



CensusAtSchool 2012 questionnaire is open

CensusAtSchool is a project run by the Australian Bureau of Statistics aimed at students from Years 5–12 and is free to all schools in Australia.

The questionnaire asks non-invasive questions about students' everyday lives, experiences, opinions and interests. It opened on 23rd January 23rd and will close on 6th July.

It is an engaging online learning resource that enables primary and secondary students to collect data about themselves, by completing the questionnaire online.

Students can investigate raw data from the random sampler to create a meaningful picture about the world around them. They can compare their own data with their peers on a national or international level.

CensusAtSchool has proved popular among students and teachers. In 2011, over 25,000 students participated in the questionnaire and since 2006 over 200,000 students have entered their data on the CensusAtSchool website.

With its free online resources, CensusAtSchool plays an important role in increasing statistical literacy of Australian school children and supports curriculum outcomes.

web www.abs.gov.au/censusatschool

Eureka Skydeck brings Melbourne to the classroom

Melbourne's Eureka Skydeck has created an educational blog 'Deckstar's Days Out' featuring Deckstar, the Skydeck mascot. Each week the blog will track Deckstar's visits to signature Melbourne landmarks and events.

Choosing to work with an online platform, the Eureka Skydeck aims to bring information about Melbourne into classrooms, enabling students to view and respond to stories in real time and enabling teachers to use the blog as a resource bank.

Students can discover iconic and historic landmarks as well as events that characterise the spirit of Melbourne. Eureka Skydeck's Educator Abbey Dusink says "We wanted to create something unique for students to use in the classroom, something that brings Melbourne directly to their desk so that they feel like they are accompanying Deckstar on his weekly visits."

Deckstar's Days Out hasn't only been designed to introduce the topic of Melbourne, but can also to be used as a platform to



introduce cyber safety, introducing students to the world of blogging and enabling them to represent themselves online in a responsible way.

tel 03 9693 8810
www.deckstarsdaysout.info

Storybook reading challenge for primary schools

Carpet Court has announced a competition to encourage more shared reading in classrooms and provide schools with colourful children's books.

The Carpet Court Storybook Challenge gives primary schools located near participating Carpet Court stores the chance

to win \$1000 in books and reading mats for their classrooms, as well as individual book prizes.

The entry form is available at
www.facebook.com/CarpetCourt
or by email storybook@carpetcourt.com.au

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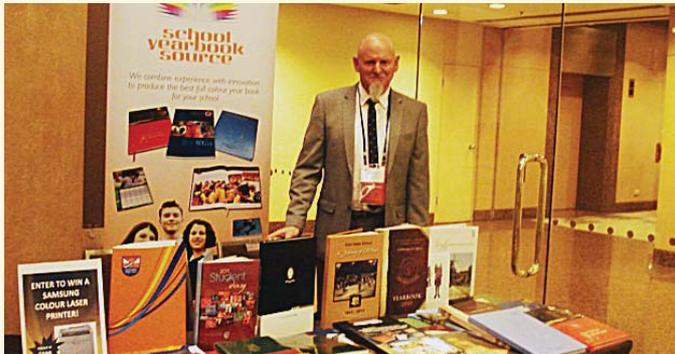
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He says: "The demand for our hard covered school yearbooks, which we produce in full colour, is ever increasing and with a price tag around \$10 per book this is hardly surprising.

"I really enjoy helping schools to produce high quality hard cover yearbooks and I

always look forward to the appreciative responses of both staff and students when we make our deliveries.

"The durability of a hard covered book is valued by families who wish to keep a permanent record of their children's school years."

Printciple Source also produces school diaries, calendars, brochures, flyers, magazines, mailers and catalogues for schools in all states.

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www.printciplesource.com.au

Law firm announces scholarship winners

Mallesons Stephen Jaques, has announced the recipients of its national scholarship program. The *Mallesons Aspire Award* is designed to help disadvantaged students, who would have otherwise faced great difficulty meeting study costs, achieve their tertiary education goals.

