THE ELECTION CHOICE

LABOR

- Support full Gonski funding

COALITION

- Will cut Gonski funding after 2017

THE GREENS

- Support full Gonski funding

Full coverage inside
A GREAT TEACHER CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.

Would $10,000 help improve an education program you're passionate about?

Erin Emmett
St Augustine’s College
2015 Award Winner

The 2016 CommBank Education Awards are now open.

The CommBank Education Awards recognise and reward teachers across Australia who are making an outstanding contribution to developing the essential skills of their students.

A teacher or school leader who is running a financial, innovation or entrepreneurial education program, can apply to win one of 15 awards of $10,000 to put towards their program, plus $2,000 as a personal reward.

Applications close 5pm (AEST) Monday 15 August 2016.

Apply today
commbankeducationawards.com.au

EDUCATION AWARDS

Commonwealth Bank
04  Cool schools
Teachers looking to include sustainability and environment issues in their teaching can take advantage of a treasure trove of resources and activities online.

05  Education cannot wait
A new global fund aims to help continue the education of some of the estimated 75 million children affected by war, disease and disasters.

08  How the parties compare
Labor and the Greens have pledged to deliver the full Gonski.

10  You decide
We asked the Labor Party, the Coalition and the Greens to tell us about their education policies.

14  Gonski gains are obvious
It’s no surprise that extra Gonski funding is improving literacy and numeracy in thousands of schools and there’s a bonus: students are more interested in going to school.

18  Baby leave sets parties apart
The Senate denied the Coalition the chance to rip up its promise on paid parental leave so what will happen with a new government?

19  On life support
A guarantee of 70 per cent funding for TAFE would be the first step towards fixing the crisis and corruption in Australia’s vocational education sector.

24  A lost generation
Education is central to refugee children’s chances at a positive future. But they, and their teachers, have many barriers to overcome.

28  Meeting the challenges
It’s a truism of any workplace: new people bring new ideas, fresh legs and loads of enthusiasm. It’s certainly true of the crop of new teachers Australian Educator is following.

31  Happy snaps
Sally Mackander’s transformation of her Indigenous students’ attitude to school started with a novel way of getting their parents on side.

Regulars
04  FYI
06  From the president
36  Books
38  Recess
Coool schools

More than 900,000 students, 40,000 teachers and almost 5,500 schools across Australia are participating in Cool Australia’s environment and sustainability programs this year.

The not-for-profit organisation has recorded annual growth since it was founded eight years ago by photographer Jason Kimberley. While hauling a sled during an expedition to Antarctica, Kimberley decided to find a way to help educate young people to take better care of the planet.

Cool Australia provides more than 800 ideas through its website for learning activities across 18 different topics. And, each year it convenes Enviroweek to encourage the need for action and give schools opportunities to promote their activities.

While the week is an important promotion, it helps underline the need for ongoing programs through its slogan: ‘A year of action. A week of celebration’.

‘It’s a message that’s taken to heart at Gabbinbar State School in Toowoomba, Queensland where the Cool Australia programs and Enviroweek activities have been running for three years with Year 4s with teachers Samantha Ritchie and Marion Elvery.

‘It sits very well with some of the units of work we do,’ says Elvery. ‘We do a geography unit about waste management, a science unit that involves gardening and I run a gardening program with the students as well.’

The students also participate in promotional campaigns to reduce litter round the school, which is a popular activity, says Elvery. ‘I haven’t come across any child who doesn’t love getting out and being part of surveys about litter or promoting litter-free day and they’re always very happy to be out in the garden.’

Elvery says the Cool Australia website and its resources and links have been useful and appropriately targeted for the students. Enviroweek is 11-17 September.

More sustainability resources

While sustainability is one of the three cross-curriculum priorities, implementation of education for sustainability is still low.

The AEU is working with a coalition of organisations from the education, union, youth and environment sectors to work towards a higher priority for sustainability in the education system.

After surveying teachers, the coalition (known as the Australian Education for Sustainability Alliance or AESA) found that most wanted to focus more on sustainability in their teaching but needed help getting started.

AESA created the Getting Started with Sustainability in Schools website (sustainabilityinschools.edu.au) in response. It is a portal to direct teachers to high-quality education resources, contains case studies focused on how to create change, and information on how to link it, all back to the curriculum – in an accessible, direct way.

The Panama papers ring alarm bells for public ed

...Modern democracies are based on a fundamental social contract that everyone pays on a fair and transparent basis, so as to access public goods and services.

When those with privilege and resources avoid their responsibilities such as paying tax almost entirely – then the modern social contract is at stake.

Education is rightly at the heart of the modern social contract. Education is one of those precious gifts that we have at our disposal – to learn how to live with respect with each other, to leave a world in better shape than we found it, and... to give life to the next generation in all of its fullness.”

Susan Robertson, University of Bristol from the article The Panama Papers, public education and democracy. The article can be found at bit.ly/1TVIiGH

When those with privilege and resources avoid their responsibilities... the modern social contract is at stake.
Education cannot wait

Emergencies disrupted the education of nearly 75 million school-age children last year, according to a report by UK think tank, the Overseas Development Institute.

The organisation, along with a number of global partners including UNICEF, has helped establish a worldwide emergency fund to help provide education to children affected by war, disasters and disease.

The fund, Education Cannot Wait, aims to raise nearly US$4 billion to reach 13.6 million children in need of education in emergencies within five years, with the goal to reach 75 million children by 2030.

It’s the first global humanitarian fund to make education a priority, helping to ensure that, eventually, every crisis-affected child is in school and learning.

The fund’s five core functions are to:
1. Inspire political commitment so that education is viewed by both governments and funders as a top priority during crises.
2. Plan and respond collaboratively, with a particular emphasis on enabling humanitarian and development organisations to work together on shared objectives.
3. Generate and disburse funding to close the $8.5 billion funding gap needed to reach 75 million children and youth.
4. Strengthen capacity to respond to crises, nationally and globally, including the ability to coordinate emergency support.
5. Improve accountability by developing and sharing knowledge, including collection of more robust data in order to make better-informed investment decisions, and knowledge of what works and does not. See page 24 for our story about the barriers facing children living in crisis zones.

Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>July Schools Tree Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>July National Tree Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>August Wear it Purple Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>September Enviro Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>October Anti-Poverty Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment rights now

As the federal election campaign rolls on, it’s an important time to consider the need to strengthen our industrial relations system.

In addition to ongoing issues in many industries, the regulation of work has been in the spotlight with the horror stories about the exploitation of workers in the agricultural sector, convenience stores and fast food outlets.

In Employment Rights Now, the latest publication from the Australian Institute of Employment Rights, some of Australia’s expert academics, unionists, lawyers and other practitioners evaluate the current status of Australia’s industrial relations system. Rather than viewing employment rights through the lens of economic efficiency, Employment Rights Now applies the rights-based principles set out in the Australian Charter of Employment Rights.

To read more visit the AIER’s website (aierights.com.au).
Needs-based funding for schools is in danger of being abandoned in favour of a return to a flawed system that entrenches disadvantage and leaves public schools out in the cold.

Election is “make or break” for Gonski

Voters face a stark choice between investing in our schools, and delivering cuts to public education.

Unlike the last election, when we had a so-called ‘unity ticket’ on Gonski, this time the Coalition is not even pretending it will deliver the funding our schools need.

I wish it was otherwise; that we had recognition from all parties that we need Gonski funding to ensure our children get the education they need. But that is not the case.

Malcolm Turnbull has decided to turn his back on Gonski funding and move away from any attempt to address the chronic underfunding of disadvantaged schools.

He will cut Gonski funding after 2017 – depriving schools of two-thirds of the extra resources they need to give all their students a quality education.

Coalition funding mess

His funding alternative is a mess. It’s not needs-based, there are no guarantees as to how the funding is to be distributed and the Coalition can’t say how it will be paid for.

The Coalition’s Budget Papers clearly show a drop in funding to public schools in Tasmania and the Northern Territory after 2017 – something that should never happen under a true needs-based system.

For anyone who believes in public education and understands the power of schools to change lives, this is not acceptable.

We have a real choice at this election with both Labor and the Greens committing to providing the $4.5 billion that we need to fund Gonski in full in 2018 and 2019, and continuing to fund schools at that level.

During the last few months I have travelled around Australia visiting schools and campaigning for the Gonski reforms.

I have seen the evidence of the difference Gonski funding can make, when it gives skilled and passionate educators the resources they need.

Gonski funding is working. Students across Australia are getting the one-to-one support, literacy and numeracy programs and other assistance they need to excel. Teachers in disadvantaged schools are starting to get the resources they need to back their efforts.

You won’t find many public educators who think that governments are throwing money at schools, or that extra funding won’t make a difference.

You’ll find plenty who are juggling tight budgets, trying to ensure that limited resources are spread across all students, particularly in areas of chronic underfunding like support for students with disability.

These are the schools that are starting to benefit from Gonski funding, and are finally getting resources they can use to meet the needs of their school community.

Barrack Heights Public School on the south coast of NSW is one such school. Principal Sarah Rudling says it has been able to turn around the performance of its students, who are primarily from low-income families.

The school created two Alternate Learning Classes, which run from Year 2 to Year 6, for students with behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties or disability. Each class is capped at 15 students with the teacher supported by a full-time aide, and an extra teacher for part of the day.

Students benefit for life

Giving these students one-to-one support has made a huge difference, with many students able to return to mainstream classes. These students will reap the benefits of Gonski for the rest of their lives.

Rudling says good teaching is labour intensive. “We need to invest time in children to get the rewards, and that takes money that too many schools don’t have.”

She’s right. The funding we want for our schools is not a cost, it’s an investment in ensuring as many children as possible leave school with the skills they need for life and work.

We can’t continue with a situation where one in seven students is at risk of leaving school without adequate literacy skills.

