Education Updates

**Report on Government Services 2016**

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**Australian Bureau of Statistics School Australia Data**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released data on the numbers of schools, students and staff in Australia. [Click here to read more...](#)

**Senate Select Committee into School Funding Investment**

The Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Youth, Senator Sam Dastyari, has initiated a Senate inquiry to 'examine the impact of the government’s school cuts'. [Click here to read more...](#)

**VCE Season of Excellence**

The Victorian Minister for Education, James Merlino, will launch the VCE Season of Excellence at the Top Screen at ACMI on Thursday 18 February 2016. [Click here to read more...](#)

**BRIDGE School Partnerships Project**

Applications for two Asia Education BRIDGE school partnership programs will close Sunday 14 February 2016. [Click here to read more...](#)

**National Ride2School Day**

Schools can now register for National Ride2School Day, scheduled for Friday 4 March 2016. [Click here to read more...](#)

**Harmony Day**

The Australian Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, has encouraged schools, students and families to celebrate diversity by taking part in the annual Harmony Day celebrations on Monday 21 March 2016. [Click here to read more...](#)

Federal parliamentary sitting dates can be found on the [Parliament of Australia](http://www.aph.gov.au) website.

Victorian parliamentary sitting dates can be found on the [Victorian Parliament](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au) website.

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

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Report on Government Services 2016

The Productivity Commission has released its annual report on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia.

Volume B of the Report on Government Services 2016 (RoGS) consists of three chapters relating to education, specifically: early childhood education and care (ECEC), vocational education and training (VET) and school education.

With regards to early childhood education the report includes information on:

- children using child care, enrolled in childcare and attending childcare
- participation rates for individual needs groups
- child care and preschool service costs
- staff quality in ECEC, and achievement of the National Quality Standard (NQS)
- total government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in the community, and Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending Child Care Benefit approved child care
- family work-related needs for child care, demand for ECEC and out-of-pocket costs of child care
- ECEC outcomes.

With regards to VET the report provides information on:

- VET participation by target group and participation in government-funded VET
- government recurrent expenditure
- user cost of capital
- student employment and further study outcomes
- student achievement in VET and student satisfaction with VET
- skill profile
- employer engagement with VET and employer satisfaction with VET.

With regards to school education, the report includes information on:

- attendance, participation and retention
- recurrent expenditure and user cost of capital per student
- student to staff ratio
- learning outcomes, completion and destination.

The RoGS figures show that in 2013-14, Victorian government schools received less in state and federal funding per student ($13,924) than those in the rest of the country, and more than $2000 less per student than the national average ($16,177). Non-government schools in Victoria received less in combined funding per student ($8697) than those in any state or territory other than the ACT, and $1400 less than the national average for non-government schools ($10,337).

The Age reported that a spokesman for Victorian Education Minister, James Merlino, said that the cost of educating a student in a small, densely-populated state like Victoria was very different to remote, sparsely populated areas, but that the government was ‘committed to increasing funding which will help make our schools even better’.

Australian Education Union (AEU) Victorian branch president, Ms Meredith Peace, told The Age that the increase in the funding gap between Victoria and the other states and territories was ‘extremely concerning’.

At the national level, AEU Federal President, Ms Correna Haythorpe, argued that the figures showed that funding to government schools had hardly increased beyond inflation in the years before the ‘Gonski’ reforms were implemented in 2014.

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) argued that recent increases in public funding for non-government schools reflected the ‘changing profile of students in Catholic and Independent schools’.

NCEC Executive Director, Mr Ross Fox, said: ‘Needs-based funding is a reality in Australia, and the changing profile of Catholic school students – with a larger proportion of students with educational need – has driven the changing levels of government funding’.

The Independent Schools Council of Australia noted on Twitter that the ‘Productivity Commission finds that non-government school funding increase matches enrolment share’. 


Vics bottom of the class for funding. Henrietta Cook, *The Age*, 5 February 2016

**Australian Bureau of Statistics School Australia Data**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has released data on the numbers of schools, students and staff in Australia.

Data from the [Schools, Australia (cat. no. 4221.0)](https://www.abs.gov.au) shows that between 2014 and 2015, the number of students enrolled in Australian schools grew from 3,694,101 to 3,750,973 – an increase of 1.5 per cent.

