

Homeless Short Film Competition

Entries close on 16th September for *THE OASIS: Homeless Short Film Competition*, a national competition with \$25,000 prize money for secondary schools students to raise awareness and understanding about homelessness.

The 15 finalists in the competition will each win a Flip Mino 720p HD 4GB camera – a pocket-sized high definition video recorder, designed for quick and easy video upload to computers and on-line. The winners will be announced in November.

The competition is part of an education and outreach program which is central to a five-year philanthropic initiative tackling the growing incidence of youth homelessness in Australia.

This initiative is designed to develop the capacities and knowledge of young Australians to become concerned, committed citizens and leaders of the future in social policy.

Students are being asked to make a film about any aspects of homelessness, to raise awareness, highlight positive stories, inspire action locally and nationally, and support



Cate Blanchett launches OASIS

existing services for homeless youth.

The incidence of youth homelessness has doubled in Australia over the last 20 years with 32,000 young people under 25 defined as homeless (including children under 12, this number increases to around 44,500 Source: ABS Census 2006).

www.theoasismovie.com.au

Catholic Education WA anoints RM Education

RM Education has been appointed preferred bidder for a major educational ICT project by Catholic Education, Western Australia (CE WA). The company will be supplying the RM Learning Platform to 158 schools across the state.

RM Learning Platform is currently in use in more than 8000 schools worldwide and was initially conceived in 2004 when the company was awarded the contract to provide every school in Scotland with a learning management system under the Scottish Schools Digital Network program (later renamed Glow).

RM Learning Platform was introduced in Australia during 2008, and is currently used by Catholic and independent schools in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Sophos malware protection cuts IT staff workload

After installing Sophos protection systems, three large schools in Victoria and New South Wales have recorded significant drops in malware slipping through their security defences and a consequent decrease in the day-to-day technical support queries made by students and staff.

Knox Grammar School in Sydney's North Shore has a student population of 2000 and 220 teaching staff at its two campuses. Laptops for individual student use in Years 5–12 are supported and senior students have access to five desktop labs equipped with specialised computer and IT-related applications.

The school replaced a memory intensive security system that barely met its requirements with a suite of Sophos software. Email and data protection systems are used to prevent malicious emails from getting into

users' inboxes and information leaking out, in combination with Sophos Endpoint Security and data protection to protect devices from viruses, spyware and unauthorised applications.

St Catherine's School in Sydney's eastern suburbs had been an Apple-focused school for many years and consequently had experienced few security threats. However, as Apple computers grew in popularity around the world, and the school added PC desktop and laptops, its exposure to worms and Trojan attacks became a growing concern.

Its response in 2001 was to instal Sophos Endpoint and Security Control to detect malware and suspicious behaviour on the school's 700 PCs and Apples. Responding to the growth of social networking and roll out of student email, the school has since installed Sophos Email Security and Data Protection and Sophos Web Security and Control using

WS1000 and ES1000 appliances.

The security risk at Melbourne's Carey Baptist Grammar School is broadly the same as the two Sydney schools. The co-ed has 2300 students at its campuses in Kew and Donvale. Secondary students are catered for with a one-to-one tablet and PC program and in 2009 a one-to-two laptop ratio was introduced for the primary school. In turn this led to the school's existing security solution being replaced with an integrated Sophos system.

In the months following installation of Sophos Endpoint Security and Control, the school's IT support staff recorded a notable drop in support queries, which had been running at around 450 per week.

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NSW Schools Spectacular will be biggest ever



Now in its 28th year, the 2011 Spectacular will showcase the performing talents of 3500 NSW public school students. This year's theme is *Imagine*.

There will be shows on Friday 25th and Saturday 26th November.

The Schools Spectacular has grown to be one of the biggest shows on earth, published in the Guinness Book of Records as "the world's biggest variety show".

This year's extravaganza boasts a 1200-voice choir; an 80-piece orchestra; 1500 dancers aged from 5 to 18; and rock, jazz, brass and marching bands with featured soloists aged from 10 to 18.

The Arts Unit of the Department of Education and Communities develops, produces and stages the Schools Spectacular each year.

www.schoolsspectacular.com.au

Literacy is a language problem – speech pathologists

One quarter of Australian pre-school children have difficulty speaking and making speech sounds, while fewer than half receive specialist treatment from a speech pathologist.

Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) National President, Christine Stone, says that oral language underpins all learning and that early speech pathology intervention is crucial to ensure children are able to understand what they learn.

"Between 20 and 25% of children entering primary school have difficulty understanding and using language – if children are unable to understand what they hear or form words and sentences, there is little chance they will be able to learn to read and write easily."

According to Ms Stone, parents can foster good oral language skills at home by talking with their child, engaging in play, reading books together and looking at pictures.

Early speech pathology intervention is highly effective for young children prior to and in the first few years of primary school, and parents should watch for the tell-tale signs their child might have an oral language or literacy difficulty:

- Avoids listening to stories, or doesn't enjoy book sharing time
- Trouble remembering the alphabet or identifying the separate letters
- Can't play 'I Spy', as they are unable to guess words that begin with particular sound
- Instead of reading books, simply learns books by heart without reading the words
- Can't remember what they have read or has problems summarising what they have read
- Reads aloud haltingly and with effort, struggling to recognise the words on the page.

www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

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Graduates happy with higher education courses

A new report from Graduate Careers Australia (GCA), *Graduate Course Experience 2010*, shows that, in 2010, 93.2% of bachelor degree graduates expressed broad overall satisfaction with their experience of higher education.