Quality, accessible public education is vital for Australia’s future. Making a quality education available to everyone is the engine of economic growth and social equity.

Economic modelling commissioned by the AEU has shown Australia would be $72 billion better off by 2070 if we could ensure all children left school with the basic skills they need for work.
How Turnbull’s budget failed public education

• No funding for the fifth and sixth years of Gonski – offering $3.8 billion less than Labor and the Greens for schools in 2018 and 2019
• Extra funding for schools not based on need, cuts for public schools in Northern Territory and Tasmania
• No clarity on how schools funding is to be distributed beyond 2017
• New schools disability funding model delayed again - originally promised for 2015, now pushed out to 2018 school year at the earliest
• No increased funding for TAFEs
• No guarantee that TAFEs will receive government funds ahead of private providers
• VET FEE-HELP scheme to remain in 2017 but with caps on overall funding
• No guaranteed funding for 15 hours per week of early childhood education for four-year-olds after 2017.

Correna Haythorpe
AEU federal president

...we don’t want an education system where a student’s chance of getting vital support depends on where they live or go to school.

To do this we must have a system of needs-based funding, which recognises that public schools educate the vast majority of disadvantaged students.

If we don’t invest extra in these students we have no chance in closing the gaps in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged students, which are about three years by the time students reach Year 9.

Australia does not need Malcolm Turnbull to return us to a flawed funding system that ignored need and, up until 2014, saw the biggest government funding increases go to the schools with the lowest needs.

That’s why we have campaigned for Gonski – because we don’t want an education system where a student’s chance of getting vital support depends on where they live or go to school.

Campaigning in key seats

Our I Give a Gonski campaign will run up until polling day and beyond if necessary. Our coordinators will be on the ground in key target seats – knocking on doors, putting pressure on local MPs and talking to school communities about why this election is important.

We will continue to run print, online and TV advertising in key areas to tell people why Gonski is a key issue at this election.

The Coalition’s schools funding plan needs to be exposed for what it is – a pre-election fix designed to make it look as if Malcolm Turnbull has a commitment to needs-based funding.

The future of needs-based funding is at stake at this election. We need to do everything we can to ensure that our public schools get the resources they need to provide opportunity for future generations of Australians. Let’s make every vote count for Gonski at this election.

Correna Haythorpe
AEU FEDERAL PRESIDENT
The Labor, Greens and Coalition schools’ funding policies show a clear difference between the parties that want to invest in schools and those that want to end Gonski after 2017.

How the parties compare

Both Labor and the Greens have committed to an extra $4.5 billion for schools in 2019 and 2020, distributed on the basis of need. This means that the full six years of the Gonski agreements can be delivered.

These resources will build on the good work that Gonski funding is already doing in schools across Australia, and ensure that disadvantaged schools get the funding increases they need for their students.

The Coalition is promising an extra $1.2 billion, to be delivered from 2018 to 2020, which it claims represents an increase of 3.56 per cent per year, ahead of inflation.

However, there are still doubts about key aspects of this policy, including exactly how the funding will be distributed. Despite claims it will be needs based, the Coalition’s own budget papers show cuts to public schools in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

The distribution between states is yet to be worked out and, while the Coalition says states must meet certain conditions for their schools to receive funding, it can’t say what will happen if the states refuse.

Both major parties are promising a long-overdue increase in support for students with disabilities. The Coalition will deliver an extra $118.2 million, while Labor is promising $266.7 million from 2017 to 2019.

It is clear that Gonski is a major difference between the parties and is a key election issue.

The Coalition talks about needs-based funding but what it is promising will not deliver the increases that disadvantaged schools need. Labor and the Greens have shown they understand the importance of investing in our schools by funding Gonski in full.

### Key differences in education policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Coalition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total additional funding (2018 and 2019)</strong></td>
<td>$4.5 billion</td>
<td>$600 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra funding for public schools (2018 and 2019)</strong></td>
<td>$3.5 billion</td>
<td>$228 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability funding</strong></td>
<td>$266.7 million (2017-2019)</td>
<td>$118.2 million (2016 and 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indexation</strong></td>
<td>Under the Australian Education Act there are three rates of indexation between 3 and 4.7 per cent depending on where a school is in relationship to the Schooling Resource Standard.</td>
<td>Flat rate of indexation for all schools of 3.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding model</strong></td>
<td>Student need in each school is assessed under the Gonski needs-based model as set out in the Australian Education Act.</td>
<td>Schools frozen at 2017 funding levels plus indexation of 3.56%. Redistribution model for public schools promised but no detail. No guarantees states won’t be worse off. Budget shows cuts for NT and TAS public schools and large increases for WA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource goal</strong></td>
<td>Lift all schools to the national resourcing standards recommended by the Gonski review.</td>
<td>No goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State and territory government financial requirements</strong></td>
<td>Required to commit the additional funding set down in the original Gonski agreements (NSW, SA, VIC, TAS and ACT). Negotiations with QLD, WA and NT on their contribution. Required to make no cuts in their own funding.</td>
<td>Maintain their spending on schools. Also required to agree to other conditions, including literacy tests for Year 1s – but no detail on what will happen if they refuse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What the parties are promising

Universities

Guarantee of $11,800 per-student funding to provide certainty to universities and remove the need for higher fees.

New funding system for universities by 2018 after a review of funding rates for subsidised students.

20 per cent reduction in student fees in the transition to free university education for all Australians.

TAFE & VET

Guarantee proportion of vocational education funding to the TAFE sector and a comprehensive review of VET and TAFE.

VET FEE-HELP loans to be capped at $8,000 a year.

Strengthen the powers of the regulator to crack down on dodgy VET providers and establish a National Training Complaints Hotline for students.

VET FEE-HELP scheme to be redesigned for 2017.

Support for TAFE: vocational education and training should be primarily provided through the TAFE system.

Paid parental leave

Six months, paid leave for the primary carer, up from the current allowance of 18 weeks.

Industrial relations

The ALP: Supports the current rule, first introduced by the Gillard government: 18 weeks’ paid leave at the minimum wage in addition to any employer provision.

The Coalition: No PPL to any parents already covered by an equal or more generous employer provision, as most AEU members are.

The Greens: Will end the freeze on Medicare rebates.

Medicare

Lift the freeze on Medicare rebates from January 2017 with indexation to be restored at a cost of $2.4 billion over four years.

Freeze on Medicare rebates to continue until 2020. Extra $2.9 billion for hospital funding.

Will end the freeze on Medicare rebates.

Climate change

Cut 2005 emission levels by 45 per cent by 2030 with net zero emissions by 2050 by introducing emissions trading schemes for electricity generators and big industry. More than 50 per cent of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030.

Cut 2005 emission levels by 26–28 per cent by 2030 by paying companies $2.55 billion for projects that cut greenhouse gas emissions. More than 20 per cent of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020.

At least 90 per cent of energy renewable by 2030 and energy efficiency is doubled. A new government body, RenewAustralia, set up to driving the transition to a clean energy system. A $250 million Clean Energy Transition Fund to assist coal workers and communities with the transition.

Housing

Restrict negative gearing to new homes from July 2017, and halve the capital gains tax discount on investment properties to 25 per cent.

No intention to change negative gearing or capital gains tax.

Phase out negative gearing. The savings to be invested in affordable housing.

Supports the current rule, first introduced by the Gillard government: 18 weeks’ paid leave at the minimum wage in addition to any employer provision.

No PPL to any parents already covered by an equal or more generous employer provision, as most AEU members are.

See story page 18
We asked the Labor Party, the Coalition and the Greens to tell us about their education policies.

You decide

The Australian Labor Party

Kate Ellis
Shadow Minister for Education and Early Childhood

SCHOOL FUNDING
A strong and equitable education system is at the heart of Labor’s positive plan for Australia.

Labor will deliver the Gonski reforms on-time and in-full, so our schools and teachers have the resources they need to help every student achieve their best. Labor’s Your Child. Our Future policy will deliver $3.8 billion more in school funding compared to the Liberals in 2018 and 2019, meaning the needs-based Gonski reforms can be delivered.

The current gaps in equity and achievement between Australian schools are unacceptable. Labor believes every child deserves a great education, regardless of their postcode.

To ensure permanent and ongoing improvement in our schools, Labor has provisioned $36 billion for Your Child. Our Future over the next decade. This will more than reverse all of the Turnbull Liberal Government’s $29 billion school cuts and provide long-term certainty so schools, principals and teachers can focus on improving outcomes for their students without having to constantly worry about resources.

As a condition of Labor’s investment, state and territory governments will be required to keep existing agreements, will not be permitted to cut school funding and will be required to make co-contributions. Labor will work with Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia to make sure students in these jurisdictions get the full benefits of the Gonski reforms.

A Shorten Labor government will also work with the states and territories to properly fund a disability loading in line with the outcomes of the national data collection process.

Students with disability, their parents and teachers have waited long enough. Labor will also provide $320 million in interim targeted funding for students with disability from 2017.

TAFE
Labor strongly supports TAFE and recognises the economic importance of a strong public provider. We will protect and strengthen our public TAFE system and restore integrity to Australia’s vocational education and training sector.

Last year, Bill Shorten announced that Labor will introduce a TAFE funding guarantee – making sure a guaranteed proportion of vocational education funding stays with TAFEs.

Labor will undertake a comprehensive National Vocational Education and Training Sector Review to ensure our vocational education system is properly equipped to train Australians for the jobs of the future and recognise the central role of our public TAFE system.

In response to dodgy private providers, Labor will also introduce a VET FEE-HELP loan cap of $8,000 a year to stop the waste of taxpayers’ money, prevent

The Coalition

Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training

THE COALITION’S RECORD
Education is the foundation of a skilled workforce, a growing economy and a creative community. The jobs of the future will be more complex than the jobs of today and will need higher and better levels of education.

