Building better // The case for capital works in public schools
A deepening divide // Counting the cost of digital inequity
The extra mile // Creating classrooms in unique locations
Looking to the past // How history lessons can shape the future

River of learning
The school community forging strong bonds with its local Elders
RESOURCES & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR 2021

**TILTING YOUR TEACHING: Seven simple shifts that can substantially improve student learning**

Here’s the perfect book for every teacher who feels this close to excellence in the classroom. Meet the Seven Simple Shifts – small adjustments you can make to your teaching practice that can have a big impact on student learning. Each Simple Shift is grounded in research, classroom-tested and can take as little as a few seconds to master – seriously!

MCR1574 • $34.95
Glen Pearsall with Natasha Harris

**EDUCATING AND RAISING BOYS**

Modern education is failing our boys. Educating and raising boys challenges society’s war on boys and boyishness, and encourages educators and parents to explore the ways they can create positive social and learning environments that recognise the complexities of the developing brain. An invaluable resource for any educator or parent who wishes to enhance the lives of the boys they teach and raise.

HB6111 • $39.95
Michael C Nagel

**COLLABORATIVE TEAMS THAT WORK: The definitive guide to cycles of learning in a PLC**

The PLC at Work® model has transformed education around the world, but some educators remain unsure about collaborative team meetings and how they translate to the classroom. In this essential guide, PLC experts Colin Sloper and Gavin Grift take the confusion out of collaboration to bring clarity and focus to your team meetings and create real results for the students you serve.

HB6104 • $44.95
PRE-ORDER
Due Dec 2020
Colin Sloper and Gavin Grift

**CARS® & STARS® Plus**

CARS® & STARS® Plus is a comprehensive reading program consisting of 10 levels (P–H) that allow you to identify and teach 12 reading and comprehension strategies and improve literacy results.

See the evidence and find out more about this essential and effective classroom series at hbe.com.au/carsandstars

**GLOBAL PD**

Self-paced online PD with accredited mini-courses, 700+ videos, books, study guides and more!

- Access hundreds of videos and resources developed by educational experts for educators.
- Explore the work of leading authors such as Dylan Wiliam, Anthony Muhammad and Robert J Marzano.
- Discover topics such as professional learning communities, Response to Intervention (RTI) at Work™, assessment, leadership and more!
- Use online tools to unpack standards, build common assessments, review team data and manage interventions.

The power to improve is in your hands with Global PD – claim your FREE 14-day trial today!

Visit hbe.com.au/global-pd or contact info@hbe.com.au

ORDER NOW AT HBE.COM.AU

+61 3 8558 2444  +61 3 8558 2400  www.hbe.com.au  orders@hbe.com.au
ON THE COVER Maclean High School’s award-winning River of Learning program has been developed in partnership with local Elders to embed Yaegl culture across the Year 7 curriculum.

PHOTOGRAPHY David Young

06 NEWS IN BRIEF
• AFLW star shares her inspiring story
• AEU joins #EndCOVIDForAll campaign
• Push to educate more teachers about childhood trauma
• Earth school offers global connections

08 CAPITAL GAINS
Thousands of public schools are in dire need of new buildings and maintenance, so why is the government still handing out billions of dollars to private schools?

14 YOUNG LEARNERS IN NEED
A looming lack of early childhood educators could derail the national policy of quality preschool for all.

18 A DEEPENING DIVIDE
A new report has revealed the depths of Australia’s digital inequity. Now, more research is required to give students a level playing field.

22 RIVER OF LEARNING
A high school in country New South Wales is forging strong bonds with local Aboriginal Elders to support and inspire students.

26 GOING THE EXTRA MILE
Three teachers working in unusual locations reveal the classroom is what you make it.

30 LIFE LESSONS
Our new educators emerge from a year of chaos and confusion with a positive outlook for the future.

34 PROFITING FROM A CRISIS
Remote learning triggered a huge business opportunity for private tech firms, sparking fresh concerns over the collection of students’ data.

36 HISTORY IN THE MAKING
Understanding how to interpret and critique history can prove vital in helping students develop their own identities and values.

REGULARS
04 From the president
05 Know your union
38 Recess
BUDGET 2020: F FOR FAILURE
A strong economy and a fair society are not mutually exclusive. Governments can make choices that simultaneously improve productivity and prosperity and advance lives equitably.

Budget 2020 was arguably the most important in a generation, a historic opportunity to re-build a stronger and fairer Australia post COVID-19.

Instead, when it was handed down, there was no recognition of teachers and education support personnel being on the frontline of the crisis. Women were overlooked and, yet again, preschools, TAFE and public schools missed out on the extra funding urgently needed for additional staff, student learning support and infrastructure.

Unfortunately, it’s not surprising that women were overlooked. There was no gender lens over this Budget. In 2014, under the watch of the then Minister for Women, Tony Abbott, the federal government abandoned the Women’s Budget Statement. First introduced by feminist and educationalist Susan Ryan, it measured the impact of public policy decisions on women and made the government accountable for addressing gender equity.

Women might make up 51 per cent of the population, but Australia now has one of the lowest female workforce participation rates in the OECD. Women across the country are at least 66 per cent more likely to be working part time or in precarious employment, which we know negatively impacts health and wellbeing, superannuation balances and career paths.

And teaching, like every female-dominated career, is undervalued, which reinforces the need for unions to advocate strongly for salaries that keep up with other professions.

In this Budget, shaped by men, just one third of 1 per cent of the total expenditure was targeted at women; that’s the equivalent of $10 per woman, per year. Not enough to fund the reforms necessary to dismantle the barriers in an economic system that is heavily structured against women.

FAILING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Back in 2017, the federal government decided that spending on public school capital works was not in the national interest and pulled the plug on funding.

Budget 2020 was heralded as an infrastructure-led recovery opportunity and the AEU put forward a plan for the federal government to invest in public school infrastructure, which we outlined in our pre-Budget submission to the Department of Treasury.

The AEU submission explained how investing in much-needed improvements to classrooms, libraries, heating and cooling systems and sports facilities would provide substantial economic stimulus to Australia’s construction and manufacturing industries, drive employment for the recovery and ensure high-quality learning facilities for students.

A similar approach was taken during the global financial crisis. The Building the Education Revolution program (BER) reversed the decline in construction and supported approximately 120,000 jobs over the life of the program. At the same time, it provided libraries,
classrooms, specialist language laboratories, science labs and sporting facilities for schools across Australia. Instead, this Budget saw the continuation of the $19 billion set aside for private schools to update their buildings with second swimming pools, mock medieval libraries and retractable orchestra pits - without allocating any money to public schools to equip with them with the technological capacity and infrastructure to engage all students.

FAILING PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS

Public school teachers and communities have worked tirelessly to ensure students continue learning in trying circumstances with limited resources during this extraordinary year. Yet, Budget 2020 failed to provide the additional recurrent funding needed to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education.

The federal government squandered the opportunity to build a stronger, fairer society by providing an immediate injection of funds to address the deep inequality experienced by Australia’s public schools.

Instead, the schools that need support the least are getting the most. Private schools will gain $12.8 billion of taxpayer money. In comparison, public schools, which educate two-thirds of Australian students, will receive just $9 billion in federal funding.

Failing to provide additional recurrent funding for public schools means they will be underfunded by $19 billion through to 2023, while private schools will be overfunded to the tune of $1 billion. The Budget leaves public schools more than $65 billion short of the minimum funding needed for teaching and learning each year.

This Budget was the most important in our post-war history. It will take decades for future generations to pay off the national debt required to get Australia through this recession. The government had the opportunity to make sure we emerged from 2020 with a stronger and fairer society, by investing in education. Instead it will cement the Australian education system as one of the most inequitable in the world.

Correna Haythorpe  AEU federal president

Know your union

With a federal office and branches or associated bodies in every state and territory, the AEU represents more than 188,000 members industrially and professionally.