Almost nine in every ten bachelor degree graduates expressed broad satisfaction with the standard of teaching they received and more than nine-in-ten felt that their study had improved their generic skills.

The data come from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), which forms part of the annual Australian Graduate Survey (AGS).

GCA Research Manager Bruce Guthrie said that all Australian universities and many private higher education providers participate in the AGS in order to monitor feedback from their graduates. They do so in order to ensure their graduates have a voice in the continual improvement of the educational experiences they offer.

"The CEQ results do not lend themselves to simplistic comparisons and rankings," he warned, adding: "when institutions make use of these CEQ results, they generally compare their results with previous years' figures and also benchmark themselves against like institutions, taking into account differences in aspects such as fields of education and the student body."

The 2010 CEQ also found that Bachelor degree graduates were highly positive about the intellectual motivation they experienced. In tandem with the development of their generic skills, bachelor degree graduates were also very positive about their development of graduate qualities.

However, the Bachelor degree graduates were most likely to express concern about the methods of assessment employed to gauge their progress.

Uni Mel competition to modernise portable classrooms

The Melbourne School of Design is running a competition that could help transform the re-locatable classroom into an interactive learning space for 21st century learning.

Future Proofing Schools competition organiser, Assoc Prof Clare Newton, said: "As methods of learning and teaching change in response to digital technologies, it is imperative that learning spaces are expertly tailored and designed with this in mind.

"The versatility of portable classrooms means that they are particularly valuable in emergency situations as they provide interim teaching spaces while schools are rebuilding. This was certainly the case in the recent Victorian bushfires and the Christchurch earthquake.

"This competition, the first time an Australian Research Council Linkage Project has included a design competition, will give all entrants a chance to build on international, best-practice

knowledge collected by the research team on education, prefabrication and sustainability. Designers will apply their unique abilities to visualise new learning environments.

"Instead of the attitude that portable classrooms are a necessary evil in Australian schools, we want to make them delightful spaces that are integrated into their environment and landscape."

The competition has three competition sections: for design professionals, university students nationwide and high school students. Registration to participate in the competition closes on 29th August.

Designs will be asked to take into account issues of sustainability, as well as looking at how inner city, suburban and remote areas have different challenges when constructing school facilities.

<http://msdincubator.com>

2011 National Dare to Dream Scholarship

Redkite, a national charity that supports children and young people with cancer and their families, has launched its 2011 National Dare to Dream Scholarship.

The scholarship will award \$33,500 to young Australians aged 15 to 24 who are on treatment for cancer or are cancer survivors to pursue their educational and vocational dreams.

Elite wheelchair basketball player, Adam Deans, who lost his leg at the age of 17 after he was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, put his scholarship towards purchasing a



custom basketball wheelchair. As a previous scholarship winner, Adam encourages others who have been affected by cancer to apply. He plans to represent Australia in the 2012 Paralympic Games.

"For anyone that is thinking of applying for a Redkite scholarship, I'd say: definitely do. Some people might say, 'I'm not going to win', or, 'my story's not good enough', but you know even I thought that when I applied...If you don't apply you'll never know."

www.redkite.org.au/scholarships

Study shows great teachers make great students

A new study *Helping Great Teachers Make Great Students* has demonstrated that students' reading performance can improve if they are taught specific social and emotional skills that support learning.

The author, Prof Michael E. Bernard, is an international researcher from the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education.

His research evaluated the teaching of positive attitudes and behaviours for learning in two national partnership schools in Victoria.

The research demonstrates that teachers who are able to teach their students attitudes and behaviours for learning (AB4L), are more successful in imparting subject content particularly where students are struggling. And those students in the lower 50% of their classes in reading achievement showed significant improvements in their reading comprehension performance.

Prof Bernard said the research is an Australian first, providing empirical evidence that teaching students AB4L improves how well they do in literacy.

"I have always believed there was an artificial separation between academic learning, and social and emotional learning," he said. "In fact,



the two are linked, and teachers need to be great at teaching both. This research shows that, if we equip our teachers with methods for developing students' positive attitudes and behaviours for learning, the students actually become better learners."

AB4L was created by Prof Bernard in 2009. It focuses on the self-management skills and attitudes that help students stay focused and engaged during classroom instruction. Specific learning behaviours include: initiative, cooperativeness, engagement, confidence and persistence.

During the study, some of the teachers at the two participating schools were trained in how to integrate AB4L into literacy lessons. Students in those classes showed significant improvement in their behaviours for learning and reading comprehension.

Former Dean of Education at the University of Melbourne, Prof Brian Caldwell, stated that the study has important implications for policy and practice.

"No amount of testing and reporting of student achievement will improve levels of literacy in Australian schools unless students' attitudes and behaviours prepare them for learning. Prof Bernard's study shows how this can be achieved through an innovative program that has been tested and found to be successful under experimental conditions."

"Prof Bernard has a well-deserved international reputation for grounded research that has led to approaches that teachers can adopt and achieve immediate impact. We need more of this kind of research if we are to meet the goals of schooling in Australia."

The AB4L research is part of Australian Scholarship Group's broader support for Prof Bernard's *You Can Do It! Education Program*.

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