While states and territories are primarily responsible for funding and running government schools, the Australian Government has an important role in setting national priorities, promoting coordination, and providing additional funding that is affordable and deliverable.

Australian schools generally achieve good outcomes but our performance has declined over time, despite significant increases in real terms in total government funding over the last decade. We agree with the education experts, including the OECD and ACER, who know that, while a strong level of funding is necessary, how that funding is spent is even more important. We can

CONTINUES ON P13
and must do better to focus on what is needed to improve.
Since coming to office, the Coalition has kept its school funding promises, and our record level of investment in schools has seen the biggest increases go to government schools. There have been no cuts and there will be no cuts, despite the scare campaigns of some.
Funding will continue to grow faster than both enrolments and inflation every year under the Coalition, meaning schools that have introduced new initiatives or resources as a result of funding growth since 2014 can confidently continue to build on them.
Our focus has, and will continue to be, on important reforms for all students that align with the pillars of the Students First policy — teacher quality, school autonomy, engaging parents in education and strengthening the curriculum.

THE PLANS OF THE TURNBULL GOVERNMENT
The Turnbull government’s future plans for schools are a two-pronged approach to lifting student achievement.
First, the Turnbull government will continue to grow school funding, above our current record levels of funding.
Total funding for schools will grow to a record total of $73.6 billion over the next four years — a $4.1 billion, or 26.5 per cent, increase from 2015–16 to 2019–20. This growth is faster than enrolments and faster than inflation.
Funding for government schools will increase by an estimated 33 per cent and non-government schools by an estimated 22.7 per cent. It will be directed according to need. As David Gonski recently said, “needs-based funding is what I pushed for, and we have that... neither party... are now against needs-based funding”.

Nick McKim
Education and Skills portfolio

At its core, education exists for the public good. Wealth should not determine an individual’s quality of education.
The Greens want to build a public education system that is recognised as being among the best in the world, where funding is provided on the basis of need.
The Greens recognise that all levels of education are critical components to lifelong learning, and the government has a primary responsibility to fund all levels of the public education system.
Care for children is the responsibility of society as a whole. The quality of care received by babies and children produces flow-on effects for the whole of their lives and the community. Early childhood education should be provided by government and accredited community organisations and not-for-profit providers.
We also must take into account the resources of each individual school, a direct measure of parental socio-economic status, and the school’s capacity to generate income from all sources, including fees and other contributions.
Monies saved from any reforms to the funding model of very wealthy non-government schools must be reinvested into public schools with the highest proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
We have committed to the full funding of the Gonski reforms, along with a much needed $4.8 billion to increase resources for students with disability over the next four years.
Culturally appropriate education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which incorporates language and culture into curricula and supports families and children to engage with the education system, is essential. The system should enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to establish and control their own education where they choose to do so, in their own language, consistent with their culture. This is part of a comprehensive plan for fairer funding for schools.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND VET
All students should have the opportunity to study at university and TAFE, regardless of their private capacity to pay for their education.
A publicly owned and properly funded TAFE system plays an essential role in providing economic prosperity and a socially just society by offering lifelong educational opportunities and skills development to a broad range of our community. Vocational education and training should be primarily provided through the public TAFE system. The community not-for-profit adult education and VET sectors should also be supported, but not be at the
SEA LiFE

EXCURSION EXPERTS
Explore our amazing underwater worlds!

☆ SEA LiFE Aquariums offer guided lessons for your class with our expert staff, plus self-guided options.

☆ Discover thousands of amazing marine creatures across a number of marine habitats, including sharks, turtles, jellyfish, rays, penguins, sea horses and many more!

Animal display selection varies by location – contact us or visit our website for more information.

QUOTE ‘AUS ED’ & SAVE 10%!
*Conditions apply

☆ Our education programs are National Curriculum aligned and can address all areas of the Australian science curriculum as well as geography, tourism, arts and hospitality.

☆ Free downloadable teacher resources are available from our websites.

SEALIFE Mooloolaba
PH: 07 5458 6226
Email reservations@underwaterworld.com.au
www.underwaterworld.com.au

SEALIFE Sydney Aquarium
Ph: 1-800-199-657
education@merinorecreations.com.au
www.sydneyaquarium.com.au

SEALIFE Melbourne Aquarium
Ph: 03 9923 5911
Email bookings@melbourneaquarium.com.au
www.melbourneaquarium.com.au

Manly SEALIFE Sanctuary
Ph: 1-800-199-742
education@merinorecreations.com.au
www.manlysealifesanctuary.com.au

* Mention this advert when you book a new new class visit, to save 10% off the normal school rate. Only valid for new bookings, you must book and visit by 31 December 2016.
students being ripped off and improve training outcomes.

**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**
Despite some improvements, the gap in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians remains unacceptable.

Delivering the needs-based Gonski reforms on-time and in-full – including the loading for Indigenous students – will make sure schools have the resources they need to run targeted local programs.

A Shorten Labor government will invest $100 million to support Indigenous students to succeed at school and to boost the number of Indigenous teachers by providing 400 teaching scholarships.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
Labor believes every child deserves the very best start – and that means access to affordable, quality early childhood education and care.

In government, Labor introduced federal support for preschools. As a result, enrolment climbed from 70 per cent in 2008 to 91 per cent in 2013.

Labor is concerned by the Turnbull Government’s proposed early education and care changes, with independent analysis showing one in three families will be worse off.

The Liberals’ Budget decision to delay additional investment in early education and care until 2018 will hurt families already dealing with high out-of-pocket costs.

Early education is one of the smartest investments we can make. Labor believes we must get the balance right between early education and parents’ workforce participation. Labor will have more to say about early education and care during the campaign.

**The Coalition**

The Turnbull government will also deliver an additional $118.2 million for schools to support students with disability for the 2016 and 2017 calendar years, ahead of new needs-based formulas applying from 2018. This delivers on our promise to use the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability to inform funding.

Government schools are set to receive 80 per cent of this increased funding. That will take the level of Commonwealth assistance for students with a disability to $1.4 billion and $1.5 billion in 2016 and 2017 respectively, as part of a record $5.3 billion investment from 2014 to 2017.

Second, Commonwealth funding will be tied to evidence-based initiatives to support student achievement, such as improving literacy and numeracy, increasing engagement with STEM subjects, and rewarding high-performing teachers and incentivising them to work in disadvantaged schools. Contrary to some misinformation about these initiatives, we want to reward teachers for their performance against the nationally agreed teaching standards, not the NAPLAN results of their students.

These reforms will be implemented in a way that supports teachers to focus on the classroom and minimise red tape. The Turnbull government will continue to work with teachers, principals and education experts to deliver record funding and implement reforms that help current and future generations of Australians to achieve their full potential.

**The Greens**

expense of, or in competition with, public TAFE.

Universities are places of learning and research where the needs of the whole community and the values of service to the public, scholarship and academic freedom should take priority over sectional and commercial interests. This is why the Greens have committed to a 20 per cent reduction in student fees as we transition to free high-quality university education for all Australians.

The Greens will ensure that universities are adequately resourced by the government to ensure planned growth in the sector can occur in order to improve accessibility. An increase in the cost-index per student funding of all public universities, and adequate funding to all rural, regional and outer-suburban universities should also occur.
It’s no surprise that extra Gonski funding is improving literacy and numeracy in thousands of schools and there’s a bonus: students are more interested in going to school.
Andrew Barnes is amazed at the progress his school has made in turning around low attendance levels. The principal of Eagleby South State School in Queensland says the improvement has been “staggering”.

He confesses that he wasn’t optimistic when he first arrived almost eight years ago. The school, which serves an area between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, had been languishing with a student population of 230 students. Many suffered some form of disadvantage, large numbers did not regularly turn up for school, teacher turnover was high and there were rumours the school would close.

Today the school has grown to more than 400 students who want to go to school. So much so that Barnes sets challenges for days on end of 100 per cent attendance. Teachers want to be there too.

“We’re no longer haemorrhaging staff; people want to work here. They enjoy coming to work and feel optimistic about the work they do. Over the 10 years I’ve been lurking around this little area that has been an amazing change. It’s the key — having good teachers with good relationships with their students.”

Catalyst for change
The catalyst for change was extra funding. It began a few years ago with the National Partnerships program but it was cemented with the Gonski funding.

“The Gonski funding has allowed us to get really serious with early years literacy, oral language literacy and working memory programs that are now flowing into the rest of the school,” says Barnes.

He points to the range of programs and the extra teacher aides the school couldn’t afford before Gonski. “A clear trajectory of improvement would be put under great threat if we didn’t have that early years work there because kids come here way behind the eight-ball in terms of oral language and early chronological awareness. I hate to say this, but the person who does the language screening when we first meet the kids usually needs a cup of tea and a good lie down when we finish. The numbers aren’t good.

“We have a lot to catch up. That’s why if we didn’t have the resources to do that intense work in the early years we’d be in really bad shape.”

The school also keeps an eye on students’ wellbeing with a nurse employed four days a week. It’s a vital job because of the numbers of students who come from complex layers of disadvantage. While Gonski funding doesn’t pay for the position directly, the school couldn’t afford it without Gonski funding covering other costs.

“It’s impossible to expect us to run a school with the same resources as a leafy green school, when we’re dealing with three to four times the amount of intense work with students and contact with parents.”

Barnes likens working in challenging schools to an extreme adventure, saying teachers can get caught up in the excitement of making a difference, but only if they’re supported by appropriate resources.

“We need to offer a high-quality program for students and quality support for teachers,” he says.

“I think it costs about a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year to keep a child in juvenile detention. By contrast, we’re getting about $288,000 here to help this whole school of little human beings. I can’t see how that doesn’t add up as a preventive,"
While schools in many parts of the country are reveling in the chance to give their students more support thanks to Gonski funding, the Northern Territory has effectively pocketed the cash from Canberra.

