FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

State Government Legislation Review

The State Government is undertaking a major review of legislation relating to education and children's services. Currently legislation is being prepared to accommodate an increase in the compulsory school age (Education Act) and to modify the SSABSA Act following a consultation with key stakeholders.

The overall review will include matters relating to the registration of non-government schools and regulation of children’s care and education services. Clearly there is a need to review the current Education Act (which incorporates the functions of the Non-Government Schools Registration Board) and Children's Services Act to reflect what is happening in schools and early childhood care and education services and to enable institutions to respond to the needs of the community in the future.

The regulation of non-government schools and early childhood services will be a key element of this review. The powers of the Minister to direct existing statutory authorities and the role of the CEO of the Department of Education and Children’s Services in relation to non-government schools could be significant points of discussion during the consultation.

Proposed changes to the SSABSA Act give some indication of the changes that may emerge with the review of the above legislation. The fundamental strengths of the Independent school sector could be compromised by enhanced compliance and direction from the State government. The tension between the need for regulation and direction from government and the independence of schools and school systems in the non-government school sector to determine their strategic directions, curriculum and policies (within the law) will no doubt be a concern to member schools. Standardization generated by over-regulations across providers should not eliminate the diversity that is now possible across school education in Australia.

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The AISSA has already indicated to the State Government that it will oppose any regulation of member schools or systems via the public provider of education.

I urge member schools to read the consultation papers and the draft legislation as they are released for public comment and to participate in the discussion and advocacy strategies co-ordinated by the AISSA.

**Building Communities**

Independent schools foster the development of strong communities which contribute to the overall quality of life and create a sense of belonging and engagement. However, they are sometimes criticised for ‘creating division’ in the community. Implicit in this criticism is the assumption that Independent schools do not contribute to the building of community.

The AISSA has produced a publication, *Building Communities*, to counter these negative perceptions and highlight the contribution Independent schools make to the well being of communities. In particular, the publication highlights the wide range of ways in which Independent schools extend their contribution to building communities beyond their individual school.

The AISSA will produce four editions this year. The first issue – *Independent Schools: making a World of Difference* – focuses on the global contributions made by three Independent schools. The next issue will focus on the contributions made by four Independent schools to their local communities.

**SA Strategic Plan**

Over recent months the AISSA has briefed member schools on the revised SA Strategic Plan. The State Government has revised the SA Strategic Plan following an extensive community wide consultation. Electronic copies of the document are available on www.saplan.org.au

The same six key objectives have been retained; i.e.
- Growing prosperity
- Improving well being
- Attaining sustainability
- Fostering creativity and innovation
- Building communities
- Expanding opportunity.

The list of targets that relate specifically to school education include:
- Reduce the gap between the outcomes for South Australia’s Aboriginal population and those of the rest of South Australia’s population, particularly in relation to health, life expectancy, employment, school retention rates and imprisonment
- By 2014 achieve a 10% improvement in the number of children reading at an age appropriate level by the end of Year 1
- By 2010, 93% of students in Year 3 to achieve the national benchmarks in reading, writing and numeracy
- By 2010, 93% of students in Year 5 to achieve the national benchmarks in reading, writing and numeracy
- By 2010, 93% of students in Year 7 to achieve the national benchmarks in reading, writing and numeracy
- By 2010 increase the number of 15-19 year olds engaged fulltime in school work or further education/training to 90%
- Increase yearly the proportion of 15-19 year olds who achieve the SACE or comparable senior secondary qualifications
- By 2010 increase by 15% the proportion of students receiving a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) or equivalent with at least one of the following subjects: mathematics, physics or chemistry
- Increase yearly the proportion of Aboriginal children reading at age appropriate levels at the end of Year 1
- Aboriginal cultural studies in school curriculum by 2014 with involvement of Aboriginal people in design and delivery
- By 2014 equal or better the national average for the proportion of the labour force with non-school qualifications
- Increase the proportion of higher education students to 7.5% of the national total by 2014
- Exceed the national VET average for VET participation by 2010
- Broadband usage in South Australia to exceed the Australian national average by 2010 and be maintained thereafter.
Double South Australia’s share of overseas students by 2014.

It is significant to note the withdrawal of targets for primary year levels and the inclusion of targets for science and mathematics.

The overall Strategic Plan and the above targets can provide a useful context for planning by school boards and school management. The AISSA has encouraged member schools to consider the overall objectives and relevant targets in their strategic planning and future plans. The AISSA will also consider the Plan in the review of its existing strategic plan.

Recent attempts to engage the AISSA in reporting progress against the above education targets through the Department of Education and Children’s Services have been disappointing. If the State Government is to obtain ‘ownership’ of the SA Strategic plan among non-government agencies and the private sector it will need to engage and consult them as partners not as ‘add-ons’ reporting to government departments. The ground work with AISSA has simply not been undertaken. We are prepared to work with colleagues in DECS not for them.

Garry Le Duff
Executive Director

NATIONAL TOPICS

Federal Budget

The Federal budget contains additional benefits for some non-government schools. Some of the initiatives confirm the Coalition’s commitment to key policy directions in relation to national curriculum, teaching standards, performance pay for teachers and publication of student results by school and sector. Additional accountability requirements in the next funding quadrennium are outlined for those schools receiving Commonwealth funds.

Key initiatives include:

- **Literacy and Numeracy:** Direct assistance to parents
  - $457.4 million over four years to provide direct assistance to parents of students who have not achieved minimum standards in reading, writing or mathematics in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. This will provide a $700 tutorial voucher per child to parents; (This is an extension of an existing program);

- **Summer schools for teachers**
  - $101.7 million over four years for the new Australian Government Summer Schools for Teachers programme to be delivered by Australia’s best tertiary educators for outstanding teachers. The five disciplines included in this initiative are Literacy and Numeracy, English, Mathematics, Science and Australian History. Each teacher will be rewarded with a $5,000 bonus on completion;

- **Literacy and Numeracy: rewards for schools**
  - $53.2 million over four years to rewarding schools for improving literacy and numeracy. Schools will be eligible for a grant of up to $50,000;

- **Practicum for teachers**
  - $77 million for universities to ensure the practical experience of student teachers is high quality and represents a substantial component of teacher education courses. This will enable all three year and four year bachelor degree teacher education students to receive a minimum of 120 days in-school teaching experience;

- **Intensive English**
  - an additional $127.8 million over four years to double the rate of funding for intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) tuition for students entering Australia under the Humanitarian Programme;

- **Investing in our schools programme**
  - $195.9 million to extend the *Investing in Our Schools Programme* over two years for small infrastructure projects;
Support for non-government school students in regional and remote schools

- $121 million over four years to support students in more than 400 regional and remote non-government schools achieve better educational outcomes. The next schools funding agreement will require State and Territory governments to provide an equivalent increase in funding for regional and remote government schools from 2009. The funding will be provided to schools classified under the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia classification. Eligible non-government schools will receive an additional 5%, 10% and 20% of the SES entitlement according to the three categories (Moderately accessible, Remote and Very remote);

Year 12 aptitude tests

- $14.5 million over three years for a new pilot programme to trial the use of aptitude tests by universities as an alternative or supplementary method for assessing Year 12 students seeking tertiary entrance each year;

National teacher training and registration standards

- $5 million over two years to work with stakeholders to develop national teacher training and registration standards;

National curriculum

- $13 million over two years to work with States and Territories to develop core curricula standards in English, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Australian History for Years 11 and 12; and English, Maths, Science and Australian History for Year 10, to assist in raising standards in schools. Adopting the resulting standards will be a condition of Australian Government funding from 2009 onwards;

Non-government boarding schools

- $50 million to assist non-government boarding schools, particularly in remote and regional areas that accommodate significant numbers of Indigenous students; $15.3 million for upgrades to their facilities;

Financial literacy

- $6 million to the initiative, Understanding Money – building Australia’s financial literacy $2m of these funds are directed towards increasing professional development opportunities for teachers to support implementation of the National Consumer and Financial Literacy Framework. The remaining $4 million will be allocated to extend the Understanding Money media campaign into 2007-08.