Year 11 students, Emily Clinton (NSW), Crystal Canning (Vic), Tegan Denniss (ACT), Lexus Hughes (Qld) and Julie Ogden (WA) have won the award, each receiving \$9000 apportioned over Year 12 and their first two years of tertiary studies, and an offer of ongoing support and guidance from a Mallesons mentor.

The program, launched in October 2011, marks the 10th anniversary of the Mallesons in the Community program, and the 10th anniversary of Mallesons' partnership with The Smith Family.

www.mallesons.com

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Not enough Slop in Slip Slop Slap

Queensland children may not be applying enough sunscreen to protect them from sunburn and skin cancer, a Queensland University of Technology sun safety researcher has found.

Postgraduate researcher Abbey Diaz, from QUT's AusSun Research Laboratory, investigated how much SPF 30+ sunscreen 87 primary school-aged children in Queensland applied. She also studied whether using a pump, squeeze bottle or roll-on applicator made any difference to the thickness of the sunscreen they put on.

"The SPF (sun protection factor) of sunscreen depends on the thickness of application so if it is applied too thinly the skin will have substantially lower SPF than one might expect," Ms Diaz said.

"We found the children were applying on average only a quarter of the amount of sunscreen applied by sunscreen manufacturers to test the SPF, which is 2mg per square cm of skin. Based on what



we know from other research, we can say that it is unlikely that this is enough sunscreen to protect children from sunburn and other sun damage."

Ms Diaz conducted her study over three weeks. Children, aged five to 12, applied their sunscreen on school-day mornings, without physical assistance from their parents.

Each week the children used a different

sunscreen dispenser: either a pump, squeeze or roll-on. The order the children used these dispensers depended on the study group to which that they had been allocated.

"This was done so we could ensure any difference in application thickness observed between dispenser types was not simply a time effect," Ms Diaz said.

"The team weighed the dispensers each week to determine how much had been used, and divided this by the area of the skin that sunscreen had been applied to. Children applied the most sunscreen from a pump bottle (0.75 mg/cm²), and 0.57 mg/cm² when using a squeeze bottle but only 0.22 mg/cm² with a roll-on dispenser.

"These results suggest that the roll-on may not provide an adequate coverage of sunscreen for children. Other dispenser types, such as pump and squeeze bottles, appear to be more effective for children to use."

www.cancer.org.au

CensusAtSchool Questionnaire 2012 Opens 23 January



Teach your students about data collection

- Questionnaire opens 23 January and closes 6 July
- is free, confidential and voluntary
- is suitable for Year 5-12 students

Getting involved

- go to www.abs.gov.au/censusatschool
- set up a teacher account—this takes about 2 minutes
- get student access numbers—this takes about 1 minute
- Questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete
- check out our great range of free resources

www.abs.gov.au/censusatschool



Learning about Melbourne this year?

DECKSTAR'S DAYS OUT!



Follow Deckstar from Eureka Skydeck as he visits significant Melbourne events and landmarks!

Track his weekly progress on the 'Deckstar's Days Out' Blog:
www.deckstarsdaysout.info

Eureka Skydeck - bringing online learning into the classroom!

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skydeck
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what's new

Bird's eye history of Geelong at National Wool Museum



Historic photographs in the exhibition include a gala street procession from 1918 and a picnic circa 1905

The built environment of Geelong has changed enormously over the 150 years from the arrival of the first squatters in 1836 to the redevelopment of the children's pool at Eastern Beach in 2011.

The new *Bird's Eye View* exhibition focuses on four central themes of change:

- Transportation
- Clothing
- Leisure
- Need vs Want.

An educational program accompanies the exhibition and includes a teacher's guide, which is available for download on the National Wool Museum website www.geelongaustralia.com.au/nwm. This explains key words, curriculum connections, resource links and pre- and post-visit activity suggestions for a range of year levels and abilities.

City of Greater Geelong Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Cr Cameron Granger says, "For students who really want to get to know the city, *Bird's Eye View* offers the chance to fly over Geelong and gain a completely different perspective on our history and the buildings that have shaped how we live and who we are."