The $272 million in federal funds handed to the NT government is likely to have ended up in schools but it hasn't been spent where it's needed most: in providing extra support for students. By its own admission, the government has diverted a large part of the allocation to things it wasn't intended for, says Jarvis Ryan, AEU NT branch president.

"[NT education minister] Peter Chandler boasted about this a number of times on the radio, saying: 'We've been building schools and investing in infrastructure'. And a senior bureaucrat confided in me: 'We quite like the Gonski deal we got; because there's no strings attached we can do what we want with the money'," says Ryan.

Help for those without support
The new and extra services schools can now afford thanks to the Gonski dollars are helping those who in the past may have 'slipped under the radar'.

That's certainly the experience at Darlington Primary School in Adelaide where improvements in literacy and numeracy results have been "outstanding", says acting principal Jo Miller.

Three-quarters of the school’s 300 students are from the two lowest socioeconomic status profiles, and 47 per cent are from non-English speaking backgrounds. It runs five intensive English language classes.

The $180,000 in Gonski funding Darlington has received over two years has paid for an intervention teacher to provide extra support in reading and maths.

"What's most beneficial, says Miller, is that the students specifically targeted for the program are those who don't qualify for other resources. "They're not on an NEP [Negotiated Education Plan], they don't have a disability and they don't have behavioural issues so we can't get funding for them anywhere else. This money has been used to help those students to really improve," Miller says.

Fast-tracking results
The ability to fast-track improvement has been a welcome result of the Gonski dollars for Simon Dewar, principal at Colac Secondary College, west of Melbourne.

It is Colac’s first year of Gonski funding so it’s early days for hard data but Dewar says students and teachers are reporting good success.

After carefully considering how best to spend and measure its allocation of $300,000, the school added extra VCE subjects to provide more choice, employed an extra wellbeing staff member and is running some targeted literacy programs for younger students.

There’s also a tutoring program for senior students and the school is considering extending that to run an after-hours homework program, supported by qualified teachers, as well as a program to target students in need of some extra help.

For Dewar, running a school with 460 students from a diverse range of SES backgrounds in a country area, the opportunities provided by the Gonski funds have created a sense of excitement.

As a result, there’s no way to know where all the Gonski funds have gone. "Although we know a reasonable chunk of it has just been creamed off the top by Treasury and put into consolidated revenue."

Not only has the NT government failed to make the best use of the Gonski funds but it’s actually cut funds to public schools by about five per cent since 2013. In per student terms the cuts are 4.5 per cent.

During the same period there’s been a 24 per cent growth in government spending on private schools. "That answers the question as to where some of the other Gonski money has gone," says Jarvis.

The cuts have affected staffing levels. The education department has lost about 10 per cent of its workforce, including about five per cent of teachers. And that’s putting pressure on teachers to take more classes.
Schools across the nation are building more sport into the daily lives of children through the Australian Government’s $100 million Sporting Schools initiative.

“Our students look forward to our sessions every week. I have noticed their fitness levels, teamwork, leadership and resilience developing and improving.”

In partnership with more than 30 national sporting organisations (NSOs), Sporting Schools assists with providing the resources to help sporting clubs, coaches and teachers to deliver sport before, during, and after school hours.

For further information about Sporting Schools and our partner NSOs, visit sportingschools.gov.au/sports
The Senate denied the Coalition the chance to rip up its promise on paid parental leave, but what will happen with a new government?

Baby leave sets parties apart

Type “paid parental leave” into the search engine on the Liberal Party website and you’ll be told “your search yielded no results.” It’s no wonder they want to keep quiet. Even by their own standards, the Coalition’s backflip over paid parental leave (PPL) was spectacular, from Tony Abbott pledging a gold-plated six months’ leave at full pay to Joe Hockey ripping away what federal entitlement tens of thousands of new parents already had — and branding them spongers and double-dippers for good measure.

As Australian Educator went to press, Coalition policy denies PPL to any parents already covered by an equal or more generous employer provision, as most AEU members are.

Indeed, were it not for the Senate’s refusal — following a vigorous campaign by unions — to pass the measure, the cut would be in place from July 1, and many AEU members would be up to $11,800 worse off just as they bring a new life into the world.

One of them would have been Derinda Blake, a Grade 1 teacher at Aitken Creek Primary School in Craigieburn on Melbourne’s fringe.

Blake’s baby is due on August 3; yet, her colleague Lisa Noto, who gave birth to baby Nelson on May 19, would have remained eligible for the leave.

“It was very frustrating,” Blake says of the wait to see if the Coalition bill would pass. “The difference [in due dates] between Lisa and me was only a few weeks and yet the financial difference was going to be huge. We do the same job but we were being treated very differently.

“Because I have a mortgage and my partner’s wage is less than mine, without that [PPL] money, I would barely be able to pay the bills. As it is, I’m planning on coming back next year even part-time just because of the money.”

The AEU and other unions fought long and hard for PPL. Until the Gillard government introduced a universal right to 18 weeks’ paid leave at the minimum wage, Australia was one of only two OECD countries without it.

That right was in addition to any employer provision. “The Gillard government scheme and workplace schemes were designed to work together to allow AEU members to take the time needed to care for their babies during the essential early weeks,” says AEU federal women’s officer Sally Thompson.

But in the desperate search for savings, the Coalition went from outbidding the ALP to accusing employees, such as teachers, of “fraud” for being able to access both employer and government support.

Six months’ leave remains stingy by international standards — in the UK it’s 39 weeks and in Sweden it’s 60 weeks. “Health experts nominate 26 weeks as the minimum time that mothers should spend bonding with their babies,” Thompson says. “There are a number of health and social problems associated with women being forced to return to work earlier.”

The ALP says it would maintain the existing provision. The Greens support “a fair PPL scheme with six months’ paid leave for the primary carer, up from the current allowance of 18 weeks.”
A guarantee of 70 per cent funding for TAFE would be the first step towards fixing the crisis and corruption in Australia’s vocational education sector.

On life support

There’s never been a more uncertain time to be looking for access to high-quality, affordable vocational education.

The market reform process, which began in 2012 with the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, introduced the VET FEE-HELP scheme and required state governments to allocate their recurrent VET funding to TAFE and private, for-profit providers. It’s been a disaster for TAFE colleges and the many students who rely on vocational education as a pathway to learning the skills that will help them adapt to and succeed in an economy in transition.

In four years the reforms have reduced the number of colleges and campuses across the country through closures or amalgamations, thousands of teachers have left the sector as a result, and TAFE’s national market share has dropped from around 70 per cent to 50 per cent and continues to fall.

Meanwhile, as the private for-profit sector grows, so do reports of misconduct and fraud. This year alone, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has pursued five private providers forcing the return of more than $460 million in taxpayer funding and the reversal of enrolments and student debt.

Policy vacuum

AEU Federal TAFE secretary Pat Forward says the lack of a big-picture policy on vocational education is leading to terrible inequity. “This isn’t just poor management, the scheme itself is entirely corrupt.”

To re-introduce certainty and help the badly damaged VET sector rebuild, the AEU is calling on governments to guarantee a minimum of 70 per cent funding. The remaining 30 per cent, says Forward, could be allocated contestably. “And TAFE would have a reasonable chance of getting a fair proportion of that as well.”

At the moment, 46 per cent of VET funds are open to the private sector. That equates to around $1.5 billion annually, a 220 per cent increase since 2005. And the VET FEE-HELP market has grown from $25 million to $4 billion in seven years.

However, the 70 per cent solution would be a holding measure, not a solution, says Forward. “We’re simply saying this is the immediate first step. Then we should have the argument about increasing funding in the sector because, no matter where you go, funding has been on a never-ending decline.”

The rhetoric around vocational education has always been about being responsive to employers’ needs and Forward says it’s the sector with the most potential to be involved in innovation, new skills and technology.

“Yet, despite being an integral part of the education system more broadly, governments have failed to develop a serious vision for its future,” she adds.

Unions and business groups agree government policy has left the sector in a parlous state, and Forward says there’s no evidence that market reform has delivered anything positive.

Forward is calling on all governments to support their TAFE colleges by guaranteeing a minimum of 70 per cent government VET funding; abolishing the VET FEE-HELP scheme; suspending the registration of any new private providers; and developing and implementing strong regulation and monitoring of all private colleges.

To sign the Stop TAFE Cuts petition, visit: stoptafecuts.com.au/petition

This isn’t just poor management; the scheme itself is entirely corrupt.

Pat Forward
AEU Federal TAFE Secretary

To sign the Stop TAFE Cuts petition, visit: stoptafecuts.com.au/petition
Actions speak louder than words when it comes to the Coalition's record. Thousands of jobs have been lost and the only growth has been in attacks on penalty rates and unions.

Jobs and workers’ rights under threat

If 18,000 jobs were shed in an industry such as steel manufacturing, you might expect a public outcry, a national debate and a call for the government to step in. But what if it’s the government that sheds the jobs?

That is what the Coalition has done to the public service by stealth over its three years in power. To ACTU president Ged Kearney it sums up the government’s attitude to workers and the alarming increase in job insecurity it has fostered.

“Eighteen thousand jobs — it’s extraordinary,” she says. “People are feeling very insecure.

“Forty percent of the workforce is in some form of precarious employment, whether it’s casual work, a short-term contract or an independent sub-contractor that only has one client and a decade ago would have been employed by that company.

“Take the subbies who put Foxtel on your roof. They have to provide their own truck, their own tools, their own workers’ compensation, but they only have one client: Foxtel. Sub-contractors have no access to annual leave, no long-service leave, they have to supply their own insurance. To all intents and purposes, they lose every protection they had as employees.

“We’ve even heard of call-centre operators being sacked and then employed back as contractors, where they have to hire their desk, their phone, their computer.

“It’s the Uber-isation of the workforce and it’s having dire consequences for people’s job security, their safety and their wellbeing.”