Accountability

The Australian Government will from 2009, require government and non-government school authorities to:

- introduce national teacher training and registration standards to improve the skills of new teachers;
- include external assessment as part of Year 12 certificates and common descriptions of levels of achievement;
- introduce greater principal autonomy in school management and teacher employment arrangements;
- introduce performance-based pay for teachers to encourage and reward excellent teaching;
- report school and student performance against national benchmarks (including literacy and numeracy results), with school and state comparisons to meet the core national standards from 1 January 2009; however they will be able to develop their own syllabus and materials.

Other Budget Announcements

Other budget announcements of importance to schools include:

- $8 million allocation to Australia’s four learned Academies (Humanities, Science, Social Sciences and Technological Sciences and Engineering);
- from 1 July 2007, rates of Child Care Benefit will increase by 10 per cent on top of indexation;
- from 1 July 2007, the Child Care Tax Rebate will be available as a direct payment shortly after the end of the year;
- an extra $43.8 million to provide further financial support to child care services operating in areas of need, particularly rural and remote communities;
an additional $71.3 million over five years for the Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) programme which will allow 3,000 extra children with high support needs, particularly those with a disability, to be included in high quality child care each year;

$10.7 million to integrate the three current child care Quality Assurance systems for long day care, family day care and outside school hour’s care into one system. The new system will reduce overlap and simplify the quality assurance process across the sector;

$5 billion endowment fund for Universities to contribute to capital works and research facilities;

$222 million to improve access to tertiary education for students by increasing the number of Commonwealth Scholarships, extending eligibility for rent Assistance to Austudy recipients and extending the eligibility for Youth Allowance and Austudy to students undertaking approved Masters by coursework;

competitive grants scheme for schools to install solar panels. This will enable schools to apply for a grant of up to 50% of the cost of a solar power system with an upper limit of 2 kilowatts;

$201 million over six years to support the installation of water tanks and other water saving devices by schools and community organizations;

$58.5 million to assist Registered Training Organisations (RTO) to work with industry and local employers to implement “fast track” apprenticeships (Some schools are RTO’s).

Media reports have indicated that the Treasurer (Peter Costello) has countered the ALP’s productivity-based Education Revolution policy statement by linking education as “… an engine of equity and the economy.” (The Australian 8 May).

The absence of any additional funds for students with disabilities is disappointing. “Need” is essentially associated with remote and regional students, Indigenous students and some boarding schools. The increased accountability requirements should be noted by schools.

ALP Response to Federal Budget

The ALP response to the Federal budget countered the higher education focus by the Coalition by announcing a significant capital works program for trade training (VET) in schools. The rationale for this program is based on enhancing Australia’s skill base and significantly improving the school retention and completion rate.

The ALP had already announced a number of policy statements (including the associated funding) prior to the Federal budget. They included the following:

New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal Access to Early Learning for Four Year Olds which sets out a $450 million plan to give a universal right of access for all four year olds to fifteen hours a week of high quality early childhood education delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. In addition $200 million has been allocated for 260 new childcare centres on school sites;

New Directions for Mathematics and Science which provides financial incentives totaling $111 million for students to study Mathematics and science at university and then use their degrees within the mathematics and science professions, particularly teaching;

New Directions for our Schools: Establishing a National Curriculum to improve our children’s educational outcomes which sets out a plan for a national curriculum delivered in partnership with State and Territory Governments and educational experts, informed by the needs of students and their parents;

New Directions for our Schools: Local Schools Working Together which sets out an innovative pilot program to fund the construction of shared facilities between government and non-government schools. $62.5 million will be made available to provide high quality classrooms, sporting fields, science labs, libraries, trade workshops and assembly halls in new growth areas;

New Directions for Australian Children: Helping parents keep their kids healthy and ready to learn at the start of school life which sets out a plan for a universal Healthy Kids Check, a Healthy Habits for Life guide for parents and $16.9 million for the national rollout of the Australian Early Development Index to ensure Australian children make a healthy transition to school;
New Directions for Schools: A National Action Plan for Literacy and Numeracy which sets out Labor’s plan to ensure our teachers are literate and numerate, our children are supported to read, write and count and parents shared facilities between government and non-government schools;

All these initiatives are an integral part of the ALP’s Education Revolution policy statement which strongly links high quality education and training to improved economic productivity.

The key measures of direct importance to schools announced by the Leader of the Opposition (Kevin Rudd) were:

- $2.5 billion over 10 years for the establishment of Trades Training Centres in Schools Plan which will be allocated to establish trade training centres in all secondary schools. It is proposed that between $500,000 and $1.5 million will be available to each secondary school to build and upgrade trade workshops, information and communications technology laboratories and other facilities such as, Commercial kitchens, hairdressing facilities, etc. Equipment can also be purchased. Schools in close proximity will be able to pool capital funding to create School Trade Precincts. Partnerships between industry, TAFE and trade training centres will also be encouraged. Federal ALP will expect the State and Territory governments to lift their overall investment and improve the quality of school based vocational education and training;
- $84 million over four years to guarantee access to one day a week of on-the-job training for 20 weeks a year for all Vocational Education and Training (VET) students from Year 9 to Year 12. Payments of up to $10,000 will be made directly to individual schools to broker on-the-job training or work experience;
- A commitment to increase the availability of vocational education and training programs for students in Years 9 and 10;
- A commitment to establish stronger industry partnerships to ensure schools can deliver Certificate I, II, III and IV qualifications;
- A commitment to establish mentoring plans for students at risk of dropping out of school;
- Maintenance of Australian Technical Colleges; however they will be transferred to State and Territory Government and Catholic and Independent school sectors to improve the coverage of vocational education and training offered by schools nationally;
- Re-establishment of the Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy; $65 million will be allocated over four years to the strategy.

Other proposals that may be of relevance to schools include the allocation of $4.7 billion to build a high speed National Broadband Network, charging Commonwealth departments on bills not paid within 30 days and reducing red tape for small business.

The Trade Training Centres proposal will be of interest to many schools that are diversifying their pathways for young people.

The allocation of funds to early childhood education is also a significant differentiation between the two major political parties at this stage.

It is important to note the proposals at this stage do not differentiate between government and non-government schools. On available information the proposals will provide a source of funds to schools across the three school sectors.

However, the administrative details would provide an indication of the underlying principles that will determine how the funds will be allocated. Keep in mind the principles of need and fairness underpin many ALP policy statements.

Again there are no proposals to enhance funding and support services to students with disabilities. Despite the recent focus on primary education there also appears to be no major initiatives to enhance resources to this level of school education.
Federal Budget Early Childhood Services

The Federal budget (2007-08) contained a number of measures in the Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio, in particular as these relate to the area of early childhood.

Key initiatives include:

**Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR)**
The child care benefit rate is to be increased from 1 July 2007 by 13% (including indexation). This is expected to cost $728.5 million over five years and an additional $163.7 million for indexation.

The Child Care Tax Rebate will be 'provided as a direct payment' and paid 'soon after the financial year in which the costs of child care are incurred'.

**Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance**
An additional $15.4 million to enable approximately 20,000 parents 'to undertake training, study, rehabilitation and work'.

