

New green school chair



The Metaphor school chair is a new exciting design that is inspired by the most popular classroom chair ever – Virco's 9000 series chair;

over 47,000,000 chairs have been sold since it was introduced in 1965. The chair is distributed in Australia by Nufurn.

The Metaphor is the first and only school chair currently available in Australia with full Greenguard certification. Greenguard ensures that chair meets the strict environmental code for certification from base product sourcing, to manufacture right through the supply chain to the end user. Most importantly, all chairs have passed indoor air quality certification for children and schools. In addition to its green credentials, the chair comes with a 10-year warranty; superior lumbar support; full perimeter frame; fully welded steel frame with self levelling leg stoppers; and true vertical stack 12 high.

tel 1800 650 019
www.nufurn.com.au

Skydeck 88 free entry on teachers' day



Melbourne's Eureka Skydeck 88 is offering free entry to teachers who present their VIT card on 30th October, World Teachers' Day.

Skydeck 88 is one of Melbourne's most popular school excursion destinations. Since its inception in May 2007, more than 1 million

visitors, including over 75,000 schoolchildren, have visited.

Teachers planning excursions to Melbourne's CBD can register to receive education news from Skydeck 88 at <http://www.eurekaskydeck.com.au/education/> > subscription.

Early childhood conference

Australia's foremost conference on children's rights, equity, citizenship and diversity for early childhood education practitioners, researchers and policy makers, hosted by the Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood (CEIEC), will run from 19th–21st November at the University of Melbourne this year.

Now in its ninth year, this year's conference theme is *Children's rights in research, policy and practice*. It will acknowledge the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention

on the Rights of the Child and invite participants to engage in reflection and debate, and share practices and possibilities concerning children's rights in 2009 and beyond in different contexts and settings.

The 2009 International CEIEC Conference will feature internationally renowned educationalists as speakers.

The Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood is part of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne. <http://www.education.unimelb.edu.au/ceiec>



For all creatures great and small.

STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY
High School Tour a huge success.
Book now for November Tour



The RSPCA Humane Education Team recently launched its STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY High School Tour. The tour ran over five weeks, delivering humane education seminars to over 8500 students across Sydney.

The tour involved a number of key guest speakers including Norm Hewitt (Former All Black and Winner of Dancing with the Stars New Zealand) who shared his story with students about growing up with violence and the challenges he was faced with, whilst holding onto his dream of becoming an All Black.

Our humane education seminars cover a number of topics such as The Role of the RSPCA, Cycle of Violence, Balance of Power, Respect and Kindness, Cruelty Definitions, Laws surrounding animal cruelty, and how to be an active, responsible citizen. The seminars also boast an array of audio-visual clips to show students inspector cases, shelter footage and celebrity support for our animals. Although there is some serious discussion about violence in the community, the seminars always conclude with a positive message and some video clips of animals doing funny things!

The RSPCA was lucky enough to have Hip Hop Artist 'Israel' on board for the High School Tour. Israel performed a 20-minute live set of songs from his new album The Legacy, including chart-topper music single 'Freak Tonight'.

The students thoroughly enjoyed being part of the STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY High School Tour and the feedback from teachers was extremely positive.

"Pets cannot only reignite the capacity for one to love but also to care for others."
Teacher; Links to Learning, Western Sydney

The RSPCA is aiming to run the next tour in early November of this year – book early!

We look forward to getting out there and spreading more awareness on animal cruelty issues – together we can make a difference!

For more information contact
Lauren Preston, Humane Education Manager
RSPCA NSW Humane Education Department
tel 02) 9782 4485 or
email education@rspcansw.org.au
62 Hume Highway Chullora NSW 2190
www.rspcansw.org.au

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what's new

500,000 students use Maths Online

More than one-third of Australia's 1.46 million secondary students have signed up to improve their maths skills since the launch by McDonald's Australia of a free online maths tutoring program in March this year.

The program, developed over a 10-year period by qualified maths teachers, has gained the support of the Australian Secondary Principal's Association (ASPA) and the Catholic Secondary Principal's Association (CaSPA).