VELS Focus for this exhibition includes Local History, Drama, Communication, Geography, Economics, Inquiry and Creative Thinking. For senior students, themes of land reclamation, land use and industry can be explored.

The exhibition is open from 27th February to 3rd June.

www.geelongaustralia.com.au/nwm

THE GLOBAL POVERTY PROJECT

Global poverty project to tour schools

The global education and advocacy group Global Poverty Project is touring schools with their interactive multimedia presentation *1.4 Billion Reasons for Youth*. Founded by two Australians, the Global Poverty Project was launched at the UN High Level Event on the MDGs in September 2008.

The Project's centrepiece *1.4 Billion Reasons* was launched to the world from Melbourne in July 2009. Since then, the presentation has been seen by more than 60,000 people.

In 2011 the project is continuing its grassroots phase, training a number of Australians to deliver *1.4 Billion Reasons* in their own communities,

and expand education and advocacy work.

Developed in partnership with child-rights organisation Plan International Australia, this interactive education tool is designed to educate and inspire students to get involved in initiatives tackling extreme poverty.

Specially trained presenters can visit school and engage students with this global social justice issue – providing them with a framework to help make a difference in their global and local community.

To preview the presentation and book a school presentation visit:

www.globalpovertyproject.com

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To make it easier and more efficient for libraries to acquire e-books from trusted publishers, ebrary has announced that a selection of more than 268,000 e-books is now integrated with Title Source 3, Baker & Taylor's ordering platform used by academic, school and public libraries worldwide.

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Video aims to increase HPV vaccination

To coincide with the new school year, Cancer Council Victoria has developed an online video for teenage girls to encourage greater participation in the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation program.

The three-dose HPV vaccine protects against 70 per cent of cervical cancers and 90 per cent of genital warts, and has been hailed as a breakthrough in preventative health.

This year marks five years since the vaccine was introduced in Australia as part of the National Immunisation Program. Since 2007, girls aged 12–13 across the country have been provided the vaccine free of charge at school.

However, current figures show that on a national level, only 73 per cent of girls are having all three doses of the vaccine under the school-based program.

“Common barriers to having all three injections include pain and a fear of needles, plus a lack of understanding about what the vaccine is for,” explained Kate Broun, Cancer Screening Programs Manager from Cancer Council Victoria.

“This new video resource aims to address these issues by educating girls and their



parents about HPV and its links to cervical cancer. We wanted to dispel common misconceptions and alleviate anxieties about the vaccine that girls may have, and ultimately

encourage further uptake,” Ms Broun said.

*The video can be viewed at:
www.cervicalcancervaccine.org.au*

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Free Workboot lesson plans

The Australian Year of the Farmer and publishing organisation, the Kondinin Group have joined forces to educate students about the origins of their food and fibre.

Australian Year of the Farmer co-founder and Chairman, Philip Bruem sees the partnership as the perfect opportunity to raise the profile of agriculture and bring a little of the country to the classroom through the award-winning educational resources – The Workboot Series.

For the first time, teachers will be able to download a range of ready-to-use Workboot Series lesson plans and activity pages from the Australian Year of the Farmer website for free.

There will be activities suited to every age

group and key learning area, so teachers can use agriculture across lessons as diverse as Maths, Science, Literacy, Social Science and the Arts.

Kondinin Group Managing Editor Paul Mole said: “By joining forces with the Australian Year of the Farmer we hope that through the Workboot Series, every child across the country will get the opportunity to explore beyond their backyard and into the farm gate.”

The Workboot Series and Australian Year of the Farmer will deliver activities, lesson plans, ideas and contacts to teachers and their students through the year, culminating in a nation-wide schools competition in term 3.

www.yearofthefarmer.com.au

Teachers playing catch-up as textbooks become tech-books

Teachers could be playing catch-up in high-tech classrooms with Apple’s recently announced foray into interactive textbooks helping to accelerate this trend.

That’s according to CQUniversity’s Dr Michael Cowling who is researching the technology competency of educators, following a recent study into the potential use of the Twitter social networking tool in the classroom.

