hill High in Wollongong, needed a UAI of 83 to get into his Arts course at the University of Sydney.

He said friends in Victoria who had scored 99.95 had celebrated the same way as NSW students who received 100. "They still call it the perfect score. I think other people, like employers, think 100 sounds more impressive."

From SMH Wednesday 10th June 2009 accessed at

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/theres-no-such-thing-as-a-perfect-child-when-it-comes-to-the-hsc-20090609-c29z.html>

FIRST NSW STUDENTS SENT HOME DUE TO SWINE FLU

A Western Sydney school has become the state's first to be partially closed down over fears of a swine flu outbreak.

All Year 4 students at St Margaret Mary Catholic primary school at Merrylands - about 90 students - have been ordered to stay at home until Monday after a confirmed case of swine flu. It is the first time in NSW students have been quarantined, unlike Victoria where up to 12 schools have been shut down.

It follows confirmation yesterday that a girl has swine flu after coming into contact with a known case in Victoria.

NSW Health officials visited the school and assessed students. But only those in Year 4 were given Tamiflu and sent home.

"Students will be quarantined at home for three days and if they do not develop any symptoms of influenza will be allowed to return on Monday," a NSW Health spokesman said.

"All other children at the school are able to go about their usual activities."

A parent at the school whose child is not in the affected year said many families were concerned their children could develop swine flu.

There have now been 1275 confirmed cases of swine flu in Australia with 25 people admitted to hospital. Four of those are in intensive care in Melbourne where the disease is out of control. In NSW, there have been 115 cases confirmed, 25 stemming from interstate travel.

The quarantine comes as the Federal Government warned that not everyone diagnosed with swine flu would be given Tamiflu.

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon said there were some restrictions on the commercial supplies of Tamiflu because of high demand.

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,27574,25623329-5006009,00.html>

DISABLED STUDENTS 'LOSING OUT' IN NSW

The NSW government could face legal action in the Human Rights Commission over a lack of funding for children with disabilities in schools.

The Public Schools Principals' Forum surveyed 800 principals on the provision of services for special needs and disabled students, with 78 per cent ranking funding in this area as poor or very poor.

The principals also cited issues with excessive numbers in classes including special needs students as well as insufficient counselling support.

The Public Schools Principals Forum said it now believed the NSW Education Department is in contravention of the federal Disability Discrimination Act in areas of participation, curriculum and student support services.

"We're not saying the department gives nothing, what we're saying is very, very frequently they give so little that children can't actually stand beside their able-body peers and function effectively," forum chair Cheryl McBride told reporters on Wednesday.

"We believe that's wrong and we're here to stand up and do something about it.

"We will be seeking an opportunity to launch legal action in the Human Rights Commission in terms of what they are not providing for their students."

The principals said it would cost \$350 million to make the necessary changes to ensure proper provisions for children with disabilities at mainstream public schools.

This would include reducing class sizes down to 26 from the regular size of 30, demountable classrooms and extra teachers to deal with the reduction in class sizes and a teacher's aide spending half their week with the class.

<http://www.watoday.com.au/breaking-news-national/disabled-students-losing-out-in-nsw-20090610-c3dt.html>

FIRTH MOVES ON SCHOOL LEAGUE TABLES

The State Government will change the Education Act to allow school league tables to be created in new national school report cards to be released later this year.

The decision will raise the stakes in the teacher union's war against league tables and threaten a boycott of the national numeracy and literacy tests for students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 next year.

The Department of Education has received legal advice that NSW legislation introduced a decade ago to prevent the creation of school league tables will need to be amended to allow NSW to meet new federal school reporting requirements.

A draft cabinet document obtained by the *Herald* reveals that the cabinet agreed last Monday to amend the act so that the Commonwealth is not prevented from publishing test data from NSW. The change, authorised by Leigh Sanderson, the deputy director-general of education (general counsel), will not allow publication of information about an individual in breach of privacy provisions.

The regulation preventing publication of school league tables in NSW using exam test scores is the only one of its kind in Australia. It prevents the public release of student results "in a way that ranks or otherwise compares the results of particular schools". This has prevented the publication of school league tables using raw HSC and Basic Skill Test results and university entrance rankings for the past 10 years.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/firth-moves-on-school-league-tables-20090608-c0wf.html>

FOREIGN STUDENTS COULD BE FORCED TO LEAVE

Scores of foreign students, suspected of using bogus documents to support permanent residency applications, have been discovered by Federal Government migration fraud investigators.

More than 60 students, whose documents were initially accepted as genuine by the Government, will be forced to leave Australia if they are unable to prove their documents are authentic.

It is the latest indication that rorting in the lucrative \$15.5 billion international education industry — the nation's third-biggest export earner — is a serious problem, which could undermine the integrity of Australia's education and immigration systems.

Hundreds protest in Sydney's west after another two Indian men are allegedly assaulted.

