

Teachers happier than other professionals

With a new school year having just commenced, the number of teachers who say they are happy in their job continues to outstrip the national average.

The SEEK Satisfaction and Motivation Survey revealed that 35 per cent of teachers are happy in their current role, well above the national average of 22 per cent. While 39 per cent claim to be unhappy, it is well below the national average of 48 per cent.

SEEK spokesperson David Waite said the

education sector has long proved among the nation's happiness.

"The gap between those who say they are happy, compared to unhappy is only four percent," said Mr Waite.

"In comparison, the disparity nationally is 26 per cent," he said.

Also notable within the education sector was the disparity in salary as a motivator.

"Only 46 per cent of teachers cited 'pay me more' as a reason to encourage them to stay

in their current job, well below the national average of 75 per cent"

One result of teachers being among the nation's happiest employees is that they intend to stay longer with their current employer. Those who intend to stay more than two years is 28 per cent, compared to 18 per cent nationally.

"These findings show that the motivating factors for those in the teaching professions are vastly different to most other professions where salary is the determining factor," he said.



Oz Opera takes Cinderella to NSW primaries

Continuing OZ Opera's 13-year program of primary school performances in Vic and NSW, Cinderella will be seen by students at 164 NSW primary schools over the next seven months. In all, the cast will give 268 performances.

Cinderella is 50 minutes long and written for just four singers and a pianist. As Rossini's original score calls for seven soloists and a chorus, the size of the cast for Oz Opera's Cinderella has been reduced with some inventive doubling. The Prince also plays Cinderella's cruel Stepmother. One singer plays two Ugly Sisters, with the help of a puppet. The Fairy Godfather also takes on the role of the narrator – a hand puppet called Rupert the Mouse.

The set features six partition flats, these can be turned around to represent either the Prince's palace or Cinderella's house. And, because the cast may do up to three performances a day in different schools, the set can be put together, taken apart and loaded into a van in under an hour.

The Oz Opera schools program is sponsored by Australia Post and receives project funding from the NSW government through Arts NSW.

The Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Society 2009 Poetry Competition 'SEARCHING FOR STARS' entries open MARCH 2009

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highlights

BHP Billiton Science Awards



First prize winner Rosie Watters

Students from Qld, NSW and Tas have won the top awards in this year's BHP Billiton Science Awards.

The awards recognise school students who have undertaken practical research projects that demonstrate innovative scientific investigation.

Rosie Watters, from Trinity Anglican School in Cairns, won first prize. Her project, submitted by CREST, researched ways to reduce brain injuries in cycle accidents. She found that 25 mm thick, low-density polystyrene was the best foam to use in a bicycle helmet. She was awarded \$2000 and the chance to compete at ISEF, the International Science and Engineering Fair in Reno, Nevada.

Campbell Chambers from the Shore School in Sydney won second

prize. His project, submitted by the Science Teachers Association of New South Wales, showed that polystyrene foam is an effective insulator to use in houses. He deduced that using insulation can significantly reduce greenhouse emissions by reducing the need for air-conditioning.

The third prize went to Cat Gaggin from Marist Regional College, Burnie. Her project, submitted by the Science Teachers Association of Tasmania, showed that bio-sludge was an effective alternative fertiliser to superphosphate, encouraging better plant growth and costing less. But she concluded that bacterial levels should be investigated further before adopting bio-sludge as a fertiliser.

The GRDC Award went to Luke Fletcher and Hannah Younger from Marist Regional College, Burnie. Their project, submitted by the Science Teachers Association of Tasmania, looked at the effect of fertiliser on the growth of algae in fresh water. They recommend using nitrogen-free fertiliser to prevent the eutrophication of waterways. The GRDC award is given to the students whose project best communicates original research on sustainable plant agriculture.

The national winners were chosen from 16 state and territory finalists who attended a science camp in Melbourne from 14th–17th February. All finalists received cash prizes. The students submitted a project which describes their project for the initial selection process. The 16 finalists prepared a poster about their research and explained their methodology to a panel of judges.

Fizzics Education expands NSW education program

Fizzics Education has added four new science workshops for 2009: *Big Science Big Fun* a stage show designed for large school audiences and cost effective for tight budgets.

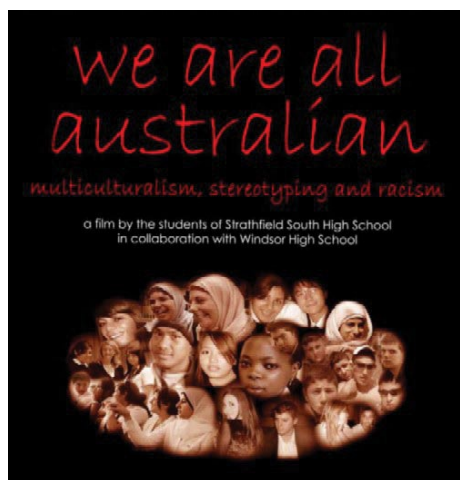
'Look Inside' Human Body a hands-on workshop covering the major functions of the body.