**Child Care Inclusion Support Subsidy**
An additional $71.3 million over five years for the Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) to enable '3,000 extra children with high support needs, particularly those with a disability, to be included in high quality child care each year'.

**Child Care Service Hubs – rural and remote communities**
$23.5 million to be invested over four years in creating '20 new Innovative Child Care Service Hubs in regional and remote communities with high indigenous populations'. The Hubs will 'provide child care' and 'link with other local early childhood services'.

**Additional Resourcing for Child Care in Regional and Remote Australia**
An additional $43.8 million over four years 'to provide further financial support to child care services operating in areas of need, particularly rural and remote communities'. Additional support will be provided to 'services that meet existing eligibility criteria for Sustainability Assistance for Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care'.

**Integrated Quality Assurance System**
$10.7 million over five years has been allocated 'to integrate the three current child care Quality Assurance systems for long day care, family day care and outside school hours care into one system'. Random quality assurance checks will continue to be undertaken. Services are required to ‘participate in the Quality Assurance System to be approved for Child Care Benefit’.

**Carer Adjustment Payment (CAP) – Financial support for carers of young children in exceptional circumstances**
$6.5 million has been allocated for 'an interim ex-gratia scheme to provide financial assistance to families under exceptional circumstances who have a child, aged up to six years, with a disability'. Families can apply for this assistance 'on a case by case basis, if their child is aged 0-6 years, is diagnosed with a major disability due to accidental injury, or severe illness', has 'significant care requirements' and the Carer is 'not eligible for the Carer Payment'. Other eligibility criteria apply. This scheme is an interim payment which is available while a review of the Carer Payment is undertaken. The scheme concludes on 30 June 2008.

**Multiple Birth Allowance – extension of eligibility**
From January 2008 the Multiple Birth Allowance 'will continue to be paid until children turn 16, or the end of the year they turn 18 for eligible full-time students'. Families with triplets or larger multiple birth sets are eligible. It is noted that ‘this extension will help these families with their children's primary and high school education'. The extension will cost $10 million over four years.

**Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) – funding for Stage 2 and Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children**
The AEDI will be re-run 'in up to 61 current AEDI communities' and implemented in 'a further 14 disadvantaged communities'. $3.7 million is to be provided over three years. The AEDI ‘is a community based population measure of the health and development of children undertaken at the beginning of the first school year’.

An Indigenous AEDI will be developed to 'more accurately assess the early development needs of Indigenous children and take into account cultural and language differences'.
From 2008-2011 a targeted longitudinal study will be conducted that 'collects bi-annual waves of data' about Indigenous babies under 12 months and four-five year old Indigenous children. $20.9 million has been allocated over four years.

**Financial Responsibilities of Parenthood – development of an education resource**

$0.5 million has been allocated for the 2007-08 financial year for the development of a resource for high school students which will provide ‘information on the financial implications of having a baby’. The resource is intended to be available in 2008.

**Inquiry into Academic Standards of School Education**

The AISSA prepared a submission to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee’s Inquiry into Academic Standards of School Education in consultation with Principals/Heads from member schools. In its response, the AISSA noted that there is considerable confusion across the community with regard to what is meant by ‘academic standards’. The AISSA raised the question as to what research based evidence is available to support the claim that education standards have fallen across Australian schools.

The response expressed concern about the claims by Universities and employer groups that schools are not producing students with the necessary level of required skills. The AISSA called for consultation between school communities and employer groups on the further incorporation of identified ‘employability skills’ into the school curriculum. The submissions also recommended that Universities define the core subjects and the content of subjects and standards which are prerequisites for particular courses.

The AISSA argued that the policy debate around education standards should be focussed on how Australia can implement a policy environment in which there is a focus on schooling for the future, innovation and continual striving for excellence. Discussions around how standards can be continually enhanced should be marked by collaboration and cooperation among the key stakeholders.


**Top of the Class: Report on the Inquiry into Teacher Education**

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Education has released the Report from its inquiry into Teacher Education. The Report notes that there remain concerns in relation to the adequacy of teacher preparation, which are reflected in responses from principals and teachers in surveys on the quality of preparation and also in the attrition rate of beginning teachers. These issues, it is argued, are due to a range of factors including: a 'fragmented approach to teacher education'; inadequate funding for practicum and educational research; 'lack of investment in building partnerships'; and 'a failure of policies involving teacher education to reflect that teacher education does not finish at graduation'.

The report recommends further research be undertaken to assess the impact of a range of factors, such as student background, selection processes and course characteristics, on the quality of teacher education. In addition, they recommend the establishing of a longitudinal study which would 'assess the effectiveness of different models of teacher education across Australia' and the developing of an Educational Research Fund which would be modelled on the National Health Ministerial Research Council.

The report argues that upon entering teacher education courses students should 'undergo diagnostic testing of their literacy and numeracy skills'. Assistance should then be provided to students to assist them to develop these skills to the required level. In addition, the report argues that 'beginning teachers need opportunities to take on teaching duties that are appropriate for their level of experience and in environments that will enable them to consolidate what they have learned in pre-service teacher education courses'. The Committee argues that the Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme should be 'adopted in Australia'.

Teacher Performance Based Pay

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, has announced that the Australian Government will conduct a tender process to engage an expert to develop models of performance-based pay for teachers to be trialled in Australian schools.

The expert consultant will work with the teaching profession and the wider school community to refine and evaluate approaches to recognizing and rewarding teachers.

The Minister said, "...Current teacher pay arrangements are impacting on the attractiveness of teaching as a career, and retention of quality teachers within the profession. We need to explore ways of creating incentives for our best teachers and move beyond the notion of salary based on time in the job".

The Commonwealth government indicated in the budget (2007/08) that from 2009, Federal funding for schools will be tied directly to quality reforms including the introduction of performance-based pay for teachers to encourage and reward quality teaching.

The AEU expressed strong opposition to the proposal. The ALP Shadow Minister described the proposal as "...not a serious policy proposal...", and pointed out that there was no money in the 2007/08 Federal budget. However he did indicate that such a proposal needed to be developed in cooperation with the States, Catholic and Independent sectors and "...we have to start rewarding quality teaching..." via a more comprehensive and resourced approach.

Tax Office Warning on Education or Scholarship Trust Schemes

The ATO has warned taxpayers to be cautious of arrangements that seek to reduce tax through ‘education or scholarship trusts’ for a student who may be a family member of the person contributing to the trust.

The Tax Commissioner (Michael D'Ascenzo) said he is concerned about whether taxpayers who enter into these arrangements are entitled to claim scholarship and bursary payments as tax free. Under the arrangements taxpayers apply to the marketer of the scheme for the student to be accepted into an ‘education funding program’. Once the student is accepted into the program, the taxpayer who is usually a relative contributes money indirectly to an ‘individual scholarship trust’ and these funds are distributed to the student tax free. "Under the law these types of payments are only tax free if they are received by a student who has won an award or been selected through an open process. The Tax Office is looking at arrangements that do not appear to meet these requirements and whether tax should be paid on any distributions," Mr D'Ascenzo said.

Further information about these arrangements can be found in Taxpayer Alert 2007/6 which is available from the Tax Office website: www.ato.gov.au/atp.

New Charter for Australian Primary Schools (Federal)

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP has announced Australian Government support to create a new charter to redefine the role of primary schools in the community. The Australian Primary Principals Association will receive $60,000 for a national forum to develop a draft charter. Minister Bishop said the new charter is important as it will provide a framework to ensure primary school students receive a high quality education. "Schools have been asked to provide a huge range of services that go far beyond what was traditionally the role of schools, and this has the potential to have a negative impact on their ability to teach students and allow them to develop the fundamental skills in areas such as reading, writing and mathematics," she said.