The students are suspected of using fake references from employers, which claim to show they have 900 hours' work experience in a job related to their area of study. Foreign students are required to provide evidence of 900 hours' work experience to support their applications for permanent residency.

More than 60 such letters have been sent to foreign students since the start of the year, with 48 sent last month alone.

The students are believed to be either close to the expiry of their student visas or on bridging visas. Either way, they will be expected to leave the country within 28 days if they are unable to prove their documents are genuine.

The identification of students suspected of using bogus documents follows the discovery of an alleged racket uncovered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in March. Investigations are continuing into possible offences relating to forgery and migration fraud, which carry penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/foreign-students-could-be-forced-to-leave-20090609-c28h.html>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

HOME EDUCATION RULES 'AN ABUSE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES'

"Parents could be banned from educating children at home in a move branded a "very bad day for civil liberties".

For the first time, local councils will have the power to enter family homes and question young children, under new plans.

They will also be able to order under-16s to school if there are fears about their safety or quality of education.

Families' groups said they were "absolutely devastated" by the move, claiming it undermined their freedom to educate children beyond state control.

Annette Taberner, from the group Education Otherwise, said: "To suggest parents can continue to home educate but then give powers to local authorities to enter our homes and interview our children without an adult being present is just extraordinary. This is nothing short of an attempt to regulate the private lives of people. It is a very bad day for civil liberties in this country."

A review ordered by the Government estimated that as many as 80,000 children could be educated at home. Previous estimates put the figure between 20,000 and 50,000.

Graham Badman, former director of education at Kent County Council, who carried out the study, recommended forcing all parents to register sons and daughters with local authorities every year.

The review - accepted in full by the Government - said officials from local authorities should have the right to access their home with just two weeks' notice and speak to children to ensure they were "safe and well". They can revoke the right to home schooling if they have serious concerns over their welfare, it said.

Parents must also submit a statement outlining what children will be taught over the following 12 months.

Councils can impose a "school attendance order" if they believe the education received is not up to scratch, with parents facing legal action if they refuse.

"By raising the bar in terms of entry to home education, you effectively raise the standard of education on offer," he said.

It is not yet known when the reforms will be introduced. New legislation will be needed to enforce rules on registration and local authority access to homes.

The review was launched amid fears some children educated at home could be at risk of abuse.

Mrs Taberner, a mother of two from Sheffield, said the "horrendous" suggestion had been "trotted out by the Government" to justify the crackdown.

Mr Badman's report said there was "no evidence" to suggest home education was linked to forced marriage, servitude or child trafficking.

But he claimed the overall number of children "known to children's social care in some local authorities is disproportionately high relative to the size of [the] home education population."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/5506362/Home-education-rules-an-abuse-of-civil-liberties.html>

PUSH IS ON FOR A 'COMMON' EDUCATION STANDARD FOR US SCHOOLCHILDREN

The state-by-state system leaves many students 'inadequately prepared,' Education Secretary Arne Duncan said Wednesday at a Monitor breakfast.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan threw his weight Wednesday behind a "common" education standard for all of America's schoolchildren, saying the current state-by-state system has produced uneven results in which some students "are totally, inadequately prepared to go into a competitive university, let alone graduate."

Mr. Duncan, who has been on a cross-country "listening tour" in preparation for submitting revisions for the No Child Left Behind Act, says he's encountered support for the idea of a national standard. "Teachers have been really positive on this idea of common standards," he said at a Monitor-sponsored breakfast for reporters. "That has played much better with teachers than I thought it would."

The secretary acknowledged, though, that what he calls "common higher standards, internationally benchmarked" would face hurdles and involve political pain. States and local governments are protective of their prerogative to set educational standards, and what Duncan is suggesting would be a huge break with tradition.

"Politicians don't like to go out and say, 'We are really struggling,' or 'Our kids are behind,' or 'Our kids are at a competitive disadvantage,'" Duncan said.

A better alternative to the state-by-state approach, he says, is to "get away from each state doing its own thing. Let's do one thing, and let's hold ourselves accountable." But raising the bar, he acknowledged, means "test scores are going to drop in some places precipitously. And what we have to do is we have to give those politicians cover for doing the right thing. So there is a real tricky balance that we have to work on here."

<http://features.csmonitor.com/politics/2009/06/10/push-is-on-for-a-common-education-standard-for-us-schoolchildren/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING SCHOOL CANTEENS - FRIDAY 19 JUNE

This is a day for individual schools to celebrate their canteens and the volunteers and staff that run them. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the wider role that canteens can play in the community.

Canteens take the pressure off busy families. They can introduce children to a wide range of foods that they may not have access to at home, and model healthy eating behaviours that can extend beyond the school gate. Canteens can also generate profits that go back into the school to buy sporting equipment, library books and other extras.

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK – HELP FIGHT POVERTY AND HARDSHIP 11 – 17 OCTOBER 2009

Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians. Around the world more than a billion people are desperately poor. Participate by:

- Organising a display, stall or award
- A workshop, lecture or forum
- A fundraiser, fact sheet or petition.