Speaking at the annual ASPA Conference in Adelaide, ASPA President Andrew Blair said the program had been embraced by the education system and the fact that McDonald's Australia was now providing it free-of-charge was a bonus

for secondary students.

"The Maths Online product is high quality, practical and accessible and has proven to be an excellent support to the work of mathematics teachers," he said.

"Providing Maths Online for free has been a wonderful initiative by McDonald's Australia for thousands of Australian secondary students who may not necessarily have access to extra tutoring in maths.

"I will continue to urge all principals, maths teachers and students to take advantage of this opportunity."

For a demonstration of Maths Online or to register (schools or students), go to www.mathsonline.com.au

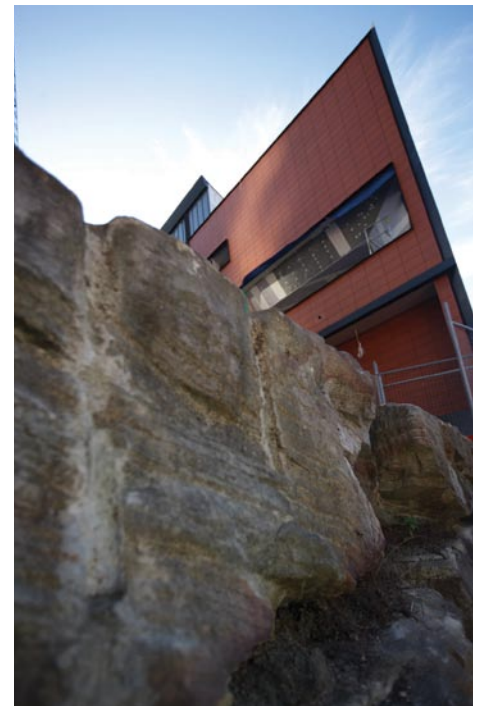
Rocks' Big Dig programs announced

Building work on the new Sydney Harbour YHA and The Big Dig Education Centre is nearing completion. The archaeology, carefully preserved under sandbags and scaffolding during building works, has been re-revealed. The new building hovers protectively above the archaeological remains, and surprises visitors with the extent of clear visual access over the archaeology of the site.

A series of interesting educational programs have been announced for 2010. These programs, which will offer a hands-on experiential learning experience, are: *Little diggers* for Years 1-2 HSIE, *Dirt detectives* for Years 3-4 HSIE, *Pieces of the past* for Years 3-4 HSIE, *Cesspits and old rubbish* for Years 7-10 history and *Groundwork: Archaeology at The Big Dig* for Year 11 Ancient History and Stage 5 Elective History.

Each program will cost \$13 per student and will be presented by Sydney Learning Adventures at The Big Dig. More information is available at www.thebigdig.com.au/education and at www.sydneylearningadventures.com.au

Contact Alison Frappell tel (02) 9261 111



Wellbeing Plan for Kids' book

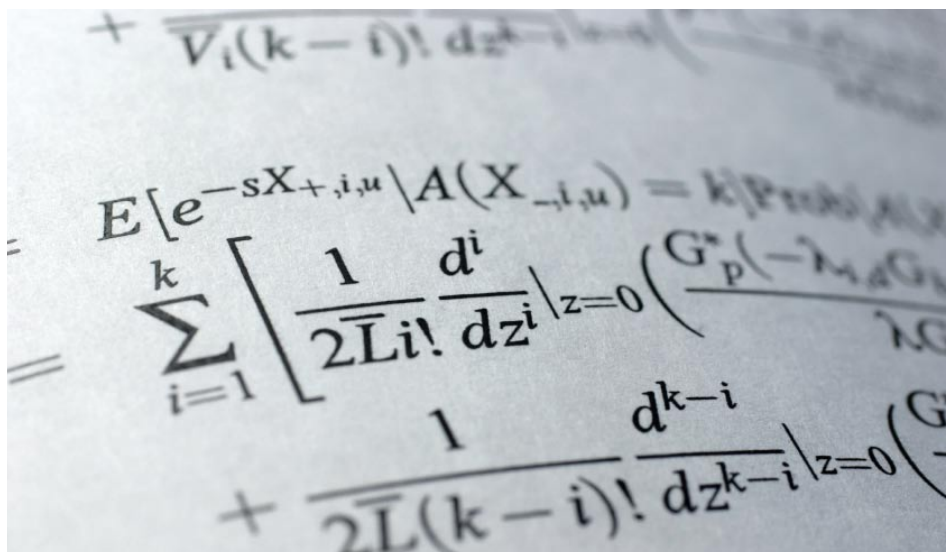
CSIRO has published The CSIRO Wellbeing Plan for Kids. The book provides practical, easy to understand information on nutrition and activity that is relevant to Australian parents and children from toddlers to teenagers. Written by researchers in CSIRO's Preventative Health National Research Flagship and based on extensive research, The CSIRO Wellbeing Plan for Kids reduces the guesswork for parents by focusing on key lifestyle habits that will make a significant difference in achieving a healthy and active lifestyle for the whole family. CSIRO researcher and co-author, Dr Jane Bowen, said that the book was inspired by the results of a national survey of