Prime minister Malcolm Turnbull’s response, she says, is to offer huge tax cuts to multi-national corporations while threatening penalty rates. “The Coalition is not interested in keeping secure jobs in this country — they’ve made no bones about it.”

Union bashing laws voted down

This, remember, is a double-dissolution election called on the back of the Senate’s refusal to pass union-bashing legislation.

Many will be familiar with the bill to reinstate the Australian Building and Construction Commission and its coercive powers over construction workers — now widened to include those transporting goods to building sites. It makes it a criminal offence under threat of imprisonment to refuse to be interviewed, and removes the right to silence and to your own lawyer.

But the election has also been called over the Registered Organisations Bill, which Kearney says would restrict unions from doing their “core business, entering workplaces to talk to members and allowing members to have a democratic say in their unions”.

The bill seeks to apply corporate-level fines for even minor breaches of its transparency or reporting requirements, including administrative errors such as failure to lodge forms correctly, Kearney says. Liable to penalties would be not only the union but the members who sit unpaid on branch councils.

“We are not multi-national corporations and we are already highly regulated,” Kearney says. “The Turnbull government simply doesn’t like what unions do: protect their members.

“People expected more of Malcolm Turnbull, including me. At the beginning he was consultative; he was calling us for meetings. We were trying to plan an innovation agenda. But he has just resorted to type, union-bashing and scaring us on national security.

“He’s not offering us a bright future; he’s offering multi-nationals tax cuts at the expense of education, health care, decent welfare and decent pensions.”
Education, health and affordable housing are essentials that deserve to feature in the federal election campaign.

“AUSTRALIA IS A VERY prosperous nation with a long – albeit deeply flawed – egalitarian tradition.

But today, we have a society and an economy more closely aligned to the principle that to those who have much, more will be given. And from those who have little, even the little they have will be taken away.

Those who are left out or pushed out of society are blamed and punished for their own exclusion. The message they receive is that, if only they tried a little harder all would be well, whether it’s breaking into the housing market or into the labour market.

The reality is there are structural causes for people’s exclusion and we have the means to address these causes.

We need a massive redistribution of wealth, of resources, of opportunities and of hope. We need a progressive taxation system so that those who are not paying their share are made to do so.

Investing in Gonski, in TAFE, in public health and in social and community services should not be seen as charity or welfare; they should be seen as a common good that belongs to everybody, from our first peoples through to our most recent arrivals. None of them should be dependent on the depth of your pockets.

In prosperous Australia, 105,000 people are experiencing homelessness. We have 200,000 households on waiting lists for social housing. About one million households are experiencing housing stress. With such levers as negative gearing and capital gains tax exemption, housing has become a speculative sport rather than a human right available to all.

St Vincent’s has called for the creation of a $10 billion social and affordable housing fund to address this major market failure.

We’d like to see a robust jobs plan that addresses the structural drivers of unemployment. If the private sector cannot create the jobs, governments have to step in.

We have seen no move to address the dire needs of those waging a daily battle for survival from below the poverty line. The New Start Allowance is $38 a day – nobody can be expected to survive on that. It must be increased; but instead the government is taking away the Carbon Tax compensation. It’s an appalling and vicious attack.

In health, we’re again seeing the death of Medicare by a thousand cuts. Universal healthcare is a precious thing – we need to protect and extend it. We need to make sure that nobody says they cannot take care of their health because they need to put food on the table.

If you want to build a strong economy, it doesn’t make sense to deny your population access to high-quality healthcare.

A place to live; a place to work for those who can, and adequate income for those who cannot; a place to learn; and a place to heal. That’s what this election should be about: very simply, on making sure that nobody misses out on the essentials of life.”
**Coalition plan to dismantle Medicare is false economy**

**Primary health care urgently needs an injection of funds — not the $57 billion in cuts planned by the Turnbull government.**

*THE BIGGEST ISSUE* confronting the health sector today is the $57 billion in cuts to hospitals and to the public health system, funding that was committed for the next 10 years by the previous (Gillard) government.

Its effects will be felt in bed, and even hospital closures, busier emergency departments and longer waiting lists, right down to the most basic level, where fresh linen doesn’t appear as hospitals scrimp and save in ways that really matter to patients.

Nurses and midwives know the type of care their patients need. But, if they aren’t, given the resources, their hands are tied.

If the Coalition gets back in, these cuts will go through. The $2.9 billion over three years announced in April still leaves a massive hole and comes with no implementation plan that we’re aware of. We need a commitment from parties to restore that funding.

The Coalition says we don’t have the money. Nurses and midwives have repeatedly outlined how resources can be used more efficiently, but this requires proper reform. We need to put real money into primary health care and prevention. If you invest early on, you reap savings later.

Instead, the Coalition’s agenda is systematically to dismantle Medicare to retain just a safety net system like we see in the US. Medicare is not a safety net. It’s a universal health insurance scheme. No matter how rich or poor you are, Medicare is there.

They started with the GP co-payment, which was so vociferously opposed they had to back down. Now they’ve frozen the rebate for GPs, who will struggle with this real terms cut and feel forced to pass costs on to patients.

To add to that, the government is trying to remove bulk billing incentives from diagnostic and imaging services — blood tests, pap smears, ultrasound scans and the like.

It makes no sense to deter people from visiting GPs or taking tests that could prevent serious complications. When people get sick, that load will flow on to the hospital system.

Staffing in aged care is inadequate. Too many elderly people are not respected or cared for in a decent way. Over the past decade, the proportion of money that employers spend on direct care has declined.

Yet Tony Abbott removed the quarantine on $1.2 billion that providers were required to use for employment and training.

Some of the stories we hear from members are horrific: only one registered nurse for up to 100 patients working with care staff with up to 15 patients each, some with dementia. Some providers even restrict incontinence pads because they’re costly.

The final issue for us is penalty rates, which can make up 20 to 45 per cent of income for nurses and midwives. The lowest-paid nurses are heavily reliant on penalties.

It’s not just compensation for time away from the family. It’s a matter of increased responsibility. If you’re there at 4am on a Sunday morning, you’re it – there are no doctors. There will be a raging storm of nurses and midwives if the government takes penalty rates away.”

---

**Annie Butler**

Australian Nurses and Midwives Federation’s assistant federal secretary
Quality PD opportunities: August, September, October, November

leading a digital school™ conference
digital classrooms | digital schools

Thursday 25, Friday 26 and Saturday 27 August 2016
Crown Conference Centre | Melbourne

“to leverage is to lead”
leverage technology to:
> rethink schooling (day 1 theme)
> shift to deeper learning (day 2 theme)
> develop students who create (day 3 theme)

K-12 digital classroom practice™ conference
best practice | superior outcomes

Friday 2 and Saturday 3 September 2016
Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

A conference exploring best digital practice to achieve superior teaching and learning outcomes in the digital classroom

FlipCon™ Gold Coast
Thursday 13, Friday 14 and Saturday 15 October 2016
Saint Stephen’s College

FlipCon™ Adelaide
Thursday 17, Friday 18 and Saturday 19 November 2016
Brighton Secondary School

Your choice: attend FlipCon Gold Coast or FlipCon Adelaide to embrace Flipped Learning
• Flipped classroom
• Flipped school
• Flipped homework
• Creating flipped resources
• Technology and how to tips
• Going beyond to deeper learning

Phone 1800 760 108 | Fax 1800 760 908
Email team@iwb.net.au | Web www.iwb.net.au
Education is central to refugee children’s chances of a positive future. But they, and their teachers, have many barriers to overcome.

By Nic Barnard

It’s a typical school day. Due to anxiety and fear, you have had an almost sleepless night in a Northern Territory detention centre where your mother is on suicide watch. Accompanied by a uniformed security guard, in a country and culture you barely understand, you make the 45-minute trip to school in punishing heat. Now you are supposed to settle down and concentrate on learning before making the trip back ‘home’.

Until recently, this was the experience of children at Wickham Point immigration detention centre, 35 kilometres from Darwin, as reported by paediatricians from the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) who visited late last year.

Since then, almost all asylum seeker and refugee children on the Australian mainland have been released into community detention. They live, relatively freely but with some restrictions, in specified accommodation with their families. If they are unaccompanied minors, they live in group houses with full-time carers.

But the AHRC report on Wickham Point nevertheless underscores the trauma endured by families seeking refuge and asylum, and the barriers it creates to education here and abroad.
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says every child has the right to education. But what does that mean for children too traumatised, stigmatised or alienated to learn?

**Millions on the move**

Globally, a generation of children and young people risks being lost as the world struggles to cope with refugee migration on a scale unseen since World War II.

The numbers are almost too large to grasp. Almost 60 million people are on the move and 51 per cent are aged under 18, says the UN High Commission on Refugees.

As Australia struggles in many respects to cope with a few thousand refugees, the biggest burden is being borne in Europe where a million people crossed the Mediterranean last year, seeking safety and a new life — and almost all from the Middle East.

A sober session of the AEU's federal conference in February heard Education International general secretary Fred van Leeuwen outline the scale of the problem and the pressure it is putting on teachers.

"Without the chance of a quality education, an entire generation risks being lost, excluded from society," he told the conference. "The repercussions for this missing generation can't be underestimated. They go far beyond poverty and lawlessness, to hopelessness and despair. In too many cases, they become fertile ground for radicalisation."

"These are not long-term solutions. There is only so much that teachers can handle," says van Leeuwen.

**Teachers' extra roles**

Reports show that one in five refugee students in Germany has post-traumatic stress syndrome or disorder (PTSD) as a result of the war situations they have come from.

"How can we possibly expect our teachers to carry out their classroom duties while also assuming the roles of social workers, psychologists and cultural translators?" asks van Leeuwen.

The AHRC echoes these concerns. Its president, Professor Gillian Triggs, acknowledges that access to education is improving since the government released children from detention centres such as Wickham Point, but says major barriers remain.