Review of Geography (Federal)

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, Julie Bishop, announced a new study into the teaching of Geography in Australian schools. The Australian Government has committed funding of $45,000 for this study, which will investigate why there has been a decline in the quality of the content and rigor in the teaching of geography in our schools, Minister Bishop said. The Institute of
Australian Geographers and the Australian Geography Teachers Association have raised concerns with the Federal Minister, indicating that too little geography is being taught in schools and that in some cases, environmental and political studies are masquerading as Geography.

Corporate Sponsorship of Government Schools

Federal Education Minister (Julie Bishop) has raised the prospect of corporate sponsorship of public schools as part of a push to forge closer ties between the business and education sectors. The Minister also suggested at a School Business Dialogue forum that teachers should be given the opportunity to do work experience placements so they can give better career advice to students. She said Australia should also consider ‘charter schools’ where business and industry support the creation of schools which meet their employment needs then have input into what is taught. “I think Australia should open its mind to bringing our education system into the 21st century”.

Key Challenges for Independent Sector in USA

Jefferson Burnett (Vice President-Government and Community Relations) National Association of Independent Schools (USA) recently attended an ISCA meeting in Perth. He outlined the key issues associated with the Independent school sector in the USA. They include:

- The tension between the allocation of income to operating costs and educational services; alternative sources of income are being investigated by some schools (e.g. conducting adult education classes);
- Attracting and retaining high quality teaching staff;
- Managing parent expectations (what am I getting for my money?) and the role of schools in educating parents in raising children;
- Financial sustainability and affordability;
- Changing school curriculum programs
- Demographic trends;
- Engagement of trustees-governance training.

Some elements of the community are questioning what Independent schools are contributing to the community.

Most if not all these issues would be familiar to leaders of Independent schools in Australia.

STATE TOPICS

There are no new funding initiatives in the State budget (2007/08) for the Independent school sector. The existing recurrent funding arrangements and the additional $4 million allocated in 2007 – 08 to assist students with additional needs form the significant items. The latter item is part of the $16 million over four years for non-government schools promised at the last State election. This additional allocation has been used wisely by member schools to directly assist students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The future SACE has $54.4 million allocated over five years for its introduction and the professional development of staff and support for schools across the three school sectors. This year $13.3 million will be provided for the above purpose. New legislation covering the future SACE and the ‘learning or earning’ measures to lift the school leaving age from 2009 will be introduced into State parliament in 2007. It is an integral part of the Government’s Education Works strategy.

The Independent sector has access to a small number of programs outlined below; however the question of access to the special programs does raise a fundamental question – when are parents as taxpayers entitled to expect that their children and their non-government schools have access to government funded programs without additional cost?

The following items have been allocated funds, predominantly for Government schools:

- The new government ‘super schools’ announced earlier have $47.7 million allocated in the budget; $31.4 million is allocated for new major works at 14 existing schools
- A new Asset Support Centre with $36 million over three years will enable government schools to discuss local maintenance needs, while the strategy will focus on long term improvement of education assets
A 'Green' schools initiative will provide $1 million in 2007–08 to assist government schools and pre-schools in reducing energy and water use as part of the SA Strategic Plan.

An investment of $10 million to early years literacy and numeracy including the Premier's Reading Challenge is part of a continuing program. (This program is available to non-government schools)

The Premier's Be Active challenge has an allocation of $599,000 including awards to students and high achieving schools.

The healthy eating program has been allocated $610,000 to implement new healthy eating guidelines, including mandatory food standards for healthy food and drink in State schools and preschools. Junk food will be banned in government schools from 2008. (The curriculum resources for this program are available for purchase by non-government schools)

$142 million has been allocated to support students with disabilities and children with additional needs in government schools. Programs include; disability support ($24.1 million over four years), indigenous family support, support for schools and preschools to assist children who have experienced abuse or neglect, school card and other programs to support rural schools and families.

Students at ethnic schools will receive funding of $76 from the State government together with $50 per head from the Commonwealth government.

The planned ten new trade schools will receive an additional $4.7 million on top of the existing funding of $24.8 million. The additional funds include support for 20 'apprenticeship brokers' who will connect students with training and employment opportunities.

$1 million has been allocated over four years to support Education Adelaide in expanding its marketing efforts in emerging overseas student markets. (Some Independent schools are members of Education Adelaide).

Fast Food and Obesity – Social Development Committee Report

In 2006 the State Government Health Minister, the Hon John Hill, referred to the Social Development Committee an inquiry into Fast Food and Obesity. The AISSA prepared a submission to the inquiry which argued that the responsibility to reduce the incidence of overweight and obesity lies with the whole community and outlined the range of strategies undertaken in Independent schools to encourage practices of healthy eating and maintaining fitness in young people. The AISSA argued that children, young people and families require support to make 'good' choices rather than being targeted for making 'negative' choices.

The Inquiry Report recognises 'that obesity is a complex multifactorial problem influenced by a number of factors including those of a social, behavioural, psychological, cultural and environmental nature'. The Social Development Committee noted that it received a significant amount of evidence which linked the consumption of fast food with obesity. However, conflicting opinion was heard on the links between weight gain and fast food advertising. While recognising the critical role of individual responsibility in dealing with the problem of obesity, it argued that there is a need to create an environment 'in which individuals are dissuaded from making poor food choices and helped to develop healthy lifetime eating and physical activity patterns'.

The Report makes thirty recommendations covering a wide range of areas including the Food Industry, Trans Fatty Acids, Television Advertising, Public Education, Food Labelling and Physical Activity. Schools were seen to play a key role in ‘providing an environment conducive to healthy eating’. Five recommendations were made which were specific to schools including that the ‘Minister for Education and Children’s Services, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, work to ban the sale of energy dense low nutrient foods from school canteens’ and ‘work to remove all carbonated drinks and sugar-laden drinks from school vending machines and school canteens as soon as possible or by the end of the 2007 school year, and monitor the impact of their removal on school budgets.

New School Leaving Age (South Australia)

The Premier has announced plans to lift the school leaving age from 16 years to 17 years in 2009. The changes will be introduced into State Parliament in the near future. The new ‘learning or earning’ legislation aims to keep all young people in school, training or work until they are seventeen. This change is part of the Government’s ‘school to work’ reforms that include the establishment of the first three (of 10) Trade Schools from July this year, and the implementation of the future SACE in 2011. AISSA will consult with member schools once the legislation is released for public consultation.

Review of SSABSA Act

The SSABSA Act has been revised following a review. Substantial changes are proposed in relation to the approach to board governance, the powers of the Minister and the functions of the authority.

The key changes include:
- significantly enhanced powers to the Minister to give direction to SSABSA
- reduction in the size and composition of the Board-based on an expert rather a representation model. This is a significant change as the three school sectors may not have representation on the new board, hence widening the gap between decisions made by the SSABSA board and the
- The role of the three school sectors (collaboratively) in requesting the board accredit subjects or courses (See 15(3)
- The powers of the CEO of DEC’s (employing authority) over the employees of SSABSA (See 18).

The key strength of the current Board structure and statutory independence is its autonomy from direct influence by one school sector. AISSA would welcome your comments on the proposed draft legislation which has been circulated to all Secondary Heads for advice.