children's eating and physical activity habits and a survey of Australian parents. Co-author, CSIRO researcher Dr Nadia Corsini, says the book is a positive guide for parents to help their children adopt healthy habits that they will take into adulthood.

"This book explains what healthy habits to prioritise, how to manage the challenges of raising healthy children and how parents can motivate their families to make changes that can last. It also includes over 100 delicious recipes for stress-free family cooking," she said.

The CSIRO Wellbeing Plan for Kids is published by Penguin (rrp \$34.95).

Access to mathematics is vital for equity



"The disastrous state of mathematics education in Australia is more than a brake on national capability in research and innovation. It also reflects a lack of social justice for students," according to Ms Jan Thomas, Executive Officer of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute.

Writing in the October issue of *Australasian Science* magazine, Ms Thomas traces "a steady decline of mathematical sciences in Australian universities. She says that a 1996 review of Australian mathematical sciences identified challenges but was generally optimistic about the future but adds that "when the Howard government reduced funding to universities from its first Budget later that year, it had a profound impact on university mathematics and statistics departments". The number of Year 12 students completing intermediate or advanced mathematics courses also fell.

She says there has also been a "subsequent

flight of many of Australia's best mathematical minds to other nations and the steady contraction of mathematics and statistics departments. The percentage of Australian graduates with a major in mathematics or statistics has slumped to less than half the OECD average. "Unsurprisingly, this has led to a disastrous situation in regard to the supply of mathematics teachers in secondary schools. The lack of sound mathematical knowledge of many primary teachers is also a significant factor."

Ms Thomas calls for mathematics education to be debated in terms of equity and social justice. "Students equipped with adequate mathematical skills are already in a privileged position in gaining access to rewards in a world of science and technology," she says. "In Australia, the unforeseen consequence of the decline of mathematical sciences is a filter for 'social inclusion/exclusion.'"

Scary fun in Geelong



Giant robotics, interactive displays and an educational quiz game are available to students at the National Wool Museum's exhibition *Eaten Alive – The World of Predators*. The exhibition is open daily until 31st January 2010.

Developed by Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre, *Eaten Alive – The World of Predators* is an exciting and highly interactive exhibition that is full of hands-on activities for students of all ages.

From well-known carnivores such as sharks, lions and crocodiles through to predatory insects, the exhibition explores fearsome jaws and claws as well as some of the more subtle techniques used by predators to survive.

School visits can be either Museum staff or teacher led, and include a tour through the exhibition with a series of age-specific educational activities. A complete education kit, including 40 pages of background notes and suggested activities, is available from the website www.nwm.vic.gov.au

Bookings tel (03) 5272 4701
Program enquiries Felicity Ellis
www.geelongaustralia.com.au/nwm/

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Mentors for budding poets



Year 9 and 10 pupils at Macquarie Fields High and Abbotsleigh College in Sydney are among six secondary schools around the country participating in an education scheme called Papercuts.

The non-profit scheme links students with a published poet and provides teachers with specially prepared kits of classroom activities. The finished compositions are ultimately seen in all their glory on the back doors of public toilets inside local businesses.

