

## 5000 delegates expected at EduTech 2014

Ashley Gonzalez, marketing manager with Association & Communications Events, organisers of EduTech 2014 is predicting that the meeting will attract up to 5000 delegates. It will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre 3rd–4th June.

Keynote speakers include Sir Ken Robinson and Prof Sugata Matra.

Robinson is an internationally recognised leader in the development of education, creativity and innovation. An estimated 200 million people in over 150 countries have seen the videos of his 2006 and 2010 talks to the TED Conference.

Matra is Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University in the UK and previously a visiting professor at MIT in the US. He was recently described by *The Times* newspaper as a 'Global Education Superstar'. In 2013 he won the TED Global and received US\$1million towards his wish to build a school in the Cloud. His 'Hole in the Wall' project demonstrates that, even in the absence of any direct input from a teacher, an environment that stimulates curiosity can cause learning through self-instruction and peer-shared knowledge.

There are eight congresses within the



EduTech envelope: K–12 Ed Leaders; K–12 IT Directors and Managers; Tertiary Tech Leaders; Higher Ed Leaders; K–12 Business Managers and Administrators; K–12 Library Managers; Vet Leaders; and Workplace Learning.

Delegates may choose from eight masterclasses conducted by Sugita Matra; Ewan McIntosh (Founder and CEO of NoTosh, UK); Gary Stager (Executive Director The Constructivist Consortium, USA); Alan November (International leader in education technology and Senior Partner November Learning, USA); Joyce Valenza Teacher

Librarian, Springfield Township High School and incoming Assistant Professor of Practice, Rutgers University School of Communication and Information, USA; Neil Ballantyne (Director Learning Designs, NZ); Youg Zhao (Presidential Chair, Associate Dean for Global Education, Director, Center for Advanced Technology in Education University of Oregon, USA); and Conrad Wolfram (Director of Strategic and International Development Wolfram Research, Inc and owner, Wolfram Research Europe Ltd.

[www.edutech.net.au](http://www.edutech.net.au) **ET**

## New Era name underscores focus on education

A little over a year ago long-established IT services, software development and PD specialist Editure was renamed New Era, the new identity marking the company's decision to focus its skills on education and, over time, exit the commerce and industry sectors.

Fast-forward 12 months and the change of direction is bearing fruit. In Australia and New Zealand, New Era is providing services to up to two million students and teachers at all levels from primary through to tertiary.

In Australia, in an ongoing 10-year relationship with Catholic Education, New Era is continuing to support and enhance the Catholic Network Australia's Education Staff Portal, a forum where upwards of 100,000 Catholic teachers can collaborate, undertake professional learning, create content and share resources.

And in a major move, the IT Services group has signed an agreement with Huawei to become a Tier 1 Value Added Partner, enabling access to the giant Chinese ITC manufacturer's huge product range.

Paul Dourlay, National Sales Manager says: "With our Huawei partnership, we will be positioned to offer exceptional value for new ITC systems and upgrades."

Professional development has long been a key strength for New Era and this is more important than ever according to Dourlay.

"Schools need to have a clearly laid out professional development strategy if they are to be successful with implementing BYOD and cloud-based education. Through on-site consulting and teacher training, we can help schools to develop a vision of where they need to go and how to get there."

[www.neweraed.com.au](http://www.neweraed.com.au)

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## ACEL appoints Minnis Journals to market conference exhibition

Minnis Journals has been appointed by the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) to market sponsorships and exhibition space at the annual ACEL Conference 1–3 October at the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre.

Up to 1400 senior educators are expected to register for the three-day meeting. The 2014 ACEL National Conference is themed *Passion & Purpose: Setting the Learning Agenda*. The conference will provide the discourse, the probing, and the digitally rich environment to facilitate meaningful discussions around the issues of prominence for educators today.