EDUCATION

future SACE

School Pilot Program Phase 1

The future SACE Office has invited schools to apply for Phase 1 of the future SACE Pilot Program to be undertaken during Semester Two, 2007. Schools selected for Phase 1 will work in a partnership with the future SACE Office to shape elements of the new South Australian Certificate of Education. This will involve schools achieving specific outcomes. The Phase 1 Pilots will focus on two areas:
- Personal Learning Plan (PLP)
- Literacy and Numeracy

They will provide information that will be used by other schools locally and state-wide including how they cater for specific students (e.g. Aboriginal students, students with disabilities, socio-economically disadvantaged students, gifted students, new arrivals, rural and isolated students, academic focus students, boys, etc).

The Phase 1 Pilots will provide schools with additional resources in 2007 to assist in shaping the future SACE. Schools selected to participate will attend an Orientation Conference at a metropolitan venue on Monday 2 July.

Sample Destination Survey of 2006 Year 12 Students

The future SACE Office is undertaking a sample destination survey of the 2006 cohort of Year 12 students to trial a process that could be used in the future for tracking the destinations of all Year 12 school leavers. Eleven Independent sector schools have been asked to participate in the Survey. The schools are representative of a range of SES, and include rural, remote, co-educational and single sex schools, etc.

The participating schools will be asked to:
- forward a letter of consent to the listed address of their 2006 Year 12 students;
- receive consent letters back from the students/parents and enter onto a data file;
- forward the data file to the future SACE Office.

The Survey will be undertaken by Professor Richard Teese using the Victorian “On Track” survey methodology.
It is proposed that subject to the effectiveness of this Sample Destination Survey, all 2007 Year 12 students could be involved in a Destination Survey in 2008.

Regional Leaders’ Conferences
Six hundred and ninety school principals and senior secondary leaders from 263 schools and district offices participated in 13 future SACE regional and metropolitan conferences between 7 and 25 May 2007.

Each conference structured opportunities to provide feedback to three Discussion Papers:

1. Proposed Draft Learning Frameworks, Subject and Courses
2. Draft Learning Framework: Personal Learning Plan
3. Proposed Draft Literacy and Numeracy Approaches.

Further feedback was sought before 4 June via a website response sheet. All feedback is being analysed and summarised in detail by an independent contractor who has experience working with schools in each of the sectors.

A summary of the initial feedback from conferences indicates the following:

- the conferences were well received and discussion was lively and constructive;
- views were framed by the contexts of the participants;
- conversations allowed leaders to discuss potential implementation issues and to begin to plan towards 2009 implementation;
- there was great interest in receiving details about tertiary selection processes.

The Learning Federation

Update

The Learning Federation (TLF) will continue to release new digital resources to schools via DVD.

The content released to date means that there are now over 1900 learning objects and 3000 digital resources available through the TLF.

The content recently released addresses particular activities in literacy, maths, numeracy, science, French, German, Greek, Italian, and Studies of Australia and include digital resources from institutions such as the History Trust of South Australia, Power House Museum, National Film and Sound Archive and the Children’s Television Foundation.

Delivery of these resources to schools remains a challenge for all the state AIS’s which continue to look at providing a range of solutions.

The BELTS server hosted by the AISNSW will be shutting down in the near future and NSW will revert to distribution via DVD until a more stable platform able to handle the increasing demands becomes available.

The AISSA will continue to release copies of updated DVD’s of the learning objects and digital content to schools that have signed the TLF licence agreement. We continue to explore a number of options for on-line delivery of the TLF content.

The next stage of the TLF will address areas of student underperformance identified by the analysis of national and international assessment data and will develop or procure resources that align with the National Statements of Learning for English.

Research into the effectiveness of the use of TLF material in schools has reinforced previous research:

- Generally students were more highly motivated to engage with learning
- Learning objects were particularly beneficial to students at risk and students with special needs
- Some teachers were simply translating their old practices into an ICT environment and not developing or applying new pedagogical approaches.

Research continues in 2007 and recently, research into whether use of digital content has an impact on student achievement has been conducted. Results are expected to be released in August this year.

A repository of best practice is being developed. Other research includes the use of interactive whiteboards and TLF digital content to transform pedagogy in the classroom and to enhance student learning.
Multicultural Mental Health Australia Art Competition

World Mental Health Day will be held on 10 October. School are invited to encourage students to participate in the National Multicultural Art Competition.

The competition is open to individuals from 8 years of age and up, who have migrated to Australia within the last five years.

Art is a valuable way of exploring identity and developing a language of exchange that can be used to foster diversity and harmony within and between cultures and participating in the art competition gives individuals the opportunity to reflect and celebrate their identity and all that encompasses.

There are prizes to giveaway including books, art supplies and vouchers, plus some of the pieces will be exhibited at Federal Parliament House in Canberra during the launch of World Mental Health Day.

Participants have until 5 August 2007 to enter and they are required to produce an art piece based on the theme: I Identify-My Identity.

Additional entry forms and details can be found at: http://www.mmha.org.au/mmha-products/art-competition/mmha-national-multicultural-art-competition

Green Ambassador Program

The 2007 Commonwealth Bank Green Ambassador program has been launched.

The feedback from last year’s Commonwealth Bank Green Ambassadors was very positive.

Essentially it is very similar to the program last year:

- It is a competition for young Australian’s to be acknowledged for their environmental commitment and leadership.
- The competition is open to all young Australian’s aged between 16 and 23 years old.
- Young people can either nominate themselves; in addition, this year another person can nominate a young person.


Conservation Volunteers and the Commonwealth Bank assess the applications and select 20 Commonwealth Bank Green Ambassadors.

Commonwealth Bank Green Ambassadors receive a digital camera, Conservation Volunteers membership and an opportunity to volunteer on a Better Earth project.

Applications close Friday 27th July.

Values Month

Values month is an opportunity for students to celebrate and promote values education. In August 2007, student leaders will be invited to generate an activity, event or experience involving students and teachers that celebrates and promotes values.

A group of students from Government, Catholic and Independent Schools ranging in ages from 11 to 16 came up with the proposal for Values Month. They have been working together as Student Ambassadors for Values Education and wanted to get other student leaders involved in promoting values in schools. They came up with the idea of dedicating a month in which students themselves could decide how they want to talk about, learn about and get involved in values education.

To find out about funding for this project, please phone or email Mary Hudson on 8338 0422 or email the.hudsons@ozemail.com.au. Schools may want to work in a cluster to organise an activity or event and therefore may be eligible for additional funding.

Community Service Programme (WA)

The Western Australian Minister for Education, (The Hon Mark McGowan MP), has announced that a compulsory community service programme will be introduced for senior secondary students. Under the proposal, by 2009 all Western Australian Year 12 students will be required to have completed a minimum of 20 hours of community service before they are eligible to receive the WA Certificate of Education. Community service will need to be supervised by teachers and recorded in logbooks.
Minister McGowan’s proposal is an extension of an election promise made in 2005 that all Year 10 students would participate in a community service programme. Minister McGowan claimed that the programme would teach students lessons in responsibility, empathy and altruism. He stated that ‘by getting out into the community, students are not only helping others, they are also building their confidence, leadership skills and responsibilities as active members of society’.

Job Ready Certificate
The Leader of the Opposition, Kevin Rudd, and the Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Stephen Smith, announced a plan to introduce a Job Ready Certificate – an initiative that would assess the job readiness of secondary school students engaged in trades and vocational education and training. Students will obtain the Job Ready Certificate through on the job training placements as part of Labor’s Trades Training Centres in Schools Plan. The Job Ready Certificate will be a stand alone statement of a student’s readiness for work and will be in addition to a Year 12 Certificate and any separate VET qualification.