**AEU FEDERAL**

120 Clarendon St, Southbank, VIC, 3006
Phone: +61 3 9693 1800
Email: aeu@aeufederal.org.au
Web: aeufederal.org.au

Federal president
Correna Haythorpe

Federal secretary
Susan Hopgood

**AEU ACT BRANCH**

Branch president
Angela Burroughs
Branch secretary
Glenn Fowler
40 Brisbane Avenue
Barton 2600
Phone: 02 6272 7900
Email: aeuact@aeuact.org.au
Web: aeuact.org.au

**AEU NT BRANCH**

Branch president
Jarvis Ryan
Branch secretary
Adam Lampe
3/8 Totem Road
Coconut Grove 0811
Phone: 08 8948 5399
Email: admin@aeunet.org.au
Web: aeuact.org.au

**AEU SA BRANCH**

Branch president
Lara Goldberg
Branch secretary
Leah York
163 Greenhill Road
Parkside 5063
Phone: 08 8172 6300
Email: aeusa@aeusa.asn.au
Web: aeusa.asn.au

**AEU VIC BRANCH**

Branch president
Meredith Peace
Branch secretary
Erin Aulich
126 Treererry Crescent
Abbotsford 3067
Phone: 03 9417 2822
Email: melbourne@aeuVIC.asn.au
Web: aeu VIC.asn.au

**AEU TAS BRANCH**

Branch president
Helen Richardson
Branch state manager
Adam Clifford (Acting)
1/32 Patrick Street
Hobart 7000
Phone: 03 6234 9500
Email: support@aeutas.org.au
Web: aeu tas.org.au

**NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION**

President
Angelo Gabrielatos
General secretary
John Dixon
23-33 Mary Street
Surry Hills 2010
Phone: 02 9217 2100
Email: mail@nswtf.org.au
Web: nswtf.org.au

**QUEENSLAND TEACHERS UNION**

President
Kevin Bates
General secretary
Graham Moloney
21 Graham Street
Milton 4064
Phone: 07 3512 9000
Email: qtu@qtu.asn.au
Web: qtu.asn.au

**STATE SCHOOL TEACHERS UNION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

President
Pat Byrne
General secretary
Mary Franklyn
1 West Street West Perth 6005
Phone: 08 9210 6000
Email: contact@sstuwa.org.au
Web: sttuwa.org.au

SUMMER 2020 // 5
Teachers and school leaders would benefit from knowledge about trauma and adversity when responding to children’s challenging behaviours, according to a recent article in The Conversation.

In education, such understanding and techniques are known as “trauma-informed pedagogy”, write Karen Martin, assistant professor, Population Health, University of Western Australia and Emily Berger, a lecturer at Monash University.

Their article, Why every teacher needs to know about childhood trauma, reveals that mental health issues among children are on the rise following last year’s bushfires and the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Berger and Martin write that a strong body of evidence shows trauma can affect brain structures linked to learning, and children’s control of emotions and behaviour. “These effects can make it difficult for children to learn, make friends and develop positive relationships with teachers. Trauma and adversity can also disrupt children’s impulse control in the classroom and on the playground.”

For schools to be trauma-informed, say Berger and Martin, school staff need to know about the prevalence and consequences of childhood trauma. Increasing the confidence of school staff about how to work with children impacted by trauma and adversity is also important.

#EndCOVIDForAll

The AEU has joined the call to support vulnerable nations through the national #EndCOVIDForAll campaign.

The campaign aims to protect those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19; strengthen health systems and protect essential aid programs; and help kick-start economic recovery in the region. Its motto is: “COVID-19 is not over until it is over for everyone”.

AEU federal secretary and Education International president Susan Hopgood has urged the federal government to increase its financial support to address the worst effects of COVID-19 on the world’s most vulnerable nations and communities.

“Whether it’s for ourselves, including First Nations children, or our global neighbours, we have a responsibility to make governments accountable,” says Hopgood.

Australia has been supporting various Pacific nations during the pandemic, but its aid contribution has steadily decreased since 2013 and is at its lowest level — just 0.21 per cent of the country’s gross national income. So far, Australia’s COVID-19 response for vulnerable nations has been delivered through re-purposed funding and at the cost of existing aid programs.

Star proves she’s More than a Kick

More than a Kick: Footy, the Photo and Me tells the inspiring story of AFLW rising star Tayla Harris who stood up to vicious online trolls after a photo of her taking a mighty kick for goal went viral last year. Six months later she was unveiling a bronze statue of herself.

The two-time AFLW All Australian has been praised for the way she handled the media storm that followed the photograph and she shares her advice to young people navigating social media. Her response to the controversy helped raise awareness about online bullying, the need to call out unacceptable online behaviour and inspired young women around the country. Teacher notes: tinyurl.com/y62qgkld
Whether it’s for ourselves, including First Nations children, or our global neighbours, we have a responsibility to make governments accountable.

Susan Hopgood
AEU federal secretary

Earth school connects students around the world

With millions of students around the world still unable to attend classes and teachers scrambling to provide online content, an initiative by a coalition of more than 50 environmental and education experts couldn’t have come at a better time.

The Earth School provides 30 adventures for learners of all ages to discover, celebrate, and connect with nature. The global team behind it collaborated with the guidance and support of TED-Ed and the United Nations Environment Program.

Earth School features daily adventures, or quests, each organised around the theme: The Nature of… The initiative is hosted online and is designed to encourage young people to connect with nature.

Covering real world concepts such as the T-shirts we wear, the water we drink, the trees in our forests or the food on our plates, each quest includes a discovery video and quiz combined with a series of interactive resources – including additional content to watch, read, teach, do, and share, with age-adjusted exercises built into each lesson.

Earth School: ed.ted.com/earth-school

EVENTS

25 Nov
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

1 Dec
World AIDS Day

3 Dec
International Day of People with Disability

8 Mar
International Women’s Day
Building inspiration

The first new school built in inner-city Brisbane in 50 years is breaking new ground, in more ways than one.
The technology is probably one of the best decisions we made. The amount of time it saves in terms of teaching and learning is phenomenal.

Sharon Barker  
Fortitude Valley State Secondary College, QLD

Rising seven stories, Fortitude Valley State Secondary College is the first vertical mainstream Year 7-12 school built in Queensland.

The $100 million stage one opened this year for Year 7s with 140 students. By the time the current Year 7 students graduate in 2025, there will be capacity for 1500 students – an average of 250 in each year.

The surrounding area, known for its nightlife, is changing face as high-rise developments including offices and apartments fill the skyline. Principal Sharon Barker says the area is becoming home to many creative businesses. “Also, some of the biggest engineering firms in Queensland are in the valley and there are a lot of technology firms. It’s quite a dynamic place to be and we’re in the middle of everything,” she says.

The school’s ethos mirrors its vibrant surroundings and is inspired by its own architecture, says Barker. “Our vision and values statement is, ‘To create a community of agile learners who are bold, resilient and kind.’ One of the reasons we chose bold was because we were being given this beautiful bold building and we needed to live up to that. We couldn’t come into this completely unique space and not rethink our approach to pedagogy and curriculum.”

The site was originally home to a 160-year-old primary school, which was closed in 2013. The development includes the renovation and extension of the historic building for use as a performing arts centre as well as the seven-storey building that will eventually accommodate Years 7, 8 and 9. Senior classes will be housed in a new building as part of stage two, which will also include a sports stadium and several specialist classrooms.

**LOFTY EXPECTATIONS**

The vertical building includes three levels of general classrooms with four classrooms on each level that can be opened into a single space. The room dividers are made of glass and double as whiteboards.

The latest technology is embedded into the architecture and the pedagogy. All students and teachers have iPads, and large screens in each room allow work and resources to be easily shared.

“The technology is probably one of the best decisions we made. The amount of time it saves in terms of teaching and learning is phenomenal,” says Barker. “One teacher, who’s been teaching for 25 years, a brilliant teacher, had never turned on an iPad before. He says he now gets through far more work in class because he’s not collecting textbooks and handing out photocopies. Teachers are airdropping work between students.”

Working in the new space has raised expectations, says Barker. “We’re redesigning our pedagogy and taking a different approach to the way we’re...
It is imperative that the Commonwealth invest in state-of-the-art facilities for all public schools to provide the best teaching and learning environment possible for Australia’s students.

Correna Haythorpe
AEU federal president

delivering curriculum because we’ve got this amazing space that we work in. “We should all be aspiring to have this level of infrastructure in our public schools,” says Barker who describes herself as a “very proud” public school principal. “Having this building here as a flagship school is a great nod to public schooling. But I do acknowledge that – having been principal in a school that was 100 years old with one building that had sunk six inches – we’re not all at the same level in terms of what we have.”

MISSED OPPORTUNITY
Thousands of public schools are in dire need of new buildings or urgent maintenance. Meanwhile, rapidly growing enrolments are putting pressure on schools struggling to find space.