Dr Cowling said teachers and lecturers were digital immigrants compared with their younger digital native students. He says his research exposed a fear factor among academic staff worried that technology would take over their classroom when they were unprepared.

“You can imagine teachers will be enticed into using the very rich environment of textbooks on tablet computers, and their students may be way ahead of them in terms of the technology,” he said. “It’s unclear how companies such as Apple expect teachers to manage this transition, trying to educate students using technology that they know more about than the teacher.”

Dr Cowling is collaborating with a colleague Jeremy Novak from Southern Cross University on research funded by CQUniversity.

tel (07) 5552 4942

email m.cowling@goldcoast.cqu.edu.au

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Parents urged to remember cyber-safety

Aussie school kids are more connected than ever with new Telstra research revealing four in five parents will send their kids to school this year with an internet connected device.

Telstra's Cyber-Safety survey of Australian parents with children aged 10 to 17 revealed almost eight in 10 children own a mobile phone by the time they're 13 and seven in 10 will take one to school this year.

The research also found that while school bags are increasingly packed with internet connected gadgets including mobiles, laptops and tablets, nine in 10 parents have concerns about cyber-safety risks such as approaches from online strangers and cyber bullying.

Telstra's Officer of Internet Trust & Safety, Darren Kane, said it was important for parents to equip children with the skills required to use new technology safely as they pack their gadget-filled bags for the new school year.

"Our research found that parents' cyber safety concerns don't necessarily motivate them to prepare their kids for the digital schoolyard. Almost half of parents (45 per cent) admitted they haven't spoken to their children recently about how to handle approaches from cyber bullies and more than a third (37 per cent) haven't spoken to them about how to respond if a stranger approaches them online.

The Telstra research also revealed:

- While mobile phones and laptops are the most popular devices to take to class, one in three are returning to school with a smartphone, while six per cent will take a tablet to school this year.
- Unsolicited contact by strangers is the single greatest cyber-safety concern among parents (with 34 per cent citing it as their top concern) followed by cyber bullying (15.3%) and unsupervised access to information (14.7%).
- 31 per cent of parents haven't spoken to their children recently about how to protect personal information like photos, address details and passwords when online while 42 per cent of parents haven't spoken to their kids about who they should share their mobile number with.

www.telstra.com.au/cyber-safety

ACSSO cautious on hire and fire reform plan

Australian Council of State School Organisation (ACSSO) president Peter Garrigan claims that parents in outlying metropolitan and in rural areas are concerned that their children are likely to be disadvantaged from the federal government's decision to give principals the power to hire and fire teachers in public schools.

He said: "Although parents already have concerns about the inefficiency of the current process of removing ineffective staff, there needs to continue to be a more centralised process to ensure the equity across the system

"With the freedom for schools to set salaries for staff, we could also experience further inequities across our schools. Those in more affluent areas have a greater ability to raise funds this in turn enhances their ability to pay higher teacher salaries than those in lower socio-economic areas."

"Already, under the current system, schools in these areas have difficulty in attracting and retaining staff."

"Every school needs a balance of enthusiastic, young teachers and older experienced hands to support them to offer every child a high quality education. So schools in rural and remote areas as well as in less affluent city suburbs will struggle to attract first-class, experienced teachers.

The current shortages of funding to public schools makes it unfair to principals and local school communities to devolve responsibility for management of school finances to them. A handout of \$12 million to NSW was totally inadequate to bring the state's public schools up to a standard that would ensure every student a high quality education," he said, adding that an extra \$10 billion per year is needed to bring public schools up to scratch.

Free global education resource launched

Child rights organisation Plan International Australia has released a new free resource for teachers.