New Grants and Schools Competition to Tackle Obesity (Fed)
The Minister for Health and Ageing, Tony Abbott, recently launched a new grants program and schools competition, focused on preventing obesity and chronic disease. The $12 million ‘Healthy Active Australia’ community and schools program will provide grants of between $10,000 and $200,000 for local projects promoting healthy living among at-risk groups. These grants will particularly target children, adolescents, young women, families in lower socio-economic groups and people in rural or remote areas, as well as Indigenous communities.

The Friendly Schools & Families Program
This resource is an evidenced based whole school approach to reduce bullying. It is directly linked to the principles and key elements of the national Safe Schools Framework and is suitable for both primary and secondary schools.

Further details can be obtained by contacting Barbara Smith on 039835 7423 or email smithb@acer.edu.au

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Changes to AEI’s International Network
In response to changing operational demands on its international network, the Australian Education International (AEI) has announced a number of changes to its staffing arrangements in China and North and Latin America with effect from early July 2007.

China: Ms Cathryn Havka, AEI’s Consul (Education, Science and Training) in Shanghai will complete her posting at the Australian Consulate-General on 14 July 2007. Mr Quentin Stevenson-Perks, who was to replace Cathryn at AEI’s Shanghai Office, will now take up his posting to China at the Australian Embassy Beijing in early July 2007. He will join Mr Scott Sheppard, Minister-Counsellor, who is responsible for AEI’s operations in China. AEI’s Office at the Australian-Consulate-General in Shanghai will continue to operate with the staff reporting to the Beijing Office.

North America: Ms Fiona Morris, AEI’s Consul (Education, Science and Training) Los Angeles will complete her posting at the Australian Consulate-General Los Angeles on 1 July 2007. From that date, the staff at the Los Angeles Office will report to Mr John Hayton, Counsellor (Education, Science and Training) in AEI’s Washington DC Office.

Late America: As AEI will no longer have an Australian-based officer at its Los Angeles Office after 1 July 2007, responsibility for AEI’s Mexico City Office will transfer to Ms Davina Potts, AEI’s new Counsellor (Education, Science and Training) Santiago, Chile.
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LEGAL MATTERS

Collective Bargaining

Some member schools have commenced discussions with employees and their representatives about collective agreements. Some schools are considering other methods of providing salary and conditions improvements.

This is the first time that schools have needed to establish any registered agreements under the Federal system instead of the State system. With the different legal requirements, the Federal collective agreements will be substantially different to the State enterprise agreements previously established by schools. There are also significant procedural differences.

To assist schools in establishing collective agreements, the AISSA has recently distributed to all member schools (excluding Lutheran schools):
- AISSA Collective Agreement Kit 2007 – Sixth Edition
- Background Information on Salary Movements, May 2007
- Employee Collective Bargaining Claims, May 2007
- Conditions in current Enterprise Agreements, May 2007

The aim of the Kit is to provide advice on the technical matters in establishing a collective agreement under Federal industrial relations legislation. A summary of salary rates was distributed late last year.

New collective agreements will operate to the exclusion of Awards and collective agreements will not be able to refer to Awards in the same manner as current enterprise agreements. As many schools gave undertakings in the last round of negotiations not to seek to reduce employment conditions because of changes in legislation, the AISSA has prepared documents that could be included in collective agreements that reflect to the extent possible conditions in current Awards used by schools. It is a matter for schools whether they use the documents.

The documents have been prepared for:
- Teachers
- School Assistants
- Child Care Employees
- Caretakers and Cleaners
- Bus Drivers
- Nurses
- Greenkeepers
- Canteen, Kitchen and Dining Room Employees.
- Employees engaged in accordance with the Local Government Employees Award.

After consultation with the IEU and some subsequent refinements, the IEU supports all the documents and will be recommending to members that they be included in collective agreements. The AISSA made it clear to the IEU that it was not in a position to negotiate on the documents with the IEU, reach agreement with the IEU or recommend the documents to schools.

The IEU has recently proposed different dispute settling provisions to those prepared by AISSA. The IEU proposal is being considered by AISSA and the intent is to include the IEU proposal as an option in the documents.

The AISSA can assist member schools in establishing collective agreements or in considering options other than collective agreements.

The AISSA contact is Roger Anderson (tel 8179 1419).

ALP Industrial Relations

The ALP has released an industrial relations plan that it will take to the next Federal election.

Most importantly member schools would not return to State jurisdiction from Federal jurisdiction as the ALP is seeking one national industrial relations system for the private sector.

Schools could be forced to enter negotiations for a collective agreement, notwithstanding the view of the school. If the majority of staff want to negotiate a collective agreement, the school would be required to negotiate and follow good faith bargaining practices. It appears that the views of the staff will be determined by Fair Work Australia, possibly through such means as union membership, petitions and secret ballots. Fair Work Australia will replace the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and some other industrial relations organisations.
Good faith bargaining conditions must be followed for all collective bargaining. The good faith bargaining conditions do not appear to be onerous but disputes about whether they are being followed could be used by unions to refer matters to Fair Work Australia. Fair Work Australia would have increased capacity to become involved in collective bargaining.

The scope of matters that could be included in collective agreements would not be limited, similar to the arrangements in South Australia's legislation but unlike the new Federal industrial relations matters which has prohibited matters.

Similar to the new Federal industrial relations system, there will be some minimum standards that must apply to all employees. Most of the standards are similar to existing standards. However, unpaid parental leave is extended to two years. The redundancy severance pay entitlements for non-teachers in schools with more than 15 employees would increase. Of most significance, any employee in any week could not be required to work more than 38 hours per week plus reasonable additional hours. Under the current Federal legislation agreement can be reached to average the hours over a period up to a maximum of 12 months.

Similar to the approach under the current federal system, Awards would be substantially modified and reduced in number. The matters that could be included in the revised Awards will to some extent be different to matters that will be able to be included when the Awards are revised under the existing federal system – which is yet to occur to the Awards that apply to member schools.

Safety net wage increases would continue to occur.

The ALP is proposing that unfair dismissal laws will apply to all organisations, although there will be minimum periods of employment before a person could lodge a claim. The ALP is proposing changes to the way unfair dismissal claims are handled, aimed at resolving claims promptly and possibly in a less legalistic manner.

The ALP is proposing that Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) will no longer be available, although there will be a transition period for existing AWAs. Unless the ALP develops an alternative to AWAs, any individual contract could not be inferior in any way to conditions in a relevant Award or collective agreement.

ADMINISTRATION

**Teacher Registration Requirements (Victoria)**

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) has announced that professional development requirements will be made mandatory for all registered teachers in Victoria. All teachers will be required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of professional development every five years. Completion of the professional development requirement will become a condition of re-registration. At least half of the 100 hours will need to be allocated to professional development that focused on the latest educational research and development, which must be sourced from outside the school. Guest speakers brought in to a school to speak to teachers will be included in this arrangement.

**Foundation for Young Australians: Grant (Your Eyes Only)**

This grant is available through the Foundation for Young Australians. You can visit their website http://www.youngaustralians.org for more information.

Your Eyes Only is a new creative opportunity for young people 12-15 years to celebrate the strengths of their community by submitting a creative image celebrating their community through their eyes. Successful applicants will nominate a community group working with young people in their community (for example a school, youth group or sporting group) to receive a donation. This donation would then be used by the community group to further its work by either purchasing much needed equipment or adding funds to an existing program.

