IMPORTANT ISSUE

• Meeting with Head of Social Inclusion Unit

The Executive Director met with the Executive Director of the Social Inclusion Unit (Ms Madeline Woolley). This Unit has been established by the State government to facilitate the government’s commitment to social inclusion. A Board has been established to direct the Social Inclusion Initiative. It reports directly to the Premier and is responsible for providing leadership to the work of the Social Inclusion Initiative.

The Social Inclusion Initiative begins with a recognition that issues such as poor health, increasing crime rates, increasing problem of drug use, poverty and decreased social cohesion are related to one another and lead to social exclusion.

The Government has identified two immediate priorities:

- Increase school retention rates
- Reducing the incidence of homelessness.

The Unit will have a key role in developing and monitoring action plans in response to the recommendations of the Drugs Summit.

Other priorities identified by the Government include:

- Rates of Aboriginal morbidity and mortality
- Rate of youth suicide.

AISSA has been invited to participate in the school retention project in the New Year. We will be seeking to be consulted about this project and to be kept informed about other initiatives that may impact on families and young people attending independent schools.

I recommend member schools take the opportunity when meeting with State MP’s to inform them of the need to be inclusive of independent school communities when implementing State Government initiatives. The State government should recognize its responsibilities to young people, regardless of the school sector they attend.

Further information about the Social Inclusion Unit can be obtained at: www.precab.sa.gov.au/htm/socialinclusion

• Public Liability Insurance

Following an invitation from the Deputy Premier, the Hon Kevin Foley MP, AISSA recently provided comments to the State Government on a recent national report on public liability insurance.

Insurance premium savings of around 13% are estimated to occur, if the key elements of the report’s recommendations are implemented.

AISSA has indicated in principle support for the general direction proposed in the report, which seeks to clarify liabilities and restrict obligations that are possibly excessive.
Recommendations with direct implications for member schools include:

- Proposed tests for standard of care.
- Legal action on behalf of children alleging negligence usually would be required to commence within three years of any incident.

Although the main recommendation of the report was for a consistent national approach to be adopted, this is unlikely to occur and increased inconsistency between states is expected.

For further information, please contact Roger Anderson (Telephone 8179 1419 or Email andersonr@ais.sa.edu.au).

- **Equal Opportunity & Discrimination**

  The State Government recently indicated that the Government is still assessing what, if any, legislative amendment is desirable regarding religious discrimination and vilification.

  The Attorney General, Michael Atkinson MP, also made the following statements:

  "Labor party policy supports a comprehensive review of all State legislation to remove discrimination against homosexual, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. The platform promises to ensure that homosexual relationships are recognized in the *Equal Opportunity Act* as heterosexual relationships. It further promises that Labor will remove unjustified discrimination against same-sex couples from State legislation after the review. The Government acknowledges that this is an urgent issue to some people now living in such relationships. Public comment will be sought before any Bill is introduced, because the matter is neither simple nor without controversy."

  The possible changes could have significant implications for some member schools. (See 5 for further information).

**FUNDING AND GRANTS**

- **State Grants**

  The Minister for Education and Children’s Services has signed off on the balance payment schedule for 2002. Payments have been entered into the grants distribution system and should be appearing in school systemic bank accounts in the near future.

- **State Government Contribution to Capital Works**

  AISSA has collected data from each State/Territory on the availability of capital works funding provided by State/ Territory government’s. The schemes vary in their approaches; some being grants others based on loan schemes or interest subsidy arrangements. A general comparison has been made on the basis of a per capita allocation. In Western Australia the per capita allocation of the State capital works grant to independent schools is $290 per student; in Queensland the figure is $150 per student; the equivalent figure for SA is $8 per student. This information may be useful when member schools discuss State funding to non-government schools in South Australia with their State MP.

**CURRICULUM**

- **Briefing on Performance Monitoring**

  A meeting was recently held in Brisbane by the Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce to outline progress in establishing a national measurement framework for national key performance measures. The framework sets out a timetable for establishing national assessment and reporting for:

  - Literacy and Numeracy
  - Science
  - Information and Communication technology
  - Vocational Education and Training in Schools
  - Participation and Attainment.
A number of key policy issues were raised at the briefing. They included:

- consistency in data collected
- timely release of data for use by the schools, parents and school authorities
- assessment fatigue for students, schools and school authorities
- use of the same data for different purposes – e.g. reporting against national goals for schooling and/or improved individual student learning
- convincing teachers and authorities that the data is good
- use of the data by the media
- community understanding of data
- assessments and reporting driving the curriculum
- increasing costs of assessment and reporting
- demands on testing authorities as assessment requirements grow
- contextualization of data, according to school
- the reward, incentives or punishment approach to the link between funding and outcomes
- who should have access to the data under the communities right to know principle - to what extent should the data be disaggregated?
- assessment to a minimum standard or to identify a range of achievement levels.