AEU federal president Correna Haythorpe says the Morrison government missed the opportunity in its recent federal Budget to improve public school buildings, which has a positive effect on teaching and learning, and provide a boost to communities through the increased economic activity that new building work brings.

“A similar approach taken during the global financial crisis reversed the decline in construction and supported approximately 120,000 jobs over the life of the program. At the same time, it provided libraries, classrooms, canteens, specialist language laboratories, science labs and sporting facilities to schools across the country,” says Haythorpe.

Instead, the Budget confirmed the $1.9 billion to be spent on private schools over the next 10 years.

“The government is happy to hand out billions of dollars to high-fee private schools for second swimming pools, mock medieval libraries and retractable orchestra pits,” says Haythorpe.

The federal government ended all capital works funding to public schools in 2017, forcing state and territory governments to make up the shortfall. Total state and territory government capital allocations to public schools increased from $1.4 billion in 2016 to $1.8 billion in 2017, and $3.2 billion in 2018.

But it is not enough to keep Australia’s more than 7,000 public schools well maintained and able to accommodate rapidly increasing enrolments. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows school enrolments increased by about 200,000 in the five years to 2018 with public schools accounting for 76 per cent of the growth. A 2016 Grattan Institute report estimated an extra 650,000 students by 2026.

Paradoxically, government funding to the private school sector has slowly increased, according to a report released in March – The School Money-go-round – which puts school funding under the microscope.

An “accumulation of deals and dalliances engineered by politicians and sectoral interests” have supported the move in the absence of any defining agreement or legislation, says the report by Chris Bonnor and Rachel Wilson.

“Any proposal made 50 years ago to equally fund both a public education system and a competing private system would have been greeted with disbelief and derision. Yet we are almost there,” the report says.

Decades of research have shown that well-maintained, cleverly designed and properly resourced buildings can improve student attendance, attention, concentration, motivation and self-esteem. “It is imperative that the Commonwealth invest in state-of-the-art facilities for all public schools to provide the best teaching and learning environment possible for Australia’s students,” Haythorpe says.

Fortitude Valley State Secondary College is the first high-rise mainstream Year 7-12 school in Queensland.
Students who started at Essendon Keilor College’s Niddrie campus in Melbourne last year will never know how different their learning experience could have been. But for the teachers who work there, every day is better.

Principal David Adamson says the new $12 million project has “absolutely” improved teaching and learning. “It’s made a big difference because it’s purpose-built,” he says.

Adamson and his team worked closely with Haskell Architects to design a building specifically for teaching the middle years curriculum. “It’s got flexible spaces that we can open up for larger groups of students, or we can close them off for use as normal classrooms. It was designed to cater for a range of teaching and learning techniques,” says Adamson.

The focus on STEM is also evident with various technology tricks and resources to keep the building relevant. “We wanted to design a building that would be there in another 30 years and would be usable for new teaching practices in the next 10-20 years,” Adamson says.

But it wasn’t an easy path to last year’s opening ceremony. Adamson spent seven years on media campaigns and lobbying governments to get the funds to replace the old campus – a light timber construction built in the 1950s. “We couldn’t use some of the rooms because the ceilings were falling in,” he says.

“We were worried the glass was going to fall out of the windows because the window frames were rotten. And there were drainage issues, heating and cooling issues and rising damp. It was well past its use-by date,” he says.

When the funds were eventually allocated, they weren’t enough to cover the cost and the school was forced to dip into its savings to make up the difference. The extra cash was needed to complete construction of a canteen and provide the necessary audio visual and lighting equipment for a new theatre.

“That was money we’d saved over seven or eight years to cover the expected shortfall on future building works,” says Adamson.

The school is now turning its sights on its other two campuses.

One is served by a 110-year-old heritage building in “reasonably good” condition. But the other, a 50 year-old building, won’t be fit-for-purpose within five to 10 years because of expected enrolment increases, he says.

“We’re going to need a new building there. There ought to be long-term planning to allocate funds to make sure buildings are kept up to a certain standard. If they are not at that standard, then they should be replaced automatically. It shouldn’t get to the point that a building is so bad that it’s almost uninhabitable before it gets replaced,” he says.

On his wish list is also adequate funding to complete entire jobs. “So, if you are going to build a theatre, you build a theatre with all the bits and pieces that go with it.”

Adamson would also improve his school’s grounds if he could. “They’re in very poor condition because we don’t have enough money to put in sprinkler systems to water the ovals or replace concrete paths broken up by tree roots.”

“It’s the basic things. We’re not asking for underground carparks or swimming pools, we’re asking for the things you need to run a school properly,” he says.
Upgrading the remote Alekarenge School in the Northern Territory presents unique challenges that its leadership and community are determined to meet.

Principal Colin Kiel is working through a list of urgent improvements at the school, four hours’ drive north of Alice Springs. He’ll focus on plans for the new ICT hub, but first there’s unfinished business replacing old infrastructure and removing asbestos.

“The amount of help and support we’ve had, once people saw what was going on, has been great. The school staff, the community and the AEU have all been pushing hard. There was a lot of support from the department as well, when it was brought to their attention,” says Kiel.

Dilapidated school buildings and outdoor equipment at Alekarenge remain a major concern. Some buildings containing asbestos have been fenced off and are awaiting removal.

“The whole school has had asbestos at different times, and it’s been taken out of some areas and not others. But there is one building that’s of concern and that’s been earmarked to be removed this year,” says Kiel.

The recent works have made some dramatic improvements. Maintenance on the perimeter fence means children are no longer forced to eat their lunch indoors or in a makeshift outdoor “cage” to protect them from wild dogs looking for food.

Live electricity wires that were hanging under “temporary” buildings installed in the 1970s have been removed, rusting and dangerous ramps and walkways have been repainted, and broken toilets have been replaced.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

While there is still a lot of work to be done, Kiel is happy to report progress on many of the most urgent matters.

“But what’s capturing attention in the community is the expected arrival early next year of three new prefabricated buildings, worth $300,000. They will be a short-term replacement for three 50-year-old buildings.”

"It’ll be very exciting to get some new builds and make it a place the kids will be proud to come to and the community will be proud to have and show off. It’ll really lift spirits,” Kiel says.

“We need a new office, new staff facilities, a whole lot of things, but they won’t come straight away. They’re in the 10-year plan and the budget hasn’t been allocated. So, they’re giving us these three temporary builds to hold us over until that funding can be found,” he says.

Kiel is also hoping next year will see an upgrade for the preschool and its playground. “The design’s gone out to tender. It was meant to start in June this year, but COVID got in the way.”

In the meantime, Kiel says Alekarenge’s teachers are doing “fantastic” work with the students in the school’s newest classrooms. These 10-year-old buildings are also due to be replaced, but Kiel says they are the lowest priority right now.
Growing a mentally healthy generation.

*Be You builds on what you’re already doing*

Taking steps to look after mental health in your school can put you and your team in a better position to support your wellbeing and the mental health of the children and young people in your learning community.

Be You is a **national initiative** that equips educators to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people from **birth to 18 years**, providing an end-to-end approach for early learning services, primary schools and secondary schools across Australia.

Be You offers **Professional Learning resources** for educators, such as online events, interactive sessions with other educators and mental health experts, Fact Sheets and accredited Professional Learning **at no cost**.

When your school registers as a learning community you are provided with **Planning and Implementation Tools** to assist you to work towards a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Now’s the time to use Be You to support your school to develop a positive, inclusive, and resilient learning community.

Register at beyou.edu.au/register-now
Young learners in need

A looming lack of early childhood educators could derail the national policy of quality preschool for all.

Demand for qualified early childhood teachers is expected to grow so strongly over the next few years that, at current rates of recruitment, the sector won’t be able to keep up. Employers are already reporting difficulties recruiting and retaining suitable staff, especially in rural and remote areas.

There are “significant and increasingly urgent workforce challenges”, says the Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

An estimated 39,000 extra educators and 9,000 more early childhood teachers will be needed within three years, representing a 20 per cent increase, according to ACECQA.

ACECQA reported “persistent and increasingly pressing issues” with the attraction, supply and retention of early childhood educators in a 2019 workforce study, Progressing a national approach to the children’s education and care workforce.

The shortage is due in part to failed planning, says Martel Menz, the AEU’s federal executive early childhood representative.

IN SHORT

// Demand for qualified early childhood educators is expected to outstrip supply.

// The shortage is due to rising preschool enrolments and new requirements around class sizes.

