Education Updates

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The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) has invited senior secondary students residing in Australia or New Zealand to apply for the 2016 Liam and Frankie Davison Award for outstanding achievement in literary writing on an issue in women’s health. [Click here to read more.]


Please visit the Independent Schools Victoria website for seminars for [February 2016](https://www.is.vic.edu.au).

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Would you like to read the briefing every week? [Sign up here.](https://www.is.vic.edu.au)
Federal Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten, has unveiled a 10 year, $37 billion school funding plan that he says will provide the 'largest boost for school funding in Australia in two generations'.

Mr Shorten said that the plan, Your Child. Our Future, would 'implement and fund the Gonski reforms on-time and in-full'. If elected, Labor's plan would see $37.3 billion allocated over 10 years (2015-16 to 2025-26) to school education – a move that Labor hopes will see a 'permanent and ongoing shift to needs-based funding in our schools'.

Labor argues that funding students on the 'basis of need' will ensure that the 'investment will flow to Government schools, Catholic schools and Independent schools' and that the 'long-term funding certainty' this would provide would allow 'schools, principals and teachers (to) focus on improving outcomes for their students'.

The funding, however, is 'not a blank cheque'. Labor says that the funding will come with 'strict obligations and benchmarks on systems, schools and teachers, so that parents can track improvements in their children's learning'.

Labor aims to meet the following targets by 2020:

- ninety-five per cent Year 12 completion
- all science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teachers in secondary schools to have a relevant tertiary qualification
- all students studying mathematics or science to Year 12
- digital technologies and computer science (coding) to be taught in every primary and secondary Australian school.

By 2025, Labor aims to:

- return Australia to the top five countries in reading, mathematics and science
- meet the OECD definition of a high quality and high equity schooling system
- have all schools be able to engage with at least one school in Asia (including online)
- have every Australian student be able to undertake a continuous course of study in an Asian language or culture throughout their years of schooling.

Mr Shorten said that Labor would fund the plan through budget measures it has already proposed, including:

- making multinational companies pay their fair share of tax, reducing superannuation tax concessions for millionaires, increasing the tobacco excise, ceasing the Emissions Reduction Fund, and scrapping the Liberals’ new Baby Bonus.

The Australian Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, said Labor’s plan ‘repeats their previous mistakes in education policy yet spends $37 billion that will drive the budget deficit higher’. He said that ‘many’ elements of Labor’s Package ‘in relation to teacher quality, increased focus on STEM, engaging with parents and providing record supports for students with disabilities’ were already being implemented by the government.

‘Schools funding under the Commonwealth and under this Coalition government has always been needs based’, Minister Birmingham said.

Australian Greens spokesperson for schools, Nick McKim, described Labor’s announcement as a return to its own policy: ‘After starting to waver, Labor’s announcement backing the crucial years five and six of Gonski is a welcome return to common sense’.

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), and the Australian Education Union (AEU) all welcomed Labor’s commitment.

ISCA Executive Director, Ms Colette Colman, said:

Stability and predictability in Commonwealth Government funding support for Independent schools past 2017 is essential to allow schools to plan and deliver their education programs to students consistently and ensure the ongoing provision of quality schooling ... Maintaining the value of Commonwealth funding support through appropriate levels of indexation is also critical for Independent schools.
NCEC Executive Director, **Mr Ross Fox**, said: ‘Catholic education has been a vocal and consistent supporter of school funding that is based on the needs of students and Mr Shorten has today underlined that as a core principle of Labor’s education platform.’

AEU Federal President, Ms Correna Haythorpe **called on the Prime Minister** to match Labor’s commitment and ‘make education the bi-partisan issue it should be’.

- Shorten Chalks up $960m. Lauren Wilson, *Herald Sun*, 30 January 2016

**One School Does Not Fit All**

The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) has released a new research report that aims to challenge ‘some of the misconceptions and stereotypes associated with public, Catholic and independent schools’.

*One School Does Not Fit All*, by Dr Jennifer Buckingham and Ms Trisha Jha, argues that there is no such thing as a ‘typical’ Independent, government, or Catholic school, and that ‘the range of schools within each sector is at least as great as differences between the sectors’. This diversity, it says, ‘calls into question the usefulness of broad-brush comparisons based on average results, whether it be for policy decisions or for parents choosing a school’.

Key findings in the report include:

- each school sector enrols students from across a wide range of socioeconomic, geographic, cultural backgrounds and abilities
- funding for schools reflects the range of students and schools in each sector
- total (public and private) funding levels for schools across the sectors are broadly comparable.

Both the report and a snapshot of its findings can be found at the [CIS website](http://www.cis.edu.au).

**Redress for Survivors of Institutional Child Sex Abuse**

The Australian Attorney-General, George Brandis, and Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter, have announced that the Australian Government will work with state and territory governments to ‘develop a nationally consistent approach to redress through an agreed set of national principles’.