Featured speakers announced to date include Dr John Medina (joint affiliate faculty appointments at the University of Washington School of Medicine, in its Department of Bioengineering, and at Seattle Pacific University; Prof Linda Darling-Hammond (Charles E Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University; Richard Gerver (noted educator and speaker, United Kingdom; Noel Pearson (Aboriginal leader and educator), Prof Lee Wing On (Recently appointed Advisor for the Character & Citizenship Education, Curriculum Development Steering Committee at the Ministry of Education, Singapore); Prof Tim Flannery (Climate change advocate), Charlotte Danielson (educational consultant based in Princeton, New Jersey); and Tony Mackay (CEO, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne).

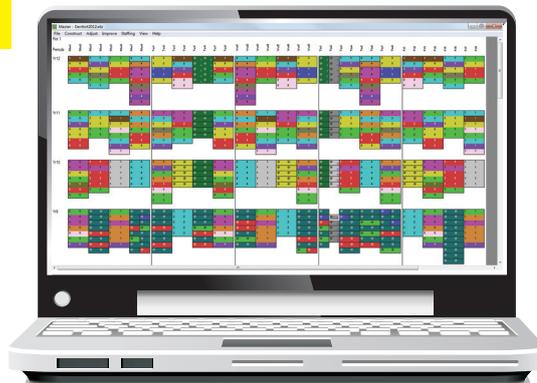


Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsorships are available as well as shell scheme booths from 3x3m up to 6x3m floor area.

**Tim Minnis**  
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## Award for Innovation 2014 announced



Computelec and Expanding Learning Horizons have announced the launch of the Award for Innovation 2014. The award will recognise and honour schools that are at the forefront of ICT integration and have achieved great success from innovative teaching practices using embedded technological learning activities. Participating schools will need to demonstrate innovation across a range of key selection criteria from leadership and student

achievement outcomes to infrastructure, technical support and networks.

Computelec Chief Executive Officer, David La Bozzetta, said "Giving schools the opportunity to showcase their innovative technology and learning successes will inspire schools to continue improving educational outcomes by harnessing the power of technology in the classroom."

Submissions will be evaluated by a panel of judges which include Bruce Dixon, industry veteran and founding director, ideasLAB; co-founder, Anytime Anywhere; David Witcombe ICT Manager, Geelong Grammar; and Peter Dyer ICT Manager, Hale School. The winning school will receive a \$5000 cash prize.

Entry submissions close Friday 25th April and the winner will be announced at the annual ELH SchoolTech Conference Gala Dinner on 18th August. This year's meeting will be held at Mantra Erskine Beach Resort in Lorne, Victoria

For information on the submission process contact Computelec Marketing Specialist Lulu Dowell.

[lulud@computelec.com.au](mailto:lulud@computelec.com.au)  
mob 0438 400 239

## Education with Altitude

Eureka Skydeck, one of Melbourne's most popular destinations for school excursions to the city, offers the options of a self-guided visit to the 88th level of the Eureka Tower, or a guided tour by a qualified educator.



Education programs available online include the primary level Melbourne Explorer, Mapping Melbourne for AusVELS Levels 7-10 and Managing the Marketing Function VSE Unit 2. In all, there are teacher notes and activity sheets for 15 programs across primary, middle and senior school levels.

Prices start at \$9.00 per head for self-guided visits to \$13.50 for a guided tour. Teachers are admitted free with a ratio of one for 10 paying students for primary, secondary and tertiary groups and one to one for special needs companion or carer.

[www.eurekaskydeck.com.au](http://www.eurekaskydeck.com.au) **ET**

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## NSW school suspension system challenged



**N**SW Youth Action Policy Director Eamon Waterford has called for a full review of the state's school suspension system, which he claims is chronically overused and largely ineffective in improving behaviour.

He said: "The suspension system is a blunt instrument that rarely creates positive outcomes. Suspension used to be reserved for violent or highly antisocial behaviour, but in recent years we have seen a disturbing increase in suspensions for 'persistent misbehaviour' in children as young as five."