"There are still huge issues. Some of them are simply traumatised. We know that 34 per cent of children, according to a global medically recognised test, were suffering medium to severe mental illness, compared with two per cent in the general population in Australia," she says.

"The other issue is that they are often well behind [other children], so there are problems for teachers managing the difference in curriculum. Teachers and principals have to manage this, and they need the resources to be able to bring the children up to speed."

"Despite a fragile infrastructure and a lack of funding, Lebanon and its teachers are doing everything they possibly can to see that at least 150,000 children have a seat in a classroom," says van Leeuwen.

Many teachers in Lebanon are working double shifts. In Jordan, they have been transferred to overcrowded schools, without proper training or consultation. They have no preparation time, lack the resources to adapt the curriculum to the students' needs, and they earn just $10 an hour.

"Very few of the teachers have the training or experience to teach psychologically traumatised students."

"In the detention centres, the English language training is miserable — absolutely dreadful — and..."
The repercussions... go far beyond poverty and lawlessness, to hopelessness and despair. In too many cases, they become fertile ground for radicalisation.

Fred van Leeuwen
Education International general secretary

the people were so demoralised, they’d look at you in despair [if you suggested going to class]."

Highest-risk category
The children at Wickham Point represented the purest distillation of this problem. Paediatrician and academic Professor Elizabeth Elliott said the 69 children (out of 76) that she and her Sydney University colleague Dr Hasantha Gunasekera screened were among the most traumatised they had seen in their combined 50 years of experience.

Every child under the age of eight was at risk of developmental problems, with half of them in the highest-risk category. Ninety-five per cent of the over-eights were clinically at risk of PTSD and scored in the highest category for hopelessness, an indicator of future mental health problems. Some said they simply wanted to die. The key safety factor at the centre, for adults and children, was the risk of self-harm.

Children had already been in detention for between three and 17 months and were suffering the accumulated effects of traumas that could include witnessing atrocities at home, the dangerous journey to south-east Asia, a perilous crossing to Australia, and then arrest and shuffling between detention centres.

The biggest fear for many was of being returned to Nauru. “Those who have been to Nauru have experienced death,” said one refugee. Despite their release from Wickham Point, refugees are acutely aware that the government still wants to send them back to the island.

One seven-year-old girl was refusing school, refusing food and had lost weight. She had headaches and stomach pains. She regularly suffered night terrors, waking frightened and screaming that someone was going to take her back to Nauru. She had cut herself with a razor on her chin, face and chest, and talked of suicide.

A 15-year-old said: “I honestly don’t see a future. I wish I had died in the ocean.”

Relief and frustration
In such circumstances, school was a relief for some. “Otherwise they would go mad,” said the father of a nine and ten-year-old. But school was a source of frustration for others, who found it difficult to learn.

“The teachers are really helpful, but I’m distracted by thoughts of the past,” said a 16-year-old boy.

Older youths can’t access vocational education or training. “There is nothing for me to do here,” said one 19-year-old. “I have lost three years of education.”

The AHRC is urging the government not to return the children to Nauru, where more than 150 remain in detention or in the community. Triggs says the provision of education, although “hardly ideal”, is improving through additional government funding. But conditions on the island remain a serious risk to children’s health and development.

For van Leeuwen, education is “the key that opens up the future”. Education International is seeking ways to get the many teachers among the refugees and asylum seekers back in front of a class.

The UN has just ratified a new goal of free primary and secondary education for all children. “This is the moment where this much-needed goal is being put to the test,” says van Leeuwen. “And we are determined to make sure ‘all children’ includes refugee children.”

Nic Barnard is a freelance writer.
Fanless, Clever and Quiet

The Switch Alpha 12 makes no noise because it has no whining fan, and that's because it has a fan-less heat pipe CPU cooling system, Acer LiquidLoop™, that effectively cools the powerful CPU under its hood. Cool, quiet power. There's a new quiet achiever in the classroom!

MAKE THE SWITCH AT BYOD.ACER.COM.AU

Screen simulated, subject to change. Windows Store apps sold separately. App availability and experience may vary by market.
It’s a truism of any workplace: new people bring new ideas, fresh legs and loads of enthusiasm. It’s certainly true of the crop of new teachers Australian Educator is following in 2016.

**BY NIC BARNARD**

**NEW EDUCATORS**

Meeting the challenges

From trialling student film clubs to setting up international school exchanges, our quartet of new teachers hit the ground running this year. But it hasn’t all been plain sailing.

Now in their second and third years of teaching, only one of them has that prized permanent position, and another has her fingers crossed for good news. One teacher is already at her second school of the year.

Meanwhile, they’ve been getting to grips with new classrooms, new cohorts of students and new responsibilities. They’ve also been deepening their involvement in the AEU.

Our sophomores are Japanese language teacher Aiko Wendfeldt in Canberra, English and history teacher Jenny O’Reilly in Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory, and country Victorian arts teacher Cally Grogan. Melbourne primary school teacher Tom Davis is now in his third year and is the only one to secure a permanent position so far.

It’s a sign of their exhausting but rewarding 2015s that all four came back in January this year raring to go. “I’m teaching a very curious and ready-to-learn group of Year 7s, which is a change from my experience last year,” says O’Reilly, who’s at Tennant Creek High. “They’re very enthusiastic about their learning and it has been a delight.

**Photography by Dean Golja, Steve Reichen**
“We’re doing ancient Egypt in history and we’re going to make toilet paper mummies out of ourselves.”

Flying solo
Meanwhile, at Montmorency South Primary School, Davis also has a new cohort of students. For the first time he’s flying completely solo, after two years team-teaching in a double classroom (two classes, two teachers).

“It’s good,” he says. “There have been some, I suppose you’d say, difficulties in getting to know the kids and understanding their behaviours and getting them on task. Building up these routines has been a bit more challenging this year.

“It’s been interesting. It’s a challenge, but obviously we’re working as a team [the year group teachers] to establish clear boundaries.”

They’ve all noticed a change in their teaching. Wendfeldt, at Campbell High School in the ACT, says: “It’s much better than last year. I think I’m more confident, and more experienced. It helps behaviour management, and because I’ve taught the whole year before, I know what to prepare and what sort of pace to teach the lessons, which makes it much easier to plan the content.

“I have a lot more energy physically. When I started, I got really tired by 3 o’clock. Last lesson, I’d feel almost dizzy, I couldn’t get up. Now I feel OK.”

O’Reilly says she feels “more comfortable” this year. “I know the students, I know the routines of the school, but it feels busier than last year. Probably because I have more idea about what I’m doing. I’m more aware of the tasks you should be doing. You have a longer to-do list.”

New duties
O’Reilly says she has been “much more shocked” this term by how quickly the weeks have flown by her. “It’s been a blur.”

As a result, she has stepped back from taking on too many new responsibilities. “I probably put my hand up for more things at the start of last year, being a bit naive about what I could cope with. This year I’ve made a conscious decision to really focus on my teaching.”

That said, she sits on the school’s behaviour committee and is getting involved in the town’s multicultural group, which runs an event in August.

In Canberra, Japanese-born Wendfeldt has set up a school exchange with her old alma mater, Gyoshu High in Numazu, 50 kilometres from Mount Fuji. Twenty students came to Australia last year and she visited the school in the summer break.

Meanwhile, in Victoria, Davis is co-ordinating the annual school camp and is part of the school’s ICT and data teams, while Grogan has her hands full adjusting to a new school, new town and new kids after changing schools midway through Term 1.

As expected, her one-year contract at Cohuna Secondary College, covering a teacher on sabbatical, was not renewed. However, the Murray River region’s tight network of schools yielded the hoped-for one-term contract, at nearby Kerang Technical High. That, at least, allowed
Jenny O’Reilly, Tennant Creek High School

I’m teaching a very curious and ready-to-learn group of Year 7s, which is a change from my experience last year.

“Remember, Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies.”
– The Shawshank Redemption

At Tennant Creek High School in the Northern Territory, Jenny O’Reilly says: “One thing I’ve tried this year is watching and analysing a movie with some of our older fellas. (We don’t call our male students ‘boys’ because you don’t know if they’ve gone through initiation yet and it’s offensive to call an initiated man ‘boy’.)”

“One theme they all identified with was having hope in a very difficult situation, which, I think, resonates with most people in their lives, but particularly in some of the difficult lives that people have here in Tennant Creek.

“I’ll definitely be doing it again - if I find the right movie.”
As a teacher with an all-Indigenous class at Clyde Fenton Primary School in Katherine in the Northern Territory, Sally Mackander was aware from previous experience that going out into the community and getting to know the students’ parents would be crucial.

But many parents had only ever heard from teachers when there was negative feedback about their children, and many were reluctant to deal with school staff due to their own experiences as children. Whenever they saw the school bus coming, “they’d run a hundred miles”, she says.

Mackander used a simple but ingenious method to break the cycle. She bought a mobile phone, took photos of the children’s work and texted it to their parents.

“When the children got home, they were able to talk about what they did at school in a positive light, rather than how they got into trouble that day,” Mackander says.

Parents loved receiving the texts so much, it wasn’t long before they were chasing Mackander to make sure she had their phone number.

Now that there was a dialogue between the teacher, the kids and their parents, relationships and attitudes became more positive. The school started seeing marked improvements in attendance, behaviour and academic outcomes.

“If you have a good relationship with parents, they’re going to send their kids to school,” says Mackander, who followed up with a creative approach to teaching that made the children feel welcome and excited about coming to school.

Sally Mackander’s transformation of her Indigenous students’ attitude to school started with a novel way of getting their parents on side.

**Happy snaps**

**Award winner**

Mackander, who was recently appointed principal at Wugularr School in Katherine, is the 2016 recipient of the AEU’s Arthur Hamilton Award for an outstanding contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Sandy Bennett, a colleague at Clyde Fenton Primary, says part of Mackander’s success was that she centred the lessons on the interests of the children and made them feel proud of their achievements.