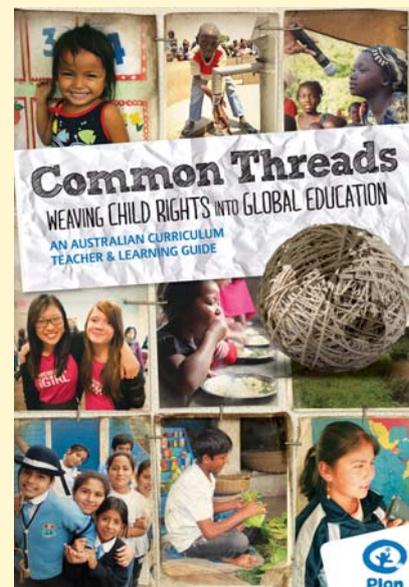
Common Threads: Weaving Child Rights into Global Education is a 64-page text that provides the knowledge and resources needed to introduce the concept of child rights and responsibilities in a global context.

It has been designed specifically for educators teaching Australian students aged 10–13, and aligns with the new Australian curriculum.

Plan International Australia chief executive Ian Wishart said *Common Threads* could help children to understand global poverty from a rights perspective and instil the knowledge and skills necessary for them to be active global citizens and help shape a better world for all children.

"This resource will help educators who are teaching global education, specifically in the context of social justice and human rights. The main focus of this guide is child rights and how putting children at the centre of community development can have lifelong positive impacts – not just for children but for the entire community."

Common Threads is presented in three modules: *Exploring Rights*, *Child Poverty* and *Exploring the Convention on the Rights*



of the Child. Each module can be taught in its entirety over several weeks or can be individually incorporated into broader units of work.

Plan has a limited run of 500 printed copies that can be mailed to schools free, along with CD-ROM versions. Call 13 75 26 to order. *Common Threads* is also available as a free downloadable resource from the Plan website.

tel 137526

<http://bit.ly/y48Jaj>

Sydney Opera House launches digital education program

Sydney Opera House has launched a digital education program that allows NSW teachers and students to visit – without leaving their classroom.

The SOH Digital Education Program offers a variety of experiences – an interactive behind-the-scenes tour, a drama workshop, live streaming of performances and a range of one-off master classes. These are all delivered through video conferencing facilities with up to four schools able to take part simultaneously.

Jonathan Bielski, Acting CEO, says the Opera House has never been more accessible.

“The launch of our Digital Education Program means children in NSW who are unable to travel to Bennelong Point will no longer miss out on experiencing the world’s best creative minds and performing arts practitioners.”

The program offers:

- *Discover the House* is a roaming interactive tour which brings the history and stories of the iconic building to life. This behind-the-scenes experience encourages open discussions along the tour with one of Sydney Opera House’s knowledgeable guides.
- *Discover the Stage* is presented by professional actors and drama educators, students can experience what it might be like to take to the stage of Sydney Opera House as they participate in physical warm ups and practical drama tasks.
- Students can engage with key curriculum via live



streaming from the Sydney Opera House stage. Much of this content will allow students to access Sydney Opera House’s resident companies.

- There are also various one-off master classes for students and teachers.

The entire Digital Education Program is

NSW curriculum linked with subjects from Year 3 through to 12.

Digital Education Program bookings
tel (02) 9250 7770
www.sydneyoperahouse.com

Twins’ test scores to reveal factors influencing learning

Researchers at the University of New England are planning to analyse twins’ NAPLAN scores in a large-scale study aimed at providing an additional basis for decisions on educational policy and practice.

The researchers have already participated in an international, decade-long study of the development of children’s literacy and numeracy that used data from more than 1000 pairs of identical and fraternal twins in Australia, Scandinavia and the United States. It showed that the roles of a particular school and/or a particular teacher in determining which students do well academically and which ones struggle are considerably smaller than often claimed in the political sphere and in the media.

The use of twins enables the researchers to tease out genetic and environmental factors (“nature and nurture”) influencing children’s development relative to other children, as identical twins share the same genetically-determined native ability and fraternal twins share about half that native ability.



Dr William Coventry (left) and Emeritus Professor Brian Byrne will research twins’ NAPLAN scores

Titled *A behaviour-genetic study of the NAPLAN results*, the project – funded by the Commonwealth Government through the

Australian Research Council – will follow the results of up to 2000 pairs of twins over a number of years.