Data from the Department of Education and Communities shows that students are being suspended more often than ever before, with a rise of 20 per cent in the last four years; despite making up less than four per cent of enrolments, one in four students suspended is Indigenous.

## Competition for budding poets



**T**he Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards open for entries this year on 1st March (closing on 30th June). The theme 'What shall we tell you?' will give creative writers an opportunity to let their imagination run freely.

The theme is taken from *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* by James Elroy Flecker.

*"We who with songs beguile your pilgrimage  
And swear that Beauty lives though lilies die,  
We Poets of the proud old lineage  
Who sing to find your hearts, we know not why,  
- What shall we tell you?..."*

There are six school categories plus the

Community Relations Commission (NSW) Award, and the Schools Award. Prizes start at \$300, trophy and prize pack for the Lower Primary category to \$500, trophy and prize pack for the Learning Assistance and Special Education category.

In 2013, more than 700 schools entered with 10,000 poems submitted from all over Australia.

Schools can register and submit entries online.

[www.dorothea.com.au/index.php/awards/enter-online](http://www.dorothea.com.au/index.php/awards/enter-online)



## Tricky spellings made easier

**L**inguist Lyn Stone launched the Linguist Learning online *50 Words for Life* Challenge to children and adults around the world on 24th February.

Stone said, "This challenge will help people build their own personal store of tricky words. These are words that they find difficult to spell. I'll let you into a secret... everybody has them. I'm doing the challenge, my children are doing the challenge and we're getting as many people on board as we can."

The idea developed in response to feedback from Linguist Learning's *Spelling for Life* book and course.

In the Challenge, when a spelling word is chosen, instead of isolating it, participants are encouraged to think of associated words. For example, *through* is grouped with *though* and *thought* and *tough* etc. This association is claimed to strengthen memorisation, and also expand vocabulary and increase engagement.

Stone said, "Not only will you learn those



spellings, but you'll learn other words in their families, making your total of words that you have mastered far bigger."

Linguist Learning is providing free lists, forums and videos to support participants.

"Some people will have more words after a

year, some people will have less, but just think... even if you learn 20 new tricky words in one year, that's pretty good."

[www.linguistlearning.com/50-words-for-life-challenge/](http://www.linguistlearning.com/50-words-for-life-challenge/)

## eSmart schools program to grow in 2014

Over 2000 Australian schools have signed up since the eSmart program was rolled out in June 2011, and that's only the start says Judi Fallon eSmart Program Manager with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, by the end of 2014 she hopes to see the program up and running in over 3000 schools nationally.

eSmart is an easy-to-use, evidence-based system that provides a framework approach to help improve cybersafety and wellbeing in Australian schools. It is a behaviour-change framework that guides the introduction of policies, practices and whole-school change processes to support the creation of a cybersafe environment.

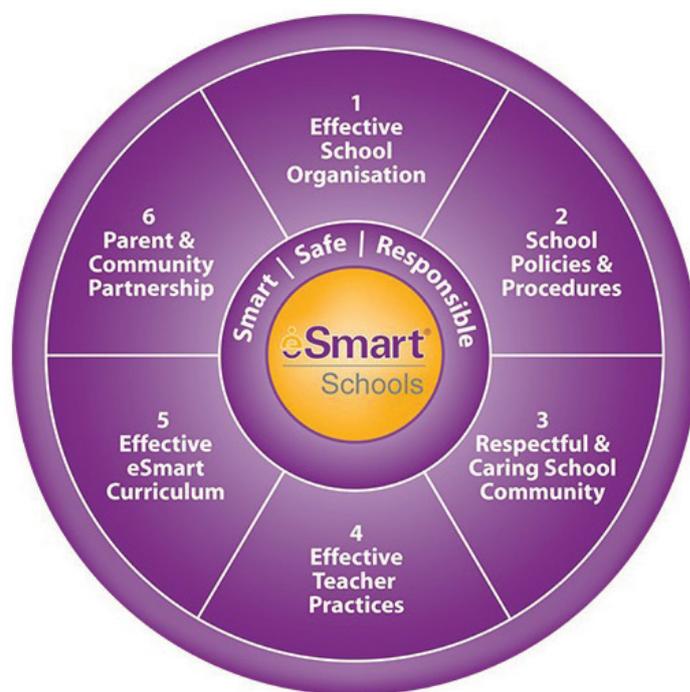
The online system provides a road map to cybersafety and links to suitable curriculum and information resources, and the tools and resources required to equip the school community with the skills and knowledge needed for the safe and responsible use of technology.