A more detailed briefing will be available early in the New Year.

- **Quality Teacher Program (QTP)**

  A number of current QTP programs will extend into Terms 1 and 2, 2003. In addition a number of new programs will be added, and some successful programs from 2002 will be repeated. Details of QTP programs for 2003, Terms 1 and 2 will be forwarded to schools as soon as possible.

  Beyond June 2003, the nature of QTP is not known at this date. However, it is expected that the Commonwealth will make a second round of funding available to all States/Territories to 2006/2007. However, there is no firm advice from the Commonwealth in relation to this, at this date.

- **Quality Teacher Program 2003 – English and SACSA**

  A package of three (3) half-day professional development workshops for Early, Primary and Middle Years English teachers in R-7 and Years 8-9 settings will be held in Term 1 2003.

  The three workshops will support teachers in understanding, exploring and using the SACSA Framework for the English learning area as a starting point for curriculum planning for an early, primary or middle year’s class. Teachers will develop a unit of work for English and explore ways of integrating aspects of literacy across learning areas.

  Details, including a Program Outline and Expression of Interest form, have been mailed to Principals/Heads (Secondary, Primary, Junior) of all independent schools.

  WHEN: TERM 1 2003
  DATES: Monday 17 February (Week 3), and Monday 24 February (Week 4), and Monday 3 March (Week 5).
  TIME: 3.00 pm – 3.30 pm (Afternoon Tea) 3.30 pm – 6.30 pm (Workshop)
  VENUE: To be advised
  RSVP: Ms Margaret Ford, AISSA by Friday, 13 December 2002

- **QTP Website – New Website for Teachers**

  The QTP dedicated website has been released. It is designed to enable teachers to access QTP information and exchange their professional development experiences and learning outcomes. The one-stop-shop of information can be found at [www.qualityteaching.dest.gov.au](http://www.qualityteaching.dest.gov.au)

  The website offers a wealth of information on the QTP and the interactive nature of the site means that users can read about the experience of teachers throughout Australia as well as submit their own stories for posting on the site. Features of the website include links to QTP projects in progress throughout Australia, a QTP-alert which will enable them to subscribe to regular news updates about QTP events and electronic copies of *QTP News* – a newsletter that is mailed to all schools.
In the near future, online events will be held using the Forum and Chat areas, enabling teachers to exchange views on professional development activities.

- **Dare to Lead Project : Indigenous Education Project**

During 2000/2001 ten *Dare to Lead* forums were conducted by the APAPDC to generate interest and commitment in improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students. The second phase of this project will commence in 2003 and continue until 2005. It will be called *Talking it On* and will focus on establishing a coalition of schools that will commit to enhancing positive educational outcomes for Indigenous students. They will receive various forms of support and recognition.

Further details can be obtained on the APAPDC website at [www.apapdc.edu.au](http://www.apapdc.edu.au)


This website showcases film and television content to the education sector. The TV resources are organized into six areas indicated by the top navigation menu. These include What's New, Find, Study It, TV Guide and Services. The website has been developed by Screenrights which is the licence provider for educators that wish to copy television.

- **Adelaide Zoo Education Service**

A new *Zooventures* school holiday program is being developed which will focus on drama and conducting scientific experiments. Activities will focus around animal intelligence, threatened species, predators, animal extremes and animal senses. A new format for Junior Zoo Schools is also being devised with links to marketing activities and special events such as the Zoo’s birthday. More details have been circulated to member schools via the mail-out.

**INDUSTRIAL NEWS**

- **Parental Leave**

The ACTU is expected to soon finalize a test case claim for further unpaid parental leave. The current standard is one year, although independent school teachers and school assistants have entitlements in excess of the standard. The ACTU is also likely to claim the right to part-time work after returning from maternity leave.

- **Industrial Relations Review**

The recommendations from the recent review of the SA industrial relations system could have significant implications for member schools.

It appears that the Government is likely to support most of the report’s 233 recommendations.

Recommendations include:

- Extending the maximum period of an enterprise agreement to three years;
- Enable industry and multi-enterprise agreements to be established;
- The Industrial Commission may arbitrate an enterprise agreement if requested by one of the parties;
- Additional restrictions on dismissing employees; and
- The Industrial Commission to have the power to determine fair contract rates.

The Review rejected the AISSA proposal that religion and marital status could be accepted as valid reasons for dismissal if they directly relate to the inherent requirements of the position. AISSA will continue to pursue this matter.

The UTLC has called on the Government to implement all the recommendations, through changes in legislation.

The Government proposes to issue a draft Bill for consultation early in the New Year. AISSA will consider the draft Bill and develop a submission to the Government.
SA Review of Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Laws

The State government made an election commitment to review the above legislation. This commitment has been confirmed by the Attorney General (Hon. Michael Atkinson). Earlier this year a discussion paper was published, inviting comment on a proposal to amend the Equal Opportunity Act to cover discrimination and vilification on the ground of religion. The proposal outlined in the paper met strong opposition from the major Christian denominations and the AISSA. The government is now assessing how it can meet its election commitment.