An ABS breakdown of the data, by education sector, shows that:

- Independent schools enrolments increased by 2.0 per cent (2.3 per cent in Victoria)
- government schools enrolments increased by 1.6 per cent
- Catholic schools enrolments increased by 1 per cent.

The ABS found that between 2014 and 2015 the number of students in Australia identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander increased by 4.2 per cent (6.8 per cent in Victoria). Of these students:

- 84.0 per cent attended government schools
- 10.4 per cent attended Catholic schools,
- 5.5 per cent attended Independent schools.


**Senate Select Committee into School Funding Investment**

The Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Youth, Senator Sam Dastyari, has initiated a [Senate inquiry](https://www.parliament.gov.au) to ‘examine the impact of the government’s school cuts’.

Senator Dastyari, who will also chair the inquiry, said that the committee would investigate:

- the impact of the cuts announced in the 2014-15 Budget and confirmed in the 2015-16 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook
- the impact on schools and students in regional, rural and remote areas
- the impact on students acquiring the job skills of the future, including science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics
- any related matters.

Assistant Cabinet Secretary, Senator Sam Ryan, opposed the motion, saying that the [ABC’s fact check had shown](https://www.abc.net.au) that ‘the government did not cut $30 billion from schools in the May budget’. He added that there had already been a Senate inquiry into school funding which had been ‘very thorough’.

The inquiry however, was established with the support of the Greens and seven of the eight cross bench senators, and is due to report by 30 August 2016.

**VCE Season of Excellence**

The Victorian Minister for Education, James Merlino, will launch the VCE Season of Excellence at the Top Screen exhibition at ACMI on Thursday 18 February 2016.

The [VCE Season of Excellence](https://www.vic.gov.au) is a five-month visual and performing arts festival showcasing outstanding VCE work from students (in Independent, government and Catholic schools) in 2015. Student performances, screenings and exhibitions will be held at various top venues around Melbourne.

Top Screen presents films, including short fictions, animation and documentaries, created by VCE Media students, plus associated education sessions with the filmmakers and State Reviewers.

For full Season of Excellence program details, including dates and venues, download: [VCE Season of Excellence 2016 Program](https://www.vic.gov.au).
BRIDGE School Partnerships Project

Applications for two Asia Education BRIDGE school partnership programs are about to close.

The BRIDGE School Partnerships Project is a teacher professional learning program that connects Australian teachers, students and school communities with counterparts across Asia. It aims to build teacher capability through school partnerships that:

- develop intercultural understanding
- improve Asian language skills (if applicable)
- enhance information communication technology (ICT) skills
- establish sustainable school partnerships and a community of learners.

Australian schools can apply to be part of the Australia-Indonesia and the Australia-ASEAN (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand or Vietnam) BRIDGE School Partnerships through a national application process. As part of each school's application, one to two lead teachers must be nominated to participate and have endorsement from their principal.

Under both programs, teachers from Australia and the partner countries participate in an extensive professional learning program during May 2016. Teachers from the partner countries then take part for a one to two-week school visit and homestay with their Australian counterparts. A reciprocal exchange opportunity will also be offered to Australian teachers.

Applications for both the Projects close on Sunday 14 February 2016. For more information, visit the Asia Education Website.

National Ride2School Day

Schools can now register for this year's National Ride2School Day, scheduled for Friday 4 March 2016.

National Ride2School Day is a Bicycle Network program, supported and funded by the Victorian Government, which aims to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, while ensuring that students around Australia arrive at school feeling invigorated and alert.

Registrants will receive a school pack with posters and stickers celebrate the event. Schools that took part in 2015 will be automatically registered and will receive their pack in the first week of Term 1.

To learn more about the program, and to register, go to the Ride2School Day Webpage.

Harmony Day

The Australian Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, has encouraged schools, students and families to celebrate diversity by taking part in the annual Harmony Day Celebrations on Monday 21 March 2016.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells described Harmony Day as Australia's 'largest national multicultural event, and as an 'opportunity for people to come together to celebrate and share in each other’s culture and generosity of spirit by encouraging participation, inclusiveness and respect'.

The theme for Harmony Day 2016 is 'our diversity is our strength’ and Senator Fierravanti-Wells supported this sentiment:

'Our cultural diversity is at the heart of who we are. We are one of the most culturally diverse yet socially cohesive nations on earth. Around 47 per cent of us were born overseas or have a parent who was'.

For educational resources, or to register a school event for the day, visit the Harmony Day website.