Chemistry Show a fantastic chemistry show for upper primary and high school

Digging dinosaurs a hands-on paleontology workshop.

A full run down on the Fizzics Education workshops is online at www.fizzicseducation.com.au. The free experiment section of the website has grown substantially and offers fun, safe and inexpensive experiments within a broad list of topics.

Harmony Day 2009: We Are All Australian



21st March 2009 is Harmony Day. The event is managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and celebrates the cohesive and inclusive nature of our nation while promoting the benefits of cultural diversity.

One school with a Harmony Day heritage is Strathfield South High School in Sydney's inner west, where students come from a range of cultural backgrounds.

In 2007–2008 the school successfully applied for community relations funding from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Their project, *We Are All Australian*, set out to counter the sense of disconnection from the community that some students were feeling.

The school involved students in producing a DVD as a way of bringing them into contact

with other young Australians from different backgrounds.

In the DVD, students from Strathfield South High, which is located in an area where over 50 per cent of the population was born overseas, got together with students from Windsor High School in Sydney's north where around 13 per cent of the population was born overseas.

It documents the students critically challenging each others' views and examines the influences that shape community attitudes. Over the course of 12 months, the DVD reveals how the two sets of students interact and change their views as they come to understand how small their differences really are.


According to Bob Crawshaw from Living in Harmony at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, student participation in the project was enthusiastic.

"A teachers' resource kit was developed around the DVD which included material on racism, stereotyping, discrimination, religion and other issues," he said. "It was distributed to every secondary school in Australia and last year the DVD won a major national multicultural marketing award."



Teachers can email communityrelationsfunding@immi.gov.au for a free copy of the *We Are All Australian* DVD (limited stocks are available).

Visit www.harmony.gov.au to download lesson plans and ideas for this year's Harmony Day, to register your school's event and order free materials.

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New contributors for Education Today



In this issue, ET welcomes Emma-Jane Hamilton and Michael Tunks to our team of regular contributors, Emma-Jane will write on marketing while Michael will write on education IT.

Michael Tunks is Director of ImproMation, a software development company with its focus on helping schools. The company currently provides online services for over 1800 schools throughout NSW. His first article starts on page 24.

Emma-Jane is a services marketing expert with many years experience spanning a variety of industries. While selecting schools for her three children, she recognised a significant opportunity to assist schools to promote, market and position themselves more appropriately to attract students.

MAPS Marketing, an existing provider of marketing services to the education sector, provided a vehicle for Emma-Jane to develop her own business. Two years since the purchase of MAPS, the business has grown to provide of a comprehensive range of marketing services and products to the education sector. Her first article, which starts on page 34, discusses the growing number of parents that are returning to government schooling and what schools should be doing to attract new enrolments.

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highlights



Cyber bullying safety tips

MySpace Australia has launched new cyber bullying safety tips and announced a partnership with *Girlfriend Magazine* and Boost Mobile to promote a new online 'Code of Conduct' to combat cyber bullying.

Designed to educate and promote awareness about cyber bullying, these initiatives complement the online social destination's broader internet safety education program which sees MySpace at the forefront of Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA) national campaign to give all Australians the tools necessary to combat cyber bullying.

The Internet Safety Technical Task Force's Research's Advisory Board, based in the US, recently produced an extensive report which highlighted that more parental intervention and guidance is needed, as cyber bullying usually happens between persons already known to each other and that technology alone is unlikely to solve the problem of bullying.

Safety tips

The technology on MySpace allows users to block other users, they simply need to click "Block User" to prevent a known bully from contacting them. It also allows users to conceal their "Online Now" status, so users can be on MySpace but it doesn't have to be known to the wider community.

MySpace profiles can either be public or private spaces in their entirety or users can select some parts of their profile to be public and parts to be private. To secure privacy, select "Customize Profile" from the Profile dropdown menu and set the privacy level for each module individually (Comments, Friends, Blog, etc.) or select it for all profile modules in one go. All under 16 year olds automatically have their profile set to private, so only their designated friends can be within their network.

MySpace encourages users to use wider identifiers, for instance, their suburb as opposed to their street number/name when entering public details into their MySpace profile, this will make it harder for school yard bullies to track people down online. If users have a public profile they need to view their profile as a window to the world, and refrain from posting any information or images they wouldn't want the world to see.

To report a cyber bullying incident click on the "Contact MySpace" link which is advertised at the bottom of every MySpace.com page. Users should select the topic "Report Abuse" and the sub-topic "Cyber bullying" from the drop down menus and follow the prompts to report an incident.

"I read about it on the ET website..."

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