For example, during literacy lessons, the children relished the opportunity to talk about local stories they knew from their families.

“You say to them, ‘I don’t understand this story, what’s the purpose of it?’ and they’ll be able to tell you. It gets them talking and sharing ideas,” says Bennett.

Mackander also taught students and staff to understand that the ability to speak Katherine creole and other local languages is an important and legitimate part of the children’s identity.

**Song of pride**

With the guidance of Mackander and a colleague, the children wrote a song using a mixture of English and local language words, and performed it at a school concert. “You could see there was so much pride,” says Bennett.

Mackander went further, teaching staff about cultural awareness and conducting night classes for parents on how to help their children with numeracy and literacy, and building on their technology skills.

Now in her new role as principal at Wugularr School, she says she’s getting to know the community again.

“It’s about getting yourself known and becoming part of a bigger picture, so we can accelerate kids’ learning.”

**If you have a good relationship with parents, they’re going to send their kids to school.**

Rom Rogers is a teacher and freelance writer.

Sandy Bennett, a colleague at Clyde Fenton Primary, says part of Mackander’s success was that she centred the lessons on the interests of the children and made them feel proud of their achievements.

For example, during literacy lessons, the children relished the opportunity to talk about local stories they knew from their families.

“You say to them, ‘I don’t understand this story, what’s the purpose of it?’ and they’ll be able to tell you. It gets them talking and sharing ideas,” says Bennett.

Mackander also taught students and staff to understand that the ability to speak Katherine creole and other local languages is an important and legitimate part of the children’s identity.

**If you have a good relationship with parents, they’re going to send their kids to school.**

Rom Rogers is a teacher and freelance writer.
The STEM Video Game Challenge is boosting the skills and firing the imaginations of students.

BY CYNTHIA KARENA

The STEM Video Game Challenge promotes students’ interest in science, technology, engineering and maths. More than 1,500 students took part in creating games for last year’s challenge.

Teachers report that they can barely contain their students’ enthusiasm for their projects.

This year Tregilgas is starting a challenge lunch club “to create a nice environment to explore STEM”. Teachers shouldn’t worry if they don’t feel qualified, she says. “You need enthusiasm, not knowledge.”

Driven to learn

Getting a whole class involved in the STEM challenge is too hard, says Philip Gregory, a science teacher at Bunbury Senior High School in Western Australia. “Making games isn’t for everyone.”

Gregory’s son Kwergan, a Year 10 student at the school, won the Year 9-12 individual advanced category last year with Rewire, a problem-solving game using concepts found in electronics and robotics.

BRIEFLY

The STEM Video Game Challenge promotes students’ interest in science, technology, engineering and maths.

More than 1,500 students took part in creating games for last year’s challenge.

Teachers report that they can barely contain their students’ enthusiasm for their projects.

More than fun and games

Battles fought with multiplication tables, desert explorers using elements of the periodic table to survive, and protecting endangered Australian animals from an evil robot invasion were just some of the games Australian students created last year for the STEM Video Game Challenge.

How to get more students seriously interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is an ongoing challenge, but it’s vital for Australia’s economic success. Hence the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) running the challenge as a national competition for all students in Years 5-12.

John Pirie Secondary School, in Port Pirie, South Australia, was so proud of its student Aiden Court, when he won the Year 9-12 individual category last year, it erected a billboard in front of the school bearing his photo and game.

Court’s game, Rexplorer, features endangered animals and evil robots. Players are adventurers who navigate through maze-like levels to be rewarded with information about each animal they rescue. “Aiden is an avid filmmaker and loves games, so making games seemed a natural progression for him,” says teacher Deb Tregilgas, who discussed the challenge with her Year 10 media studies class last year. “I saw a kid who suddenly found a future. The project helped him crystallise his career pathway as a game designer and understand where he should study [after Year 12].”

The STEM challenge is a “fabulous, non-traditional outlet” for students, she says. “They can work at their own pace, with no teacher breathing down their neck and no assessment. They don’t need to produce something the teacher wants them to do.”

Court used some class time on the game, but mostly worked at home. “Aiden shared his knowledge with his mates in class. Other kids were interested to see how his game was progressing.”

This year Tregilgas is starting a challenge lunch club “to create a nice environment to explore STEM”. Teachers shouldn’t worry if they don’t feel qualified, she says. “You need enthusiasm, not knowledge.”

Driven to learn

Getting a whole class involved in the STEM challenge is too hard, says Philip Gregory, a science teacher at Bunbury Senior High School in Western Australia. “Making games isn’t for everyone.”

Gregory’s son Kwergan, a Year 10 student at the school, won the Year 9-12 individual advanced category last year with Rewire, a problem-solving game using concepts found in electronics and robotics.
"I remember watching him making a rope on the computer screen, trying to make it move like a piece of rope would," says Gregory. "He was driven to learn the physics of the situation, looking at online tutorials to fill the gaps in his knowledge."

Under the rules of the competition, Gregory couldn’t help his son or the other students with the technical aspects of creating their games. The students need to be determined and motivated.

“I’m on a learning curve myself. I was initially unsure about my role, and, although I occasionally play games, I don’t create them. I’m more prepared to facilitate the process this year.”

Gregory finds the Teacher Learning Pack on the challenge website useful. It explains game development basics, has links to the curriculum, demystifies gaming jargon and recommends game-making software to match student ability.

This year Gregory plans to have a few checkpoint meetings to see how everyone is going and provide support, especially with identifying key elements needed for the Game Design Document.

“The document is a record of students’ ups and downs and details the game’s development process, what their game is about, and how they brainstormed and planned the project. Some students have dropped out mainly because what they were trying to make didn’t work the way they planned.”

Winning students go to the annual PAX (Penny Arcade Expo) Australia gaming convention where industry professionals play the games and discuss what goes into making a great game. It’s an opportunity for students to network and have their games reviewed,” says Gregory.

“Kwergan made business cards he exchanged with others, and he loved seeing members of the public play his game.”

Indigenous winner

Year 9 and 10 game design students at Montrose Bay High School in Tasmania created their games in class. Information technology and game design teacher Luke Webster also held workshops outside of class.

Six groups at the school submitted games to the challenge, with one winning the Indigenous achievement award for Couch Gaming: Times of War, where players defend a castle from invading forces by answering multiplication questions.

“I saw a kid who suddenly found a future. The project helped him crystallise his career pathway…"

Deb Tregilgas
John Pirie Secondary School

Aiden Court from John Pirie Secondary School in South Australia’s game, Rexplorer, features endangered animals and evil robots.

Resources
stemgames.org.au/resources
pwc.com.au/stem.html
About one in four of the more than 1,500 students who registered for the STEM Video Game Challenge last year were female.

"Increased exposure to STEM-related skill sets in a fun and interactive way empowers both male and female students to achieve great things in the future," says Liam Hensel, the challenge’s project director at ACER. "Students don’t have to possess a great degree of technical skill to get started. They just need to be encouraged to take that first step," he says. "Our goal isn't to direct students to be scientists or mathematicians or even game developers. It's to provide a catalyst for students to engage with an increasingly valuable set of skills that will empower them to succeed in the future."

Webster says the benefits for students who take part in the challenge include teamwork. "They became good at helping each other out," as well as working to a timeframe, focusing on a theme and understanding the design process.

Last year’s students were so keen, they emailed Webster about the progress of their games out of school time. Even on weekends and holidays. "At school they were tracking me down at recess and lunchtime to open up the classroom. I’d have to hide if I wanted a break."

Webster’s gaming class has a dozen groups working on entries for this year’s STEM challenge.

"It lets you unleash your creativity," says Cynthia Karena, a freelance writer. "I'm on a learning curve myself. I was initially unsure about my role, and, although I occasionally play games, I don't create them."

The artistic side of making games appeals to some girls, including Bunbury Senior High School Year 7 student Jessica Armstrong, who's working on a game for this year’s STEM challenge.

"It lets you unleash your creativity;" she says. "I'm a very creative person, and when you’ve got a world to create from your own imagination, that really interests me. Although I've never made a game before, I think it will be a really good experience."

"Students don’t have to possess a great degree of technical skill to get started. They just need to be encouraged to take that first step," he says. "Our goal isn't to direct students to be scientists or mathematicians or even game developers. It's to provide a catalyst for students to engage with an increasingly valuable set of skills that will empower them to succeed in the future."

Cynthia Karena is a freelance writer.
**My best app**

**ChatterPix Kids**
(iOS; free)

Students can record their voice over photos to make them ‘talk’. With a few taps they can record their voice and tell a short story, says Cho. “This app promotes speaking and digital storytelling. It allows unconfident students to speak up and express an opinion. For EAL (English as an additional language) students, it allows them to listen to their own voice – fluency, pronunciation, intonation – and improve on those when required.” Cho also uses the app to provide instructions and messages to students.

**Book Creator**
(Android, $3; iOS, $7.99; Windows, free)

With Book Creator, students can create and publish ebooks, pdfs and comics. Cho asks students to draw their own pictures and create sentences. “They can import photos and videos too. Students send their books directly to me for correction.” In a project exploring two-dimensional shapes, students photographed triangle and square shapes in the classroom. “They discussed how many angles and vertices are in the shapes and verbalised that in their book. It’s easy for me to listen to their work later.”

**Strip Designer**
(iOS; $4.49)

While this app is for designing comics, Cho also uses it to create posters. “When firefighters came to the school to give a safety talk, students used Strip Designer to show us what they had learnt about the drop-and-roll technique that was discussed. Students took photos of each other dropping and rolling, and created speech bubbles with instructions. Students find it easy to adapt this app to show other things they have learnt.”