For more information please visit www.antipovertyweek.org.au

POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

The *Positive Partnerships* program is a series of free workshops which build partnerships between families living with autism and their school so these students' school years are as productive as possible. Teachers too – in all states - are invited to attend professional development programs as part of the Federal Government's *Helping children with autism* initiative. The program is being run nationally by a consortium - Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC) – which competitively won the \$11.3 million contract last year.

The workshops began in February and will continue until November. We have had some amazing feedback from the workshops so far. Many parents saying they now feel less isolated and more equipped to cope with the challenges autism presents. There was a lovely story in Melbourne where three parents met each other at the workshop and discovered that their children were at the same school! Since the workshop they have formed their own support group which has made a tremendous impact on their lives.

For information, dates, venues and to register a few weeks ahead of dates, see www.autismtraining.com.au Please call 1300 881 971 with other queries.

CANCER COUNCIL AND YOUR FAMILY, ALL AT NO COST!

Cancer Council NSW invites parents and carers of primary school children in the Hunter region to participate in a groundbreaking new trial aimed at increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables. Free 'Fruit 'n' Veg \$ense' sessions will run from April to July 2009, in local schools and community centres across the Hunter region addressing issues such as fussy eaters, stretching your food dollar further, menu modification and planning. Sessions are free to attend and you will receive handy resources and new recipe ideas to use at home. The trial requires you to complete two short questionnaires and attend one session. To enrol and participate, please contact the Cancer Council (Hunter) Research Hotline on: 4923 0710 and leave your name, postcode & best contact phone number. Alternatively send an email to:

eatittobeatit@nswcc.org.au .

YOUTH ROAD AND TRAUMA FORUM

Youth and Road Trauma Forum Westmead Hospital and NRMA Motoring & Services holds a Youth & Road Trauma Forum for students in Years 10 to 12, to reduce the risk of severe injury and death as a result of potentially preventable road crashes. The event will be held at Acer Arena in Homebush Olympic Park on 18th 19th and 20th August 2009. For bookings or more information on the forum can be found on our website www.australiayouthandroadtraumaforum.org.

SCHOOLS FIRST

Schools First is a fantastic new initiative that is about improving outcomes for young people. At its heart, Schools First is about bringing together students, teachers, parents and community members, to support each other and help improve student outcomes.

With a prize pool of \$5 million every year for three years, Schools First is a national awards program that provides:

- Financial recognition of success in establishing effective school-community partnerships; and
- Financial support to build stronger school-community partnerships.

In support of the awards and their objective, Schools First will also:

- Provide regional workshops to support schools and communities to form or strengthen partnerships and prepare submissions for an award;
- Showcase successful partnerships as a means of inspiring other school communities; and
- Assist in developing a "knowledge bank" of resources on which school communities can draw.

And it's open to all Australian primary and secondary schools, whether they're public or private, special needs, religious or independent. There are over 60 regional awards, eight

State/Territory awards, and one national winner. Register for workshops across the country at <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/>

MS READATHON CLICK, FLICK & COLLECT

The 2009 MS Readathon will be celebrating 30 years of encouraging children to have fun reading to change the lives of Australians living with multiple sclerosis (MS). Each year the MS Readathon inspires children to help people living with MS by collecting sponsorship from family and friends for the books they read in the month of June. It's free for children to register online at www.msreadathon.org.au. Schools, volunteers and participants are needed NOW! For more information, contact the NSW on 02) 9468 8302.

FAQS:

Q: What services does the Federation of Parents and Citizens' provide?

Federations services can be roughly listed as follows:

- Membership of a state-wide network of shared decision-making and information
- An avenue through which P&C Associations can become incorporated entities
- Participation in a blanket Public Liability Insurance scheme offering indemnity to \$10 million and the option to purchase extension and alternative insurance cover.
- Access to industrial and constitutional advice
- Access to speakers for daytime or evening meetings
- Access to Federation's Information Days and the Training and Development Project
- Annual Conference.

Q: How does the P&C provide information for members?

Information is shared in a number of ways.

- P&C Handbook for the P&C Associations – includes general information for School P&C Associations; Constitutions; Information for Regional and District Councils of P&C Associations; The Government School System in NSW; Federation's Constitution and Policy; useful contacts and much more.
- P&C Journal – published four times a year. The Journal carries a range of relevant and topical items highlighting what is happening throughout the government school system at every level. We welcome feedback and any article you may wish to contribute. Please send all articles to journal@pandc.org.au.
- P&C Affiliate Webmail, Logon ID and Password
In August 2008 Federation introduced the P&C Affiliate Webmail System. This is a system that allows you to send and receive emails from the Federation from anywhere on the internet. The URL address is <http://mail.pandcaffiliate.org.au/Webmail/>.

The Federation of Parents and Citizens Association would like to thank the following sponsors for their ongoing support of Parents and citizens and public education in NSW.