An eSmart school is capable of making prompt effective and consistent responses to bullying, cyberbullying, cyber-abuse and other negative behaviours.

There are six domains in the system, each of which covers one key aspect of becoming an eSmart school. Schools may choose to start by focusing on the fifth domain, then cover the second, then move back to the sixth, or any other sequence. In saying this, many schools find that they have already addressed several components and use the eSmart schools framework to fill the gaps.

An independent evaluation shows that, eSmart Schools, is having a real impact in schools, with more than 90 per cent of principals and coordinators saying it helped them embed safe and responsible behaviours and more than 80 per cent saying teachers, students and parents' understanding of expected behaviours online had improved as a result of the program.

Williamstown Primary School assistant principal Steven Montgomery, whose school has appointed four Grade 6 students as eLearning Leaders, said: "The involvement of the eLearning Leaders has been a fantastic initiative. It gives the older students ownership of the issue and instils a real understanding of the importance of leadership and setting an example for the younger students."



eSmart is available for \$3850 per school/campus and schools can choose different payment options. Qld state schools receive the framework free thanks to a partnership between the Queensland government and The Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

tel 1300 592 151  
 email [esmart@amf.org.au](mailto:esmart@amf.org.au)  
[www.esmartschools.org.au](http://www.esmartschools.org.au)



## Wireless emergency alert siren system

Australian developed WiLAS (Wireless Lockdown Alert Siren) has been developed in response to requests from schools wanting a lockdown and evacuation alarm system that is easier to hear than existing bell or hooter systems; more easily allows premises occupants to understand what alert is being sounded; and is easy to activate.

In an emergency, the responsible person selects the required alert tone on the handheld remote control and within seconds any nearby siren receiving the signal is activated. Because WiLAS is a wireless solution, warning sirens can be placed wherever they are required and there is no need for potentially expensive interconnecting control and power cabling networks, or the worry of where to place a central control panel.

WiLAS has been installed in many primary and secondary schools, both public and private, since it was introduced in 2009. The system has also been installed in colleges TAFEs and universities, where the nature of their sprawling campuses makes it an ideal solution alert system.



For site assessments, quotations and further information call or visit:

tel (02) 8037 5500  
[emergencyalertsystems.com.au](http://emergencyalertsystems.com.au)

# Red Cross urges schools to prepare for disasters



The Australian Red Cross is encouraging principals and teachers to include Emergency Preparedness and Recovery Lesson Plans in their curriculum. Emergency Services National Preparedness Coordinator, John Richardson said engaging

children in learning about how to prepare, respond and recover from disasters is a critical part of building resilient communities.

“When we teach kids how to be prepared, they are better equipped to respond and recover from an emergency. Kids also share what they learn with their families and friends, spreading crucial emergency preparedness and recovery information to their communities.”

Red Cross has developed a suite of lesson plans to help teachers educate students from preschool to Year 12 about emergency preparedness and recovery information.

Endorsed by the Australian Psychologists Society and the Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network, the Recovery Lesson Plans were developed by teachers with advice from experienced Red Cross emergency managers and a psychologist experienced in counselling people to help them recover after an emergency.

[www.redcross.org.au/schools.aspx](http://www.redcross.org.au/schools.aspx)

## ET publisher to produce ACEL e-Publications



The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) has appointed Minnis Journals (publisher of *Education Today*) to publish the Council's three e-Newsletters. There are three in the series: e-Teaching, e-Leading and e-Shortcuts.

40 issues