// Concerns over wages and poor networking opportunities are impacting recruitment.
Too many people – and certainly the federal government – have sat on their hands expecting the issue would be sorted out by itself; that the market would provide attractive salaries and conditions ...

Martel Menz
AEU federal executive – early childhood

Preschool enrolments have climbed rapidly since the national policy to provide universal access to early childhood education was introduced in 2008, at a time when just 12 per cent of children attended for 600 hours a year. Today, enrolments reach 95 per cent or more across the country, according to an independent review of the policy commissioned by the Council of Australian Governments’ Education Council.

Dramatic enrolment growth has led to a significant increase in teaching vacancies, which has escalated with the new requirement this year that a second qualified early childhood teacher be available when 60 or more children attend a preschool or long daycare centre. Menz says the obligation was announced in 2012 as part of the National Quality Framework, which gave the government and the sector eight years to plan, but the last national workforce strategy expired in 2016 and has not been replaced.

LACK OF ACTION
“There’s been ample time to deal with this but too many people – and certainly the federal government – have sat on their hands expecting the issue would be sorted out by itself; that the market would provide attractive salaries and conditions, enticing enough people interested in an early childhood career. That was never going to happen,” says Menz.

The Education Council’s review, completed by independent management consultancy the Nous Group, found that providing universal access at “appropriate levels of quality” was at “particular risk” because of the upcoming teacher shortage.

Other issues affecting recruitment to the sector include concerns over wages and conditions and lack of opportunities for networking and professional development.

FUNDING UNCERTAINTY
Implementation of the policy has been undermined by persistent funding uncertainty and the federal government’s continued refusal to extend preschool funding for three year olds, despite overwhelming evidence and strong international trends that show the benefits to both children and the economy.

There was no joy for the sector in the federal budget; the government has only committed to preschool funding for 15 hours for all four year olds until the end of 2021. That’s despite a recommendation by the Education Council review that funding should be guaranteed for at least five years, followed by a more permanent arrangement.

AEU federal president Correna Haythorpe says the annual drip-feeding of funding prevents preschools from planning for the future and retaining and attracting staff.

A recent PWC report demonstrated that preschool pays for itself: for every $1 spent on early childhood education, $2 of benefits flow back to the economy.

ACECQA is working on a national workforce strategy and action plan, which is expected to be delivered to the education ministers by mid-2021.

Workforce crisis by numbers

39,000
da 9000
extra educators
+more early childhood
teachers
needed within the next
3 years

(Source: ACECQA)
“We are all storytellers. We live in a network of stories. There isn’t a stronger connection between people than storytelling.” — Jimmy Neil Smith

Narratives shape our world and the world around us. Our instinctive need to tell stories hasn’t changed, but one thing that has is the way we share our stories. From allegories on cave walls, grand literary epics, to the modern video storytellers on TV and YouTube - storytelling is a part of our DNA.

Our minds have always been image processors, not word processors. According to dual-channel learning theory, people generally remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see and 50% of what they hear and see. This suggests that using the audio-visual medium is a great approach to achieving optimum recall of complex information. Yet video often has this reputation as being passive, not active. This is a misnomer. The application of video in the classroom doesn’t begin and end at the recall and comprehension stages, it also cultivates higher-order thinking processes through the act of storytelling itself.

**Teachers as storytellers**

Storytelling is as critical to teaching as it is directing a film or writing a novel. Teachers have always been storytellers, weaving narratives to capture student’s imaginations, and fuel their curiosity.

As educators, our role is to equip students with the skills to deconstruct stories, both in written and visual form and encourage them to respond with stories of their own. This stems from our ability to interpret stories effectively, supported by resources and technologies that encourage students to share theirs.

**Students as storytellers**

Students are innate screen storytellers, immersed in video from an early age, using and responding to the medium is their second nature. Through their access to resources and technology, students share the unique ways they see the world through video, every day.

**Accessing higher-order processes through video**

Video can activate learning, unlike any other modality. It builds strong engagement amongst students for new knowledge, aiding their recall and comprehension through dual-channel learning. Complex issues are made more digestible through formats like short-format documentaries. This enables greater synthesis, analysis and ultimately creation, where students themselves can document and record their own projects as video storytellers.

With only a limited amount of ‘film texts’ accredited to each state and territories suggested text guides, there is an opportunity to refresh your program’s resources with a wider variety of video texts. Resource centre’s such as EnhanceTV have a range of short-format clips, feature films and critically acclaimed documentaries, that can inspire your students to think outside the box and immerse them in the important issues of our time.

**Curriculum-linked TV programs that will creatively inspire your students**

A great example of encouraging higher-order thinking is the series Aussie Inventions That Changed The World. The series immerses students in the cultural and historical contexts that led these creative thinkers to examine problems, test and learn, solve for them and push humanity forward.

Go Back to Where You Came From is another compelling program that captures the true power of storytelling, challenging students to think critically about what it means to be an Australian and a global citizen.

Each program can be examined from a diverse range of viewpoints, moving across subjects domains and transporting students through our history and culture. They inspire our students to share their views and opinions.

In the 21st Century Classroom, it’s about reconceptualising students as storytellers. As educators, our objective is to put the power of story into students’ hands, as they are the storytellers of the future.

SOPHIE CURRAN is an educational advisor and writer at EnhanceTV.
Students as storytellers. As educators, our objective is to put the power of story into students’ hands, as they are the storytellers of the future.

In the 21st Century Classroom, it’s about reconceptualising stories: students to share their views and opinions. Teachers have always been storytellers, weaving narratives to capture student’s imaginations, and fuel their curiosity.

“Storytelling is as critical to teaching as it is directing a film or it also cultivates higher-order thinking processes through the act of storytelling itself.” —

There isn’t a stronger connection between people than storytelling. “We are all storytellers. We live in a network of stories.”

Narratives shape our world and the world around us. Our instinctive need to tell stories hasn’t changed, but one thing has is the way we share our stories. From allegories on cave walls, grand literary epics, to the modern video storytellers on TV that has is the way we share our stories.

“EnhanceTV provides a platform that gives you and your students access to television programs that support learning. You can tailor video clipsto every lesson.”

Noel Chan, head of physics
A deep digital divide

The need for at-home learning sparked by lockdown measures around the country has exposed a serious online inequality among our students.

BY NIC BARNARD
COVID-19 hasn’t created the digital divide – it’s exposed the deep inequality in digital inclusion that exists for our students.

Correna Haythorpe
AEU federal president

Now, armed with new figures that show the extent of the problem, the AEU is calling for the federal government to act, by drawing up funded plans to ensure every child has the tools they need to learn - and the training to use them.

A report by researcher Barbara Preston, commissioned by the union, takes a deep dive through published census and other data to reveal that 125,000 students in Australian public schools had no home internet access at the time of the last census, 2016.

As recently as 2019, four million Australians had only mobile internet access, according to the Australian Digital Inclusion Index. For students without a space of their own at home to work uninterrupted, the need to scrap for a connection on a phone with a limited data plan (which might also be required by a parent for work or job-hunting) is an added burden.

IN SHORT

// Lockdown revealed the deep digital divide in Australian schools.
// Digital inclusion requires digital ability as well as access to hardware and software.
// The government must invest in a digital equity audit to determine the intervention required to get all students on a level playing field.
Getting connected

When Thomas’s Sydney-based primary/secondary school switched to home learning, his mother Merrily says things got tricky. “The library wasn’t open – and you couldn’t exactly sit around in a shopping centre,” she says.

The family was already struggling financially when the pandemic hit and Merrily is a full-time carer for her own mother. Their experience highlights how the digital divide is about more than just having the right equipment.

“We have a laptop,” she says. “I saved and saved and went without so he could have it. But the data plans are expensive. Trying to fund Wi-Fi for him was almost impossible.”

Merrily says she also found it difficult to help Thomas with his schoolwork because her own education was limited. “I wanted Thomas to have a good education because I ended up having to drop out of school. COVID-19 has made it very hard for students.”

Help came through children’s charity The Smith Family which, through sponsorship, has helped Thomas get connected to the internet and provided other support.