There will be two grant rounds during 2007:
Open - 26 March 2007 Close - 18 June 2007 (Closed)

**Schools Heritage Competition**

Registrations are now open for this year’s annual Schools Heritage Competition, which provides opportunities for students from Reception to Year 12 to identify and promote their local history, community and built environment.
This year the Department for Environment and Heritage has chosen the theme, **HERITAGE POSTCARDS: showcasing local places**, for the competition. Individual or group entries are invited in four categories – Reception to Year 3, Years 4-5, Years 6-7 and Years 8-12. There will be two cash prizes for each age group – $200 for Most Outstanding entry and $100 for Highly Commended. This year a new award category, the ‘Postcards’ award, offers winning students the opportunity to work with the ‘Postcards’ production team to develop their idea into a segment for the show.

**The closing date for entries is Friday, September 21.** For further information contact: Robyn Ashworth DEH Heritage Branch on 8124 4957.

**2007 National Schools Competition**

The ARC National Schools Competition has been the central activity of the Recycled Packaging Campaign since it commenced in 1994. At that time, cartonboard was the only primary grocery packaging that was made largely from recycled waste.

Students can visit the ARC website www.arc.org.au for more background information. All entries must be received at the mail address of The Australian Recycled Cartonboard Campaign, PO Box 980, Fortitude Valley, Qld 4006 by **5 pm Friday, 14 September 2007**.

**Commonwealth Bank StartSmart Workshops**

The Commonwealth Bank has launched the 2007 series of StartSmart workshops for students in Years 9, 10 and 11. An invitation pack has been mailed out to all secondary schools.

**AISQ Survey of Parents**

In August 2006 the AIS Queensland conducted a survey of parents to identify the decision-making process parents undertook when choosing an Independent school and the factors which influenced their decision.

The survey findings highlighted three most important factors that influenced parents’ decision when choosing a school:

1) Preparation for students to fulfil their potential in life
2) Good discipline
3) Encouragement of a responsible attitude to work.

Other factors parents ranked as important were:

- A better all-round education for their children
- Access to a Christian education
- Strong reputation of the school
- Better facilities
- Smaller class sizes, and
- Similar values and beliefs.

**Anti-Poverty Week**

The Anti Poverty Week will be held between 14-10 October 2007. The United Nations has designated Wednesday 17 October as International Anti-Poverty Day. Further information is available on the website at www.antipovertyweek.org.au.

**CPI Figures**

The ABS March quarter CPI figures indicate the following:

- The General CPI rose by 0.1% for the March quarter 2007, up from a decrease of 0.1% for the December quarter.
- The CPI rose by 2.4% through the year to the March quarter 2007
- The Adelaide CPI figure for the year was up 1.8% and down -0.3% for the December quarter.
- The most significant price changes for the quarter were falls in food (down 2.3%), household contents and services (-0.9%) and recreation (-0.7%)
- The most significant offsetting price increases were education (up 5.0%), health (3.0%) and Housing (1.0%)
- The Pre-school and Primary EI for the twelve months was 6.6% nationally and 6.2% for Adelaide.
- The Secondary EI was 7.1% nationally and 5.0% for Adelaide for the same period.

[Heritage website link]

[ARC website link]

[Anti-Poverty Week website link]
GOVERNORS’ CORNER

Does your organisation need a check-up?

The following checklist has been obtained from the Community Business Bureau Communiqué, June 2007

Vision and Mission
- Does your organization have clear and simple written descriptions that the Board, staff, volunteers, business partners and especially clients understand and support strongly?
- Does your Mission still align with the “Objects” in your constitution?

Strategy
- Do you have strategies in place at Board level for achieving the desired future position?
- Are these strategies an incremental extension of last year’s activity or are they responsive to the emerging dynamics in the market place?
- Are risks seriously considered when developing strategies?
- Are you overlooking opportunities or do you have too many strategies or actions?

Structure and Systems
- Can the Board and Manager lead the organization effectively?
- Do current systems completely support all steps in the “customer service delivery chain”?
- What essential reports are required to track organizational performance?
- What impact would the loss of key people have on your viability?
- Does your structure link organizational systems, team structures and individual skills for superior performance?
- Are your Supervisors being developed for senior management?
- Do your people understand grant writing, tenders, marketing and OHS&W?

Client Needs
- Does the organization understand its clients’ needs?
- Are these needs met? Are these needs evolving? How are the needs incorporated into the organization’s business plan?

Finance
- Does your financial strategy and management ensure you trade profitably and achieve your strategic plan?
- Is the budget available to relevant people?
- Where will you find additional funding?
- Do Board members understand the organization’s financial reports?

Operations
- Can you streamline processes; allocate resources, priorities better or win new funding?
- Who is responsible for improving quality and meeting standards?

Marketing
- Who else should know about you?
- Find new business partners
- Should you decrease, modify or provide new services?
- What is your biggest selling point?

The Annual Report

The April 2007 edition of Board Matters contains some useful advice about how to enhance the quality of the annual report. The following are some key suggestions:

- Focus on the accomplishments of the organisation
- Include your mission statement
- Keep mission at the forefront when choosing what to include in the report
- Explain what the organisation has achieved
- Explain the financial statement in plain English
- Make an impact visually
- Tell the truth
- Include reports on partnerships with other organisations.
The Role of the Board Chair

The same journal also has a brief description of the key roles of the Board chair. Clear expectations of the role and an understanding of the necessary personal characteristics are said to be the key to effective board leadership.

Some useful advice listed below:

- Have an open door policy with other Board members
- Foster an environment that makes Board members feel comfortable
- Be a good listener
- Be assessed regularly along with the rest of the Board
- Plan to confront challenging behaviour
- Ensure there is adequate Board orientation program
- Ensure there is clarification of Board member roles and responsibilities
- Adhere to a formal code of conduct
- Establish a strong line of communication with the CEO
- Be neutral
- Engage in rational discussions during tense board deliberations.

Facing the Challenges of Good Governance

The November/December 2006 edition of Good Governance discusses the challenges Boards face to enhance their overall effectiveness and bring personal satisfaction to individual members of the board. A variety of suggestions are presented to overcome these challenges. (See text in italics below)

These challenges include:

- A big job to be done in a small time: Focus on the Board's job not management
- High level responsibilities and potential liabilities yet part-time membership: Develop an annual work plan to address functions of the Board
- Partnerships to be built and sustained yet little time to build them: Implement a Board orientation program and create time for Board members to mix or engage in conversation
- Little professional development for individual board members: Undertake collective PD, ensure training programs meet specific needs of the Board
- 'Outsiders' are required to perform like 'insiders' with knowledge of the institution: Keep Board well informed about key matters and utilize; utilize 'outsider' perspectives of Board members to assist the Board to examine matters with a fresh independence
- Complex decisions are required based on inadequate information: Ensure management informs the board of significant or complex issues and provide timely advice to the Board on these matters
- Physical setting and social rituals reinforce hierarchy and privilege: Recognize the opinions of new members; assign new Board members tasks; challenge traditions such as the time Board meetings are held
- Board members are expected to exercise independence but work as a team: build a boardroom culture in which disagreement and reasonable le dissent are legitimized; build consensus; recognize the views of all members of the Board
- Management problems should not inhibit good governance: Choose your CEO with care; treat your CEO as a partner in the organisation's success?

TARGETED PROGRAMS

Special Education

On 23 August 2007, the AISSA will host a seminar facilitated by Yvonne Webb, Lawyer, to discuss issues in relation to the following:

- The Disability Standards for Education, 2005
- Reasonable adjustment, ‘on the same basis’ and unjustifiable hardship
- Schools' obligation under the Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
- Issues of enrolment for Students with Disabilities
Case studies – including students with complex needs.

A flier has been distributed to schools and this is also available on the AISAA website following the links through Targeted Programs to Special Education.