The announcement follows the release, last year, of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse’s *Redress and Civil Litigation Report* (See Weekly Briefing 33/2105).

Attorney-General Brandis **said in a media release** that the Australian Government ‘recognises the importance of developing a national approach to redress as quickly as possible’, and that:

> A nationally consistent approach will ensure that survivors from offending institutions all receive proper redress, irrespective of the location of the institution at the time of the offending or the present status of the offending institution.

The Catholic Church’s Truth, Justice and Healing Council (TJHC) welcomed the announcement, but expressed disappointment that the Australian Government wasn’t ‘further down the track’. TJHC CEO, Mr Francis Sullivan, said: ‘The Commonwealth and the states have had Commissioner McClellan’s recommendations on redress for many months and I think survivors could have expected a bit more from today’s statement’.

For immediate personal support call **Lifeline**: 13 11 14

**Copyright Consultation**

The Australian Minister for Communications, Senator Mitch Fifield, **has called on stakeholders and members of the public** to comment on draft amendments aimed at modernising and streamlining Australia’s copyright laws.
Senator Fifield advised that the proposed changes to the Copyright Act 1968 would 'ensure the disability sector, libraries, archives and educational and cultural institutions have reasonable access to copyright material'.

Other changes include:

- streamlining educational statutory licence provisions to make it easier for educational institutions and copyright collecting societies to agree on licensing arrangements for the copying and communication of copyright material
- providing simple, clear rules for libraries, archives and ‘key cultural institutions’ regarding preservation copies of copyright material
- bringing the terms of protection for unpublished works into line with those for published works
- ensuring that search engines, universities and libraries have ‘safe harbour’ protection if they comply with conditions aimed at reducing online copyright infringement.

The consultation period closes on Friday 12 February 2016. For more information, or to participate, visit the Australian Government Department of Communications and the Arts website.

Australian Training Awards

Employers, apprentices, trainees, vocational students, and individuals or organisations involved in the delivery of vocational education and training (VET) can now nominate to be recognised as the 'best-of-the-best in their field, nationally'.

The Australian Training Awards reward the leadership and exemplary achievements of businesses, registered training organisations (RTOs) and individuals involved in VET. Prizes are awarded in 18 categories, including:

- Australian School-Based Apprentice of the Year
- Vocational Student of the Year
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year
- VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year
- School Pathways to VET Award.

Individual category winners will receive $5000.00 each, and each runner up will receive $2500.00 prize money. Winners in the businesses and RTO categories win $5000.00 prize money.

The nomination process varies between the categories, with some made directly to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, and others chosen from the winners of the state and territory training awards.

More information can be found at the Australian Training Awards website and the Victorian Training Awards website.

2016 STEM Programme Index

The Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) has released a new guide with information for schools, parents and students on how to access more than 250 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs across the country.

The 2016 STEM Programme Index, compiled by the OCS with the Australian Industry Group (AIG) includes ‘in-class, after school, holiday and online activities and resources’ and residential and online activities, catering to a wide and growing range of students.

Outgoing Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb, said:

The opportunities of the future will be made through STEM, for Australia and the Australians with the skills to thrive through change ... We all have a stake in great STEM education, and we ought to cooperate in bringing it about.

AIG Chief Executive, Mr Innes Willox, said that the resource provided ‘a wealth of information for schools and industry alike to become leaders in STEM skills activity’ and that workers with STEM related skills were needed to 'build the competitive economy of the future'.
President of the Australian Primary Principals Association, Mr Dennis Yarrington, said that working with industry, university and other partners could 'help teachers bring new excitement to the classroom. It reinforces the vital importance of the work they do and gives them new tools to do it well'.

**AITSL Professional Resources Campaign**

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is inviting teachers and school leaders to register for a campaign it is running to kick off the 2016 school year.

Registrants for the campaign will receive 10 professional resources sent directly to their email over consecutive weekdays, starting Tuesday 2 February 2016.

Featured resources will include:

- classroom observation strategies resources
- interactive Leadership Profiles
- enablers for effective professional conversations.

AITSL Chair, Professor John Hattie, strongly encouraged educators to 'engage with each of the 10 resources and think about how you can use them in your school to maximise the impact you and your colleagues have on student learning'.

For more information, or to register, visit the [AITSL website](http://www.aitsl.org.au).

**2016 Liam and Frankie Davison Award**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) has invited senior secondary students residing in Australia or New Zealand to apply for the 2016 Liam and Frankie Davison Award for outstanding achievement in literary writing on an issue in women's health.

Entrants can write about any issue in women's health that interests them. In 2015, both fictional and non-fictional pieces were received, addressing a broad range of issues, including anorexia, child marriage, pregnancy in third world countries, assisted reproductive technology and violence against women.

Up to two awards of $1000.00 will be awarded in 2016. Applications close Saturday 30 April 2016.

Further information can be found at the [RANZCOG website](http://www.ranzcog.edu.au).