**More apps to explore...**

**Complete Anatomy**
(iOS, free, with in-app purchases for additional systems)

The detail of the 3D diagrams of a human skeleton will inspire students to further explore the intricacies of the human body. Students can add connective tissue and then zoom in for more detail. Rotating the 3D model, or specific parts, gives interesting perspectives from many angles. Tap a section for pop-up text to learn about a specific body region. A specific body part can be disassembled using the ‘Explode’ tool that allows students to see the connections between bones. Students can add photos, and overlay the body with typed or handwritten annotations or diagrams (using their fingers or the Apple Pencil with the iPad Pro) and their own voice recordings.

**Tinkerplay**
(iOS; $4.49)

Quality 360-degree aerial panoramic photography allows students to rotate and zoom in on over 300 (and more being added) famous locations from cities including New York and Seville to natural wonders such as the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, Mount Everest, the Great Pyramids, and Machu Picchu. The detail and perspective is extraordinary. Students can also move their iPad around as if they are at the location, getting a full view of the landscape.

---

**Virginia’s tip**

“If you come across an app that looks difficult, still have a go, because the technology is there to assist teaching. Find a how-to video guide on YouTube to show you how to use the app and how to get the most out of it.”

**Virginia Cho**
Collingwood English Language School, Melbourne

Virginia Cho is enthusiastic about the power of technology in the classroom. Now in her eighth year of teaching, Cho says technology immediately hooks students into whatever project they’re doing. She uses apps in the classroom because they are easy for students to access. “Students can work at their own pace, and it’s easy for them to share their work with other students and teachers,” says Cho.

**SHARE YOUR SECRETS**

Which apps do you find useful in the classroom? Let us know at educator@hardiegrant.com.au
Rising to the challenging

The description is one that almost any teacher will relate to: challenging students are those whose brain functions are “obscured by layers of mistrust, disability, boredom and neglect”. As a result, poor concentration, memory and organisation, depression, anxiety, self-destructive behaviour and language deficits can come into play.

“These students crisscross categories of disabilities,” says American author, consultant and former teacher Jeffrey Benson. “There’s no guarantee that any intervention will work and there are no guarantees that growth will happen within a given period of time.

“With no reliably predictable timetable for success, these students try our patience, arouse our emotions and often bruise our professional pride as teachers, problem solvers and caretakers.”

Success, he argues, hinges on ‘hanging in’ – which is what he called his 2014 book, subtitled Working with challenging students (published by ASCD, United States).

Hanging In is a guidebook of collective wisdom based on years of experience. It focuses on practice in the classroom, offers rich insights into tactics, strategies and mindsets, and lists approaches that teachers, school teams and administrators can take with individual students. There’s even the case of a failure – a student who drops out and never returns to school.

Although the book is mainly about high school students, it’s also relevant to teaching younger children.

100 repetitions

Benson says ‘hanging in’ means working through as many as 100 repetitions for a student to ‘grow into new skills and for us to learn what works’.

For teachers, it involves a high degree of ‘respectfulness’ for their students, working from students’ strengths, creating opportunities for them to reflect, learning from errors, allowing multiple interests to inspire diverse solutions, and working as a team with other school staff.

There are no magic shortcuts to hanging in, and approaches and teaching strategies will differ between students, says Benson.

The importance of building trust emerges as fundamental before the learning can begin. Trust can be demonstrated by “standing still” in class and allowing the student to, intellectually, come to the teacher.

Every moment that a teacher has with a challenging student is “an opportunity to build the relationship or inhibit the relationship”.

“Ask questions about emotional states before commenting on behaviour - are you having a bad day, are you confused about this work, you seem angry today yes? Do you need a couple of minutes to just do nothing?”

It’s about asking students to “do something really risky – talk with me about what they’re understanding and not understanding, what they’re pondering”.

We also write up other things [on the blackboard] such as that everyone should have a good laugh every class...

Jeffrey Benson
Let us know what you think

Have you recently read a book that has inspired your teaching or your students? Tell us about it at educator@hardiegrant.com.au, on facebook.com/AEUfederal or on Twitter @AEUfederal

Exquisite respect

Benson talks about a teacher who, in the first week or so with her class, lines up students outside the room and asks each of them to choose how they’d like to be greeted: with a fist pump, high five, handshake, hello, hug or any other reasonable method they suggest. “You have to leverage everything you can for kids who’ve grown up not trusting adults. When kids come into your class, look them in the face and say, ‘Hi, I’m glad you’re here.’ Every kid needs it.”

“Teaching is so dependent on building relationships with kids, and exquisite respect is one of the foundations... Part of that is seeing the students [as] independent of all of our interventions and great adult ideas... just standing back and appreciating exactly where they are and [accepting] them.”

The author outlines his work with a volatile student, Jasmine, who had experienced sexual abuse. She was quick to speak, but slow to process information. “It was time for me to stand still. She could then step safely in my direction, on her own terms. I had to be where she could find me intellectually.”

Blackboard dynamics

In the US, teachers write curriculum-based class goals on the blackboard for students to ponder. Benson says this creates an opportunity for improving class dynamics in other ways.

“We also write up other things such as that everyone should have a good laugh every class, by the end of this week you should trust [the teacher] more, and your good efforts should be appreciated.”

Although teachers may perceive a class activity as ‘no risk’, it could have a different, greater meaning for challenging students. “Hidden in every set of classroom activities are trapdoors and landmines that can cause challenging students to disappear or explode. Anticipate those risky moments in each activity [in your lesson planning] and develop a way around them.”

He also reminds us that few jobs for adults require that we “switch work sites and supervisors every hour” and have to “adjust to a shift in sound, seating, objects and tones”, and yet students are asked to continuously navigate these transitions.

Margaret Paton is a freelance journalist and former primary school teacher.
Mark Redhead is living proof that funding for excellence is a wise investment.

BY CYNDI TEBBEL

Seeimg the bigger picture

WE ASK ...

Mark Redhead sees his younger self in the students at Mansfield State High School in Brisbane.

He thinks back to 1990 when he was a high school student in Tennant Creek, in the Northern Territory, and knew he would require financial assistance if he was to go to university.

Redhead’s hard work earned him a teaching service scholarship and he went on to teach in remote Northern Territory schools and more recently in Queensland.

He also worked in Strategic Human Resources at the Queensland Department of Education, which showed him the importance of practical teaching experience informing decision-making.

“It’s one thing to publish information,” he says, “but, in order to prove it has the expected outcomes, you need people with the intellectual space and time to test programs.”

Redhead is the acting Head of Learning and Performance at Mansfield State High, a high-performing school with more than 2,000 students. He teaches senior English, film, TV and new media. He’s also managing the school’s NAPLAN responsibilities.

Proof in results

Redhead says that, while all politicians may agree that schools are important, they don’t all make the connection that increased funding improves results.

Mansfield State High demonstrates that it does. For the past 12 months, Gonski funding has enabled it to employ literacy and numeracy coordinators who have made an “enormous contribution”.

The coordinators have been testing numeracy and literacy strategies, preparing materials, and providing staff training, taking the pressure off classroom teachers. A successful Reading Recovery program, RAMP is directly benefitting the most academically disadvantaged students.

To take that support away would mean that the results for our most needy students won’t be as strong.”

In another example, tests have shown that students’ use of a literacy strategy known as “The Eagle and Wolf” a higher-order thinking program developed in partnership with the QCAA has improved student test scores by up to 20 per cent following their use of the strategy.

Mansfield High sees it as a collegial obligation to share such rewards with other schools. It funds one of the literacy coordinators to visit rural schools west of Brisbane and sends letters of appreciation to the primary feeder schools that send their students to high school.

Fostering filmmakers

It’s paying off further up the line, too. During Redhead’s five years at Mansfield, the number of students studying film has tripled, and more than 20 have gone on to study it at tertiary level.

Last year a former student picked up a British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award (BAFTA). Another student has nominated Redhead for an Australian Scholarships Group National Excellence in Teaching Award (NEiTA). He’s on the shortlist and enjoying the opportunities it has presented him with. ⬤

Cyndi Tebbel is a freelance writer.

Why do you teach?

We’d love to hear your best tips for engaging young minds. Email us at educator@hardiegrant.com.au if you’ve got something to share. You can provide a written piece or we’d be happy to interview you.
3 ways to save on a new car

1. Get a great discount
   You save $3,795* on the car’s purchase price, using our buying power

2. No GST to pay
   You save $3,095* as there’s no GST to pay on the car’s purchase price

3. Enjoy great tax savings
   You save $13,132* in income tax over 4 years

Save $20,022* over 4 years on a new Mazda CX-5 Maxx Sport valued at $37,945**

Save thousands with a novated car lease.
Get an obligation free quote today.
1300 156 497 | www.teachersleasing.com.au

*Savings example is indicative only and is based on the following assumptions: living in NSW 2123, salary: $70,000 gross p.a., travelling 15,000 kms p.a., lease term: 48 months. The purchase price discount represents a typical saving and is compared to the manufacturer’s on-road price of the new vehicle. All tax savings calculations include budgets for fuel, servicing, tyres, maintenance and re-registration over the period of the lease. These calculations also include comprehensive motor insurance, 2 year extended warranty and gold aftermarket pack, which includes window tint as part of the offer. The total amount saved is a comparison to financing the purchase price of the vehicle over 4 years and paying for all running and maintenance costs out of your post-tax earnings. Your actual savings will depend on your income tax bracket, the GST processing method nominated by your employer, administration fees payable under your employer’s salary packaging plan, the negotiated Smartleasing discount on your chosen vehicle and your personal circumstances. **The vehicle price stated for CX-5 Maxx Sport 2.5i AWD is correct at the time of print and may be subject to change. Vehicle price stated includes all NSW on-road costs and government charges, and excludes gold aftermarket pack.
We do everything as if you are here

You work hard to support the community; we work hard to support you.

Your needs, your goals, your retirement.

You wouldn’t have it any other way. Neither would we.

firststatesuper.com.au  |  1300 650 873