50,000

The Smith Family reports that around one quarter of the 50,000 children sponsored through its Learning for Life program have no internet access at home.
3 Months FREE

Celebrate the end of 2020 with unlimited online PD for your school

Purchase any Unlimited Online PD Subscription get 3 months free*

Use Promo Code 3MONTHSFREE

Offer ends December 31 2020

See tta.edu.au/go/products for details
Call: 1300 789 961
Email: admin@tta.edu.au

*new unlimited subscription customers only.
River of learning

A NSW country high school has forged strong bonds with local Aboriginal Elders and the community to support and inspire its students, winning awards along the way.
When Uncle Ron Heron takes a group of Year 7 students into the bush, he shows the tools his ancestors used, what they ate and the fish traps they made. He is not only sharing culture and instilling pride in the students, he is providing inspiration for their lives and work ahead.

A respected Elder of the Yaegl people of northern New South Wales, Uncle Ron graduated in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Letters, by thesis (now Master of Letters) in prehistory and anthropology. He went on to lecture in Indigenous studies at Southern Cross University and, as an academic, has contributed to many publications and books.

In 2014 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Macquarie University, recognising his years of research studying and testing medicines made from native plants. Conferring the award, vice-chancellor professor Bruce Dowton said Uncle Ron had contributed to the university through science, education and leadership. “He provides a remarkable example of the power of education, not only in his own life but in how he has touched and shaped so many others.”

Returning to Yaegl Country after a stroke 10 years ago, Uncle Ron was determined to share his culture and experience with young people. “Look after the Country and it will look after you,” is his favourite saying.

He, along with other Elders, worked with Maclean High School – the only secondary school on Yaegl land – and Macquarie University’s National Indigenous Science Education Program to find ways to educate and inspire the students.

One result of the collaboration was the award-winning River of Learning program for Year 7 students, which embeds Yaegl culture and history across the curriculum. The program won Reconciliation Australia’s 2019 Narragunnawali Award in the schools category, recognising “exceptional commitment to reconciliation in education”.

Reconciliation Australia says the awards aim to acknowledge schools and early learning services that strengthen relationships, build respect and provide meaningful opportunities in the classroom.

The Maclean High School program also won the NSW education department’s Nanga Mai award in 2016, which recognises and celebrates innovation, excellence and educational achievement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in public schools.

The heart and soul of the program is an ancient fig tree that once stood on the banks of the Clarence River and was part of the story of the creation of the river. Every faculty uses the tree to teach the Year 7s about history and connection to Yaegl culture.
An annual River of Learning Day is held during the school’s activities for Reconciliation Week. Parents, Elders and community members are invited, and students showcase their work, dance, music and language skills. All Year 7s address the guests in the traditional Yaygirr language.

Liza Hamilton, deputy principal instructional leader, Aboriginal students, says the knowledge and connection to Country gained during Year 7 remains with the students throughout their schooling. And, after 10 years of running the program, the school can clearly see the benefits.

“There’s improved awareness among non-Aboriginal children who have a greater respect for Yaegl culture, and our Aboriginal students have a lot of pride now. We can ask them to do a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country or to take part in a dance and they won’t shy away. They’re proud to be included,” says Hamilton.

There’s improved awareness among non-Aboriginal children who have a greater respect for Yaegl culture, and our Aboriginal students have a lot of pride now.

Making Connections

Macquarie University’s scientists became involved with Maclean High more than a decade ago while working with the Yaegl and Bundjalung communities on bush medicine research and projects to strengthen the community.

That led to the National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP), a collective of Aboriginal Elders and community members, university staff and students, school staff and STEM organisations, to help increase the students’ engagement with science and education.

The program – now operating across the country – places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students in leadership roles at school, community and university events to give them the confidence and motivation to finish school and continue to tertiary education and employment.
THE POWER OF MUSIC

Music has also proved a powerful tool in connecting and engaging Maclean students with their culture and communities.

Students and Elders have worked with not-for-profit group Desert Pea Media to produce three music video clips in two years.

Calling themselves the 380 Crew (380 is the number of the bus that connects local communities), they wrote, sang and produced their songs during a series of workshops that covered songwriting, video production, community engagement and social impact.

Hamilton says the videos had helped the school reach new heights of student engagement and community cooperation “because music and dance is what kids love”.

“It’s really strengthened our connections - it’s truly a school, Elder and community project.

“That’s the most important thing, establishing relationships and keeping them going. All teachers know that,” says Hamilton.

Rhonda Pitson, a former deputy principal at Maclean who helped establish the River of Learning program and participated in the school’s video entry for the Narragunnawali award, said the program was pioneering because it asked Elders for their help and to share their knowledge.

“River of Learning is not a one-year wonder, it’s a part of the fabric of Maclean High School,” she says.

For Uncle Ron, the program is important for all of those involved.

“If every school had something similar to River of Learning, it’d break down a lot of barriers,” he says.

Above left: Maclean High School students learn about bush tucker.

Above right: Aboriginal student support officers (top row) Krystal Randall, Yaegl Elder Uncle Ron Heron and Sam Kapeen; (bottom row) Deborah Breckenridge and Anjanette Warburton.

Resources

Reconciliation Australia’s website explaining the annual awards includes information about Reconciliation Action Plans, curriculum resources and professional learning.

narragunnawali.org.au

Desert Pea Media is a not-for-profit organisation that produces music videos and documentaries in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Students from Maclean High have written and performed in three videos in the past three years.

desertpeamedia.com

Maclean High School posts updates including videos and photos of its activities to the Storylines website.

maclean.storylines.com.au
The extra mile

Teaching in any setting requires a diverse skillset, flexibility and commitment but for educators working in unusual locations, a strong support network is vital. We interview three teachers whose classrooms are anything but ordinary.

BY LEANNE TOLRA

MICHELLE AYRES’ working day begins at 8am in the remote Utopia homelands in the centre of the Northern Territory. Her first duty is to sort food supplies for the day ahead, then she drives a bus 30 kilometres to her classroom. She provides basic hygiene support, including face washing (trachoma, a bacterial infection that affects the eyes, is a serious issue in the region) and teeth brushing before schoolwork begins around 9:15am.

Ayres teaches Transition to Year 5 students at the Soapy Bore Homeland Learning Centre (HLC), one of four HLCs in the Arlparra School’s large geographical area. Between 16 and 20 students meet her at the school and up to another four students from a community 20 kilometres away are dropped off by a second bus. HLC teachers are often required to collect students from multiple communities on their way to school.

“There are some incredibly challenging things and some very rewarding things about teaching out here,” she says. “Education is a culturally different thing for the people in these communities and we are mindful of the different values of a Western education system. Culture and family come first, and school comes after anything that is going on in the community such as a funeral, a family occasion, or a sporting event. We understand and respect that and find ways to work with the community.”

For Ayres, who took on a six-month contract at Arlparra at the start of 2016, it has been the opportunity to positively affect the lives of her students, and the support of her fellow teachers, that have made her stay for almost five years.

“One of the biggest highlights for me is being able to take a child who has no background in literacy and teach them to read. It happens incrementally, and slower than in most classrooms because of all the other challenges that surround us,” she says.
Education is a culturally different thing for the people in these communities and we are mindful of the different values of a Western education system.

Michelle Ayres
Soapy Bore Hoeland Learning Centre

In practice

Ayres trained at James Cook University in Townsville and was working in an out-of-school-hours program before a friend encouraged her to take on the contract. “I came out here as a general primary graduate, but I have developed a real passion for areas such as early childhood literacy, phonics and targeting reading difficulties,” she says. “It is extremely rewarding to find a program that works and to see that it can work multiple times over multiple schools.

“I have really felt welcomed by the communities out here and I have formed good relationships with the local people and the other teaching staff,” she says. Ayres has also taken on a role as a Barkly region councillor for the AEU’s NT branch.

“It is quite unusual to be living around 12 other teachers in a remote place and we have formed strong friendships. We are only 250 kilometres from Alice Springs, but that is close enough to go into town semi-regularly on a weekend.”

Teaching days are Monday to Thursday to help manage the travelling, the long days and allow time for meetings, non-contact hours and school maintenance. Fridays are allocated to administrative tasks.

BRAD HANNAY
YEAR 5 - YEAR 12
Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

BRAD HANNAY says he and his fellow teachers at Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre in the northern suburbs of Adelaide are never certain what challenges the next day will bring. “We don’t usually find out who is in our class (and what learning issues they might have) until 8.20am,” he says. “We could have any number of new students come in overnight and then the next week we could get whole new group of students; this does make it difficult to plan.”