And in a first of its kind for cross town education liaison, the pupils have agreed to undertake a joint IT initiative that will generate correspondence between classes on their respective projects and a sharing of views on both sets of work online.

The collaboration aims to produce an Epic Poem.

Both schools are being helped by award-winning poets – Lachlan Brown at Macquarie Fields and Anna Kerdijk-Nicholson at Abbotsleigh.

Brown, a school teacher and PhD candidate at the University of Sydney, used funding from

the 2008 Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship for Poetry to travel to Paris to develop his sequence of *Riot Poems*.

Kerdijk-Nicholson, a lawyer, participated in the piloting of Papercuts at Abbotsleigh in 2007 and 2008 and this year is assisting teacher Terrie Jones on delivering a wide range of poetic forms and helping students examine those forms.

The classroom kits, written by Sydney English teacher Tony Britten, provide increased scope for interpretation of new and old verse. The “live” component of the program includes the exhibition of student poems on posters – installed by the pupils – on toilet doors inside cinemas and cafes, plus personal readings.

Papercuts is the brainchild of The Red Room Company, a not-for-profit organisation that commissions and promotes poetry by professional and budding poets. Papercuts is supported by the Ian Potter Foundation.

Other schools participating in Papercuts in 2009 are Fitzroy High (Vic), Spearwood Alternative School (WA), Norfolk Island Central School (NI) and Perth Modern School (WA).

www.redroomcompany.org

School Enews service launched



School Enews

A free and professional email newsletter solution for primary and secondary schools has been launched.

Developer Ryan Turner says: “If you are sending home paper newsletters, then using School Enews will turn eight steps into just two. If you are already bulk emailing home your school newsletter, then School Enews can turn six steps into just two. School Enews has been designed to improve your productivity and reduce complexity.”

He has calculated that a school with 300 students can expect to save up to \$1500 annually by sending out the newsletter as an email.

Claimed benefits include: bulk email to all parents; automatically adds the newsletter to the school’s website; subscribe/unsubscribe function for parents; and allows separated parents to received the newsletter.

School Enews is 100% free to set up an account and use at school. If technical assistance is required, there is a fee to cover services and time.

Two set-up packs are available. The Basic Setup Pack is designed for the ‘not so confident’ school and includes email design set-up; help with manual list set-up; 14 days of email and telephone technical support; and telephone set-up with optional on site visit.

A spokesperson at Kensington Public School (387 children) said: “We are extremely happy with the service provided by School Enews. It was exactly what we wanted – a reduction in cost (of paper) and a reduction in time (updating the website and photocopying the paper form). Support was always on hand and the training was simple and very easy to understand. A wonderful initiative and was well within budget!”

Ryan Turner tel (02) 8007 5226

www.schoolenews.com.au

More music training for NSW teachers

Inspired by the fact that 75 per cent of music teachers nationally have not received specialist training, the Sydney Symphony has boosted its tuition initiatives across NSW primary and secondary schools to benefit a record 600 teachers and 40,000 students.

The Managing Director of the Sydney Symphony, Rory Jeffes, said the delivery of professional development training for teachers was integral to its operations and mission.

“We have been involved in education since 1924, so it is extra special for us to be sharing our expertise to help up-skill school music teachers and to be ahead of target in 2009,” Jeffes said.

He said the impacts of the world financial crisis had not made the delivery of its suite of training programs easy, but the Sydney Symphony was pressing ahead for additional improvement in outcomes in 2010.

Sydney Symphony’s Education Program is based, in part, on a three-pronged approach:

- 1 Teachers attend a Professional Development Seminar presented by leaders in the field of music education
- 2 Teachers receive and work through a Teaching Kit – a set of syllabus-linked lesson plans and activities they can use in the classroom – from kindergarten to Year 12 – for a whole year. They

also prepare students for the live performance they will attend later in the year.

- 3 Teachers and students attend the live Sydney Symphony performance. By this stage, the students have learned about the music, can participate in the group activities and understand how the music is “put together”.

Comprehensive research and development goes into the six Teaching Kits produced every year – each tailored to the annual cycles of the music curriculum.

www.sydneyssymphony.com/education/schools