A working group has been formed within the government, including representatives of the Attorney General, Minister for Social Justice and Commissioner for Equal Opportunity to advance the review of the legislation. A draft paper will be available for public comment by mid-2003. ALP policy supports a comprehensive review of all State legislation to remove discrimination against homosexual, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. It also states that Labor will remove unjustified discrimination against same sex couples from State legislation.

The government has confirmed its commitment to proceed with this review in an open and consultative manner.

This review has far reaching implications for member schools and will be closely monitored by AISSA in the New Year.

Queensland Anti Discrimination Legislation

The Beattie government has introduced anti-discrimination legislation that would make it illegal for church schools to reject gay teachers or people in de facto relationships. Church groups and associated schools have reacted angrily to the legislation. They have argued they were not consulted over the legislation and that they should retain the right to hire teachers whose lifestyles conform with their religious teachings, including rejecting teachers who identify themselves as being in the same-sex relationship. They see this legislation as a threat to religious freedom.

The legislation if passed unchanged would allow non-government schools to continue to require their staff to be of a particular faith but would remove the right of any school to discriminate against gay or lesbian teachers or job applicants in de facto relationships.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Spinal Health


Topics covered include load carrying, locker use, posture and computing.

Machine Guarding

A very useful booklet on Machine Guarding has been released by Workplace Services. The aim of the booklet is to help managers and employees better understand and manage machine-guarding issues. Workplace Services can be contacted on 1300 365 255.

GOVERNOR’S CORNER

Corporate Boards that Create Value: Governing Company Performance from the Boardroom

John Carver and Caroline Oliver have prepared this publication for-profit boards. The book advises boards to be crystal clear about their responsibilities and particularly about the relationship between governance and management. The authors highlight the vital importance of both strong boards and strong management and describe processes that will help boards to both demand and support strong management.

The authors underline the fundamental influence over effective governance of the chairperson and the desirability of that person displaying servant leadership rather than acting as the boss or chief executive of the board.
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

- **Australian Education International (AEI)**

  Margaret Power (Executive Officer, Schools, States and Territories) met with representatives of member schools to brief them on the services offered by AEI. It provides a free promotion service to CRICOS registered institutions that involves the opportunity to display promotional materials in Australian Education Centres. Conditions apply to this service. Detailed information can be obtained on the AEI website at [http://aei.detya.gov.au/ASC/Promotion/Promotion](http://aei.detya.gov.au/ASC/Promotion/Promotion).

A range of other services will be available via a fee for service arrangement.

AEI Industry seminar will be held in Adelaide on 1 April 2003. This will provide school representatives with an opportunity to meet with AEI counsellors from various countries.

A resource kit to assist schools establish their marketing plan is available on the above website along with other publications.

OTHER NEWS

- **School Information on the AISSA Website**

  As you are aware, information for each member school is available on our website to which the public has access.

  On a regular basis we need to ensure that the information that is on the website is correct. During the week beginning 2 December you will receive a memo and print out from our website showing your current school details and a Return Fax to report any changes that you require.

  Please fax any changes to Ms Jane Pike at your earliest convenience (if possible by December 17) so that our website may be updated.

- **AISSA Website School Username and Password**

  Our new website has been operational since the middle of the year and we have responded to feedback from schools and other users in regards to the logon process that we originally put in place. As from the 9 December 2002 AISSA will be removing the Username and Password fields, which will give all users access to the entire site. We hope that this removes any confusion for school staff accessing the website. We would appreciate it principals conveyed this information to staff and AISA representatives on school boards.

- **Stop The Bullying Handbook**

  This handbook prepared by Ken Rigby (Adjunct Professor of Psychology in the School of Education at the University of SA) outlines actions that can be taken by schools to stop bullying. This book is both practical and research based. The publication is available through ACER Press. (Email sales@acer.edu.au). It can be ordered online at [www.acer.com.au](http://www.acer.com.au)

  ACER also has other resources that may be of assistance to schools. These include:


  Besag, V.E., *Bullies and Victims in Schools*, Open University Press

  Mellor, M., *Bullying Behaviour in Schools*, Scottish Council for Research in Education
SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

- **Risk Management**

  An introduction to Risk Management workshop will be held in Adelaide on 22 May 2003 by Business Excellence Australia, a division of Standards Australia.

  The course outline is:

  - Introduction to the framework for managing risk
    - What is risk and why manage it?
    - The context in which we must manage risk
  - Risk management and its relationship to corporate governance
  - Strategic and operational management of risk.

  The cost of the workshop is $465. For enquiries Telephone 1300 65 65 29 or Email events@standards.com.au

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