Hannay is a former home economics teacher who “saw the opportunity to make a difference” when he joined the school as a maths teacher seven years ago. The Goldsborough Road campus has a maximum capacity of 48 students, but there is also a flexi-centre campus with around 40 attendees. Students are aged between 10 and 18 – boys are segregated into age brackets of 10-14 and 15-18 but girls, due to their lower numbers, are taught across all ages.

Hannay teaches a class of six girls, with the support of two youth workers who are effectively wardens. The day-to-day challenges are many – from teaching a Year 5 student to tell the time, to helping a Year 11 student with subject research because she is prohibited from using the internet – but he says the biggest rewards is “seeing the kids achieve at things they would not normally be doing, because they wouldn’t even be at school”.

“Ninety per cent of our students have some sort of learning disability. It might be a learning difficulty that has stopped them going to school, such as undiagnosed autism, or a mental health issue that has gotten them into trouble,” he says.

“These kids have all basically said, ‘school can’t help me, I’m not going’. A lot them have just been denied opportunities to learn.”

Brad Hannay
Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre

These kids have all basically said, ‘school can’t help me, I’m not going’. A lot them have just been denied opportunities to learn.
of detention, the ones who gain the most from the education opportunities are “the long-term kids”.

“If they are only here for a short time - a month or two - they might learn to tell the time, which they couldn’t do before they arrived, and that’s a win. But when some of the long-term kids achieve the completion of a research project or pass Year 11, which they would never have done on the outside, it’s incredible,” he says.

“That is not just my point of view, that is how every teacher here feels. We have an amazing staff at this school. I have never worked in an environment where everyone is so supportive of each other.

“In mainstream schools teachers have to fit in, but here if a student comes to school and says, ‘I’m really not in a maths mood, do you mind if I do my English?’ I’m not going to say, ‘No’. If they are learning and being productive, if their education is progressing, then we encourage that,” he says.

“As a mainstream teacher coming into this environment that has been one of the biggest challenges. It’s about learning to be flexible so that you can give the students what they need.”

“Education and teachers have been in hospitals for a long time … what is different in our setting, is the way education and health are working together as one team.”

Melissa Handley says Jacaranda Place School in Queensland’s Brisbane-based Prince Charles Hospital is already attracting interest from national and international education organisations just six months after opening.

“Education and teachers have been in hospitals for a long time, that is nothing new … what is different in our setting is the way education and health are working together as one team,” she says.

The service is the first of its kind in Australia and offers extended treatment and education for students with severe and complex mental health conditions. It has places for 22 secondary school students, 10 of whom live in the area and participate in a day program, and another 12 who are in residential care.

Students may have had “a range of challenging and unhelpful behaviours that have negatively affected their schooling”, Handley says. The teaching program aims to help them re-engage in school and, where possible, reconnect with education pathways.

“We work closely with the health team and have the common goal of seeing the young person re-engage with society on a path that is appropriate for them. So, while the health professionals focus on their specialties and we focus on delivering education, the crucial element is the way we work together to provide one integrated service centred on the student,” she says.

Handley grew up in Cairns and attended...
the University of Queensland in Brisbane. Her first teaching role was in the rural area of Roma and she later taught at The Gap State High School in Brisbane. Handley trained as an English and drama teacher but, because of her rural experience, has taught other subject areas.

For Handley, the biggest highlight of the teaching program at Jacaranda Place is being able to concentrate intensively on the specific goals of each student. “We are able to take the time to look at the long game for so many of these students who were previously disengaged and had not attended school for a long period,” she says. “We build connections and relationships with each student and work with them to find the best learning pathway to suit their short-term and long-term goals. We then use a highly differentiated approach to teach the curriculum, drawing on techniques and supports that work for each student. It is a unique model.”

Handley says many secondary students could benefit from the added support and relationship building offered at Jacaranda. “Since starting work at Jacaranda Place this year, I can’t help but look back over my teaching career and think of various students whom I have come in contact with over the years who could have benefited from such a place as this,” she says.

Leanne Tolra is a journalist and editor.

---

Education resources that get kids talking!

- alcohol talk
- drug talk
- eating disorder talk
- gender based violence talk
- period talk
- sex talk
- sexuality talk
- suicide & self harm talk

One **FREE** resource per school  
Insights and growth

Our new educators are finishing the year on a positive note despite the chaos and confusion of COVID-19.

BY MARGARET PATON

Alekarenge School has established a pathway to employment by setting up a farm school and dramatically improved attendance rates this year.

Year 5 and 6 pupils learn in the garden on the school site, in a remote Northern Territory community, while Year 7, 8 and 9 students take a five-minute bus trip to the farm four days a week for breakfast, morning studies and manual work.

Principal Colin Kiel says a variety of vegetables were planted in June and harvesting began in August. “You can’t fail out here – this red dirt will grow everything,” he says.

Alekarenge School, NT

Training providers need to take account of remote teachers to offer the same learning opportunities in an equitable way.

“Colin Kiel
Alekarenge School, NT

Kiel’s school netted $500 in a few weeks from produce sold to staff, the community and local restaurants and students are sharing ideas about how the money should be invested in the school.

He saw the disused farm with a “huge commercial kitchen” and dining area as an opportunity to extend his students, but it was the owners, Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture, who suggested the farm school.

“I knew it was a great resource with power and bore water, too. I was thinking cultural camps out there or teaching our kids to ride bikes safely, but I didn’t
... The farm could offer a pathway model for other Indigenous communities to become economically independent.

Colin Kiel
Alekarenge School, NT

have the farm idea. The students have done everything from land clearing to building the irrigation system, checking the plantings, harvesting, pricing and selling the vegetables,” he says.

There’s been a 90 per cent student attendance rate among the 135 students enrolled at Alekarenge in the three months since the farm opened.

Kiel says it’s the first time the community has had a direct line from education to employment. In the past, the only options for students were to go to boarding school or stay “on country”, with minimal job opportunities.

"If it’s successful, the farm could offer a pathway model for other Indigenous communities to become economically independent,” says Kiel.

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY
Since he arrived in the Top End earlier this year, Kiel has gathered some advice for educators thinking of teaching in the remote region.

“You won’t understand life and teaching here until you arrive, no matter how much it’s explained to you. Be open – if there’s a funeral in the community, you’ll have 20 more kids than are enrolled,” he says.

“Be flexible to work out your students’ needs, otherwise, it can be very challenging. For example, we have four different languages in this community before we come to Aboriginal English, then English.”

That means his students haven’t been “great at verbalising where their learning is going”. To encourage that, in Term 4, he’s organised professional development for his staff.

“The training will operate around uniform language to make learning intentions and success criteria clear and accessible for students visually and verbally in their classrooms. It has to be tailored to the year level, though. The way a pre-schooler expresses what they’re learning when English isn’t their first language will be different to older students,” says Kiel.

A bugbear for him is losing staff for three- to-four days and the costs to attend training in Darwin, but he acknowledges the importance of professional development.

“I’m pushing a lot harder when those PD options come up. Training providers need to take account of remote teachers to offer the same learning opportunities in an equitable way.”
A lot of our students haven’t experienced that institutionalised racism themselves. They say, ‘it’s not something that affects me’, but they are beginning to understand why it’s become a big deal.

Phoebe Morris
Camira State School, QLD

THE GLOBAL Black Lives Matter protests and cyberbullying issues have offered plenty of “teachable moments” for Phoebe Morris’s Year 6 class.

“When my students ask about the protests, we have a discussion because I’m trying to raise awareness of how a global issue like Black Lives Matters impacts our lives or the people we’re close to,” she says.

“Even though the protests are largely in the United States, our school is trying to make a connection to Australian Indigenous people, of which we have a number at Camira State School.”

Morris says some of her students question why the topic is black lives rather than all lives matter.

“A lot of our students haven’t experienced institutionalised racism themselves. They say, ‘it’s not something that affects me’, but they are beginning to understand why it’s become a big deal.”

When it came to cyberbullying, she says it took time for her students to appreciate the impact of their words on other people. The school recently ran a cyber safety campaign to raise awareness around underage social media accounts and recording and sharing videos.

“The campaign’s worked. We’ve seen a reduced number of bullying issues since then.”

RITE OF PASSAGE
In Term 4, Morris and her teaching team are organising the Year 6 graduation. The Year 6 camp is off the agenda, but Morris is helping organise visits to high school science labs for STEM studies, possibly a surf lifesaving trip and, on graduation night, a school assembly and disco.

Morris and two other Year 6 teachers will also run a transition program to support learners socially and emotionally.

“We want to prepare them for all the challenges of high school, such as learning to read timetables and time management,” she says.

Morris uses peer-mentoring, pair and group work for some students and problem-solving and self-directed learning for her high-achieving students. “Pairing a high-achieving student with one who has learning difficulties means they’re still getting the content, but not having to have the cognitive load to figure it out on their own,” she says.

She thinks another Year 6 class may be on the cards for her in 2021 and sees it as an opportunity to refine both how she teaches and content. “There are always areas I could improve, so I’m ready to tweak my teaching,” she says.

At the end of each school day, she takes time to ponder, too. “A new day is a fresh start for me to get on with whatever the day brings.”
NEW EDUCATOR Ashleigh Leaver has boosted her energy for teaching with a simple fix. She works slightly longer days - from 7:30am to about 4:30pm - and rarely tackles schoolwork on the weekend.

“I used to bring work home and leave it to Sunday night, so I spent the whole weekend stressing and not really being able to enjoy myself,” says the home economics and textiles high school teacher.

Leaver says managing her time differently has had a spinoff benefit of being more mindful and, in response, she says she has improved her handling of students with behavioural issues.

Occasionally, though, she still struggles. “I’ll question their work ethic because it’s so different to how I was at school,” says the self-described perfectionist.

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT
As a graduate educator in Western Australia, Leaver occasionally has a head teacher observe her classroom dynamics. Recently, it was for a challenging class, including students diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiance conduct disorder, or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

“The class ran like clockwork, and [the head teacher] said the kids in that class had made other teachers close to tears, so for a new teacher, I was doing really well. But, I want to know how I should be doing better.

Some of the tips she received included being aware that some students become chatty because they need to be “doing” something and asking students to step back from the table where she’s demonstrating. It was also suggested that she encourage students to follow suit, rather than watch and wait, when she is collecting ingredients for a cooking class.

This approach talks to the school’s signature pedagogy of explicit direct instruction (EDI). Each lesson has a learning objective, activates prior knowledge, develops skills and concepts, plus is relevant for learners. It focuses on modelled and guided practice, so students master the content and build independent learning skills.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGNS
Leaver has had a taste of independence and as the de facto head of home economics at her school, oversaw the purchase of a $1000 machine that scans and cuts fabric to any design.

“We’ve come up with this new upcycling project. The Year 9 kids made tote bags from calico, and they sew on fabric designs such as letters, hearts or flowers. The machine cuts those scraps - from my neighbour’s quilting group - into whatever shape you want them.”

WHAT’S ON THE CARDS
Next year, she’ll be teaching home economics to Year 7, 9 and 10 students and introducing childcare studies to Year 10 students.

Leaver’s advice to freshly minted teachers about to step into their first classroom role is: “Be prepared for literally anything to be thrown at you. Just roll with the punches. Don’t expect your plans to work the first time in the classroom because there’s no such thing as perfection in teaching.”
Profiting from a crisis

Global education technology companies are benefitting from the confusion and disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global shutdown of schools in early 2020 rattled education systems and provided a host of new opportunities for the commercial education technology sector to profit.

Private and commercial organisations – often operating in coalitions with organisations such as the World Bank, OECD and UNESCO – have expanded their reach as education service providers.

Public education was already becoming dependent on the private technology infrastructure of global conglomerates such as Microsoft, Google and Amazon, says Dr Anna Hogan, a senior lecturer in education at the University of Queensland. The pandemic just accelerated that.

It is a rate of change that was unimaginable just a year ago, says Education International president and AEU federal secretary Susan Hopgood.

“To these edu-businesses, our students are gold they can mine by inveigling their way into public education systems. While we all recognise public education as a fundamental public good and key driver of a prosperous future, these organisations see it as a source of profit,” Hopgood says.

DATA COLLECTION CONCERNS

There are also questions about how the pandemic heightened data collection and use, especially in a future of further hybridised education models.

The edtech sector is pouring billions of dollars into the development of personalised learning informed by artificial intelligence that can determine a student’s weaknesses and give a teacher feedback on how to direct their learning, says Hogan.

“With AI-informed technology, schooling could get to the point where teachers aren’t necessarily interpreting the curriculum, setting the lessons or delivering the assessments themselves, it’s all embedded within these programs.

“We need to ask who designs these algorithms, and what sort of expertise they have. Further we need to recognise the limitations of the data being collected and interpreted through these programs. If you ask any teacher what’s the most valuable learning experience they do in their classroom, it’s often the things you can’t test or generate data on,” says Hogan.

IN SHORT

// Global organisations partnered with private firms to promote edtech for remote learning during COVID-19.

// Rapid adoption has prompted concerns over data collection, privacy and advertising.

// Student data could be exploited if regulations aren’t introduced.
COVID-19 has provided a “catalytic opportunity for educational transformation”, according to a research paper commissioned by Education International. The paper, Commercialisation and privatisation in/of education in the context of COVID-19, was co-authored by Hogan with Ben Williamson from the University of Edinburgh.

Hogan and Williamson were astounded by the extent of offerings from individual companies, but even more surprised by the contribution of the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank.

“Given their global influence they’re able to assemble multi-sector coalitions, teaming up with big edtech companies such as Google and Microsoft. They are setting agendas and telling governments how to respond to the pandemic,” says Hogan.

“And when the World Bank says edtech solutions from these companies are the best way to deal with this pandemic, that’s often what gets picked up and enacted globally.”

We need to be aware of the level of public education sector dependence on private technology infrastructures so we know who is profiting from our children.

Dr Anna Hogan
University of Queensland

A SURGE IN DEMAND
Because edtech companies have been active in online education for a decade or more, many schools were already using commercial student management systems and learning platforms. To work remotely, Hogan says they simply upscaled with plug-ins such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or One Note for face-to-face meetings.

But there were also schools with no experience in handling remote and online learning systems. “They were happy to take whatever platform they could use for free and make it work for a limited period of time,” says Hogan.

The result was an “unbelievable surge” in demand for products from commercial edtech companies, “particularly the cloud-based solutions and learning management platforms that allowed schools and teachers to transition learning from physical to online spaces”, says Hogan.

A lot of these products and services were initially free of charge for schools and individuals but required users to register and create accounts, presumably capturing customers and their data well beyond the life of the pandemic.

TikTok, the video sharing app owned by Chinese company ByteDance, is another new player in the edtech sector. TikTok has been banned in the US while Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has warned users to be wary of the app’s connections with China.

ByteDance created LearnOnTikTok, a range of educational videos embedded with ads. “They’re making a huge profit advertising straight to students as they’re getting this bite-sized curriculum content,” says Hogan.

A NEW DIGITAL DIVIDE?
The pandemic highlighted ongoing concerns about children without access to computer technology and the internet, establishing big gaps in accessibility and equity.

Hogan wonders whether in 10 years’ time the gap will be between students who get to attend a bricks and mortar institution with face-to-face instruction and social and extracurricular opportunities, and those forced into online education because their families can’t afford to send them to school.

However, she believes the pandemic has allowed every stakeholder of education to reimagine what education might look like in the future. “There’s been this idea for the last century that schooling has lacked innovation. This pandemic, labelled the biggest edtech experiment in history, has allowed people to imagine a different style of teaching and learning, and a different way to provide schooling” says Hogan.

Because the influences on schools, teachers and students from these new players is likely to persist for some time during this transition, “we need to be aware of the level of public education sector dependence on private technology infrastructures so we know who is profiting from our children, and what sort of regulations are needed for data protection, privacy and consent to ensure student data is not exploited,” says Hogan.

“We need to understand who has ownership and control, not only of data, but of curriculum and the way our public schools are run.”

The Education International research report Commercialisation and privatisation in/of education in the context of COVID-19 is available at https://go.ei-ie.org/GRCovid19
In an era of “alternative facts” and fake news, understanding history is more important than ever, says Professor Tim Allender, from the University of Sydney.

The critical thinking skills that underpin the study of history help us to filter authentic content and see through “counter facts”, he says. “And it helps us understand human rights and social justice, what it is to be a human being, and how our society is formed and shaped.”

A new book Historical Thinking for History Teachers, edited by Allender, Anna Clark and Robert Parkes, sets out an Australian perspective on how to engage students in the discipline of history.

With knowledge of the “disciplinarity” of history, teachers can offer students robust historical frames that powerfully drive their ability to think in complex and humane ways, says Allender.

“This teaching also helps students identify and question what drives their own values and ethics,” he says.

The book is designed for preservice and early career teachers, and teachers without a history background. “There’s been increasing research into historical thinking and new ways of teaching and learning history, but not from the Australian perspective,” says Clark, from the University of Technology Sydney.

“We wanted to support current and future history teachers with reflective practice and provide a practice-based text that is Australian in its focus,” she says.

AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

The term historical thinking was developed 15 years ago, led by Professor Peter Seixas from the University of British Columbia. This project identified six historical thinking concepts which are now largely embedded (with some
variations) in history curricula around the world. In the Australian curriculum these concepts are called evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, perspectives, empathy and contestability.

This consolidates the shift from a content-driven to a thinking-driven study of history. “We learn the what of history, but we also learn the why and the how,” says Clark.

Many of the skills needed to critique history are not intuitive, she says. Recognising, understanding and holding the tensions between then and now, which are present in historical research, is something that can be taught.

In the Australian curriculum, the concept of contestability recognises the subjectivity of all historical inquiry and challenges students to debate and interpret particular narratives.

Any outside political pressure to teach a particular positive view of the past to build citizenship is ill-conceived, says Clark. “From a historical thinking perspective, learning a positive and uplifting Australian history does not make us better citizens.

“It’s understanding the complexities of the past and how we might use our skills and our critical judgement to interrogate the past and its sources that makes us valuable citizens moving into the future.”

Students also begin to recognise that they are historical actors, just like the people they study, with a role to play. “We are just one chapter in history,” she says.

CONFIDENCE AND ACTIVISM

But in the end, the foundation for teaching history goes beyond the historical thinking model, says Allender. “It is not a recipe or single model of best practice.”

“Other dimensions include reflective practice and taking time out to discuss and learn with experienced teachers.”

It’s about building confidence and sharing support to think deeply about how to build historical knowledge. “Be an activist, an enthusiast, someone who captures current day events and has sufficient flexibility in the way you understand the discipline to be able to do that,” he says, “whilst also teaching those deeper academic skills,” he says.

Allender also encourages new teachers to keep strict boundaries when it comes to dealing with compliance pressures in today’s increasingly over-regulated classrooms. In his observation, compliance can reduce teachers’ morale and classroom agency as experts in their field and contribute to them leaving the profession.

“The true value lies in the way you teach this wonderful subject, rather than meeting the exigencies of regulation,” he says. “Do not lose sight of the wonder of the subject.”

**Historical Thinking for History Teachers: A new approach to engaging students and developing historical consciousness, eds. Tim Allender, Anna Clark, Robert Parkes, Allen & Unwin (2019)**

**Agile, tech savvy ... with an opinion**

Teaching history in the 2020s is rich with technological resources to help generate and test knowledge. There are more than 30 available platforms including Coggle, Voice Thread, Padlet, Popplet and Sutori, plus online resources such as Wikipedia and Trove.

But it is important to analyse sources and put them into context, says Associate Professor Anna Clark. “A resource on its own is not enough.”

Today’s history curriculum equips students with contemporary and relevant skills, and is just as important as science and maths (STEM) subjects, she says.

“You can’t have a healthy society with STEM alone, and you can’t have a healthy society without humanities and social sciences. It’s a false dichotomy.”

“The skills you learn in humanities are absolutely the buzzwords we hear about being job ready,” she says. “Students are agile, they learn about communication and having an opinion and communicating that in a tangible, legible way.”
Lifelong learning is ingrained for this rural educator, who answered a calling to share his skills.

BY MARGARET PATON

Specialist visual arts teacher of 10 years and professional sculptor of many more, Paul Allen of Central Victoria sees parallels in his two lines of work.

“I look at students as the medium. You need different sculpting techniques depending on that medium. When you carve wood, you honour the grain’s direction and what’s already innately in the wood. Students have their own interests, difficulties and challenges; good teachers can work within those strictures,” he says.

THE NEXT GENERATION
Allen teaches one day a week at Malmsbury Primary School and is the educational leader and educator in its after-school care service. The pandemic has put on hold his master’s degree to do empirical research exploring Indigenous knowledge systems and how they may be implemented in the modern classroom.

Allen didn’t intend to be a teacher. The degree-qualified sculptor of wood and steel had “moderate success” with his artistic career in Victoria and Queensland. But, when an enormous gum tree fell in a primary schoolyard in inner Melbourne near where he was living, he offered to carve it. The principal said “yes”, and he was hooked on the idea of teaching.

“Everything I know about the arts is because someone taught it to me. I had the epiphany; maybe I should be teaching it to the next generation,” says Allen, who did a year-long Prep-to-Year 12 graduate diploma through La Trobe University in 2009.

ARTS EDUCATION AS A SPIRAL
Soon after moving to Central Victoria, he started in his role at Malmsbury Primary and says he was initially overwhelmed by the crowded arts curriculum. He now takes a spiral approach, focusing on material and methods.

“You revisit older skills and techniques, build on them for the next year, and keep building, so each year has a progression. It means the older students can explore those modernist ‘isms’—spending more time looking at the ‘what’, not the ‘how’ of those works,” he says.

“My job is to keep the artist thriving in children and to challenge their inner critic. By the end of primary school, they’ve reconceptualised themselves as being able to do art. Some years later, one of my students saw me in the community and thanked me because she’s gone on to earn $70 an hour painting faces at markets.”

Another highlight is a “memory palace” Allen created at the school with other staff and the local community in 2017. The historical trail uses imagination and story to link the physical space of the school grounds with knowledge from the 1830s until now. It draws on orally based learning systems, labelled by science researcher Dr Lynne Kelly as the “living pedagogies of Indigenous Australians”.

“Allen is demonstrating that landscape, song, dance, art and stories with vivid characters can be implemented in learning experiences across the curriculum and that art/music teachers are key resources,” Kelly says.

Remote teaching while schools were shut down was challenging for Allen. He sent his students weekly activities, with the option of Friday Zoom meetings or digital images for him to assess.

Fast forward to when he’s completed his postgraduate studies and he says he may well do more study.

“My perfect week would be teaching five-year-olds one day and adults another day. The two extremes. Ultimately, I want to teach teachers.”

Paul Allen
Malmsbury Primary School

Margaret Paton is a freelance writer and casual K-12 teacher.
SUMMER
TO DO LIST:
1. Plan a road trip
2. Buy a new car—
   2. Salary package a new car!
3. Use savings to pay for the beach house!

Quoted prices include:
- Finance
- Rego
- CTP
- Fuel
- Maintenance
- Insurance

Hyundai i30
Go Hatchback 2.0
save $1,650 on purchase price!
$340* PER FORTNIGHT
INC. $150 OF RUNNING COSTS

Hyundai Tucson
Active X
save $4,483 on purchase price!
$428* PER FORTNIGHT
INC. $172 OF RUNNING COSTS

Mitsubishi Outlander
PHEV AWD
save $4,000 on purchase price!
$479* PER FORTNIGHT
INC. $133 OF RUNNING COSTS

Volvo XC60
D4 Momentum
AWD 2.0D\TT
save $9,455 on purchase price!
$576* PER FORTNIGHT
INC. $179 OF RUNNING COSTS

Nissan Navara
N Trek Warrior
Auto
save $11,352 on purchase price!
$596* PER FORTNIGHT
INC. $163 OF RUNNING COSTS

Looking for a different car?
Request a quote on a car you love to see how much you could save!

Find out how much you could save with a novated car lease.
300 156 497 | teachersleasing.com.au

*Based on the following assumptions: living in NSW 2560, salary: $70,000 gross p.a., travelling 15,000 kms p.a., lease term: 60 months, using the Employee Contribution Method for FBT purposes. Images shown may not be the exact car that the calculations have been based on. All figures quoted include budgets for finance, fuel, servicing, tyres, maintenance, Vero by Suncorp comprehensive motor insurance, Hydro Platinum Pack and re-registration over the period of the lease. Also includes, for Suzuki, Audi and BMW models only, 2 year Platinum Warranty insurance. Vehicle residual, as set by Australian Taxation Office, payable at the end of lease term. The exact residual amount will be specified in your vehicle quote. Vehicle pricing is correct at the time of distribution but may be subject to change based on availability.

†Negotiated Smartleasing buying power discount on chosen vehicle may vary.
#1 fund for weathering market ups and downs

Our members can focus on today, knowing their future is safe with us.