LITERACY NUMERACY & SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

National Literacy and Numeracy Week
3 September – 9 September 2007

Making A Difference is the new theme for National Literacy and Numeracy Week (NLNW). This year's theme aims to recognise and celebrate schools and individuals making a difference in literacy and numeracy education.

Digital and Visual Literacies & Numeracies Expo
One of the features of South Australia’s celebrations is the Literacy and Numeracy Week Expo to be held on Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 September at the Education Development Centre, Milner Street, Hindmarsh.

The focus of this year's Expo will be Digital and Visual Literacies and Numeracies and the keynote addresses will be provided by Professor Len Unsworth and Associate Professor Merrilyn Goos. In addition to the keynote, educators from across the State will present workshops and share their exemplary practice in literacy, numeracy and Information Communication Technologies, as well as the recipients of this year’s National Literacy and Numeracy Week Excellence and Highly Commended Awards.

There is no cost to register for the Expo. Registration forms will be available to download at www.nlnw.sa.edu.au from 26 July 2007 and registration will be via fax (8204 9930).

For further information please contact Rosemary Deegan, Literacy Adviser (8179 1413) or email deeganr@ais.sa.edu.au

National Assessment Program

2008 National Common Tests: Literacy and Numeracy

During May and June 2007, a sample of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students from five South Australian Independent schools participated in the trial of common national tests in literacy and numeracy. This is the second national trial in the preparation of the first common national literacy and numeracy tests, to be held in 2008.

Tentative dates for the 2008 National Common Test of Literacy and Numeracy for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 have been set for mid May. Schools will be informed as soon as the dates are confirmed.

Civics and Citizenship

Year 6 and 10 Civics and Citizenship is assessed nationally every three years, as a random sample assessment. This test is part of the National Assessment Program with the results published as part of the 2007 Annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (the ANR).

During October this assessment will be administered to a sample of students in selected schools in all school sectors in every state and territory in Australia. The Schools Assistance Act 2004 outlines the educational accountability obligations of schools to participate in this Program and as such it is expected that all sampled schools will participate. Thirteen independent schools in SA have been selected to participate in the 2007 sample.

2007 Literacy and Numeracy Benchmark Assessments

Independent schools in SA select from 2 literacy and numeracy state assessments:
- the State Literary and Numeracy test (State LaN) or
- the Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA),

to enable whole cohort assessment of reading, spelling, writing and numeracy to take place at Years 3, 5 and 7, as part of the National Assessment Program.

Assessment Dates and Information

State LaN (Term 3, Week 3)
The 2007 LaN Tests for year 3, 5 and 7 students will be held on Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 August. The catch-up day, for students absent on either of these two days, will be on Friday 10 August.
Literacy will be administered on Wednesday and Numeracy on Thursday. The option for Year 3 students to do the literacy component of the test over 2 days instead of one day is available again this year. Schools wishing to use this option with their Year 3 students should use the following schedule. This option is not available for Year 5 and Year 7 students.

The alternative Year 3 schedule is:

- Tuesday 7 August, reading and spelling component of the literacy test, Wednesday 8 August, writing task,
- Thursday 9 August, numeracy test,
- Friday 10 August, catch-up day.

Any school wishing to use this alternative year 3 schedule must use the sequence presented above. It is important that students at all year levels do the writing task on Wednesday 8 August.

**WALNA (Term 3, Week 3)**
Students may undertake the assessment during the week 6 - 10 August.

The 2007 Administration Guidelines has recently been sent to schools. This booklet outlines an overview of the testing process and associated procedures and also contains the 2007 Exemption and Parent Withdrawal forms. A sample parent information brochure has been forwarded to schools. Schools may wish to use this letter as a model of a possible communication to parents.

Lynda Secombe is the SA Independent Sector Liaison Officer for the National Assessment Program and can be contacted via email: secombel@ais.sa.edu.au

**COUNTRY AREAS**

**Country Areas Program**

Country Areas Program (CAP) Grants have been distributed to all eligible schools.

DEST has now confirmed that schools can announce their CAP grants to their schools and local communities. It is a DEST requirement that the contribution of the Australian Government is acknowledged in all activities funded by the CAP grants.

**VET IN SCHOOLS**

**2006 VET Activity in Independent Schools**

In 2006, 91% of all SA Independent schools with senior secondary enrolments offered vocational education and training options to their students. VET in schools programs were delivered in with a senior secondary enrolment. 4,043 students participated in VET and school-based apprenticeship programs. The most popular industry areas were:

- Tourism & Hospitality
- General Education and Training
- Information Technology
- Business and Clerical
- Sport & Recreation.

- The number of students completing a full Certificate increased by 11.1% from 2005.
- The number of students undertaking a structured work placement increased by 15.8% from 2005 with workplace hours increasing by 9.5%.
- School-based Apprenticeship commencements increased by 17.9% (from a small base in 2005)
- Student participation increased in the following industry areas: Automotive; Building & Construction; Engineering and Mining; Transport and Storage.

**2007 VET Grants to Schools**

The VET funding Agreement between Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology and the SA Independent Schools Targeted Programs Authority Inc has now been signed. This means that the VET funding for 2007 will be available. Schools will receive notification of their VET grants in the next three weeks.

Any school that has not submitted a Funding Submission should do so before June 30. Schools will receive 80% of their grant in August, and the final 20% instalment in October. The 2006 Educational Accountability reports need to be completed and returned to AISSA prior to receipt of the 2007 grant.
**Automotive School-based Traineeships**

TAFE SA is conducting an information evening on Automotive School-based Traineeships at the Croydon Campus, Goodall Avenue, Croydon Park on Wednesday 8 August from 6pm – 8pm.

These School Based Traineeships offer employment options and a future career in the automotive industry. Traineeships offer students one day paid employment in an automotive workshop or dealership, and one day per fortnight training at TAFE SA, while completing Stages 1 and 2 of the SACE.

For further information contact Kathy Cameron:
Phone: 8204 0831 or email: kathy.cameron@tafesa.edu.au

**National Science Week**

Students talk to scientists... plus... build water rockets and see a CSIROSEC Science Show.

Free at the South Australian Museum from 20 – 24 August.

Students will have the opportunity to work with two or three scientists during the day and, after the workshops, they will be encouraged to look around the museum. Programs have been developed for both Senior and Middle Years students.

For bookings and information contact Criss on 8207 7429.

**Professional Development Opportunity at South Australian Parliament and Electoral Education Centre**

This professional development opportunity will be held on Monday, 9 July 2007 from 9.00 am – 4.00 pm. Bookings are ESSENTIAL by 4.00 pm 2 July. For bookings and further information contact Janine Roberts on 8237 9343.

**Australian International Education Conference 2007**

Quality and Outcomes: Fulfilling the Promise
Focusing on the quality of the experience which international students have during their study in Australia and the benefits which students accrue afterwards.

Date: 9-12 October 2007
Venue: Melbourne Convention Centre
Registration: 02 9281 0024 or aiec@epicattractions.com

**COMING EVENTS**

**New Imagery for Schools and Schooling (Challenging, Creating and Connecting): International Conference**

This conference will be held at the Sydney Convention Centre 10-12 October 2007. Registration is available on-line at www.acel.org.au

**Principal Conversations Twilight Seminar: Dealing with Conflict**

The Principal Conversation series is an informal opportunity for school leaders and preschool directors to converse, network and socialise whilst focussing on a specific topic of interest.

This Twilight Seminar is an opportunity to discuss good practice and share strategies with colleagues on dealing with conflict, resolving issues and moving forward with dignity for all concerned.

Date: Thursday, 2 August 2007
Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Venue: Education Development Centre
Fee: Nil
RSVP: by Monday, 23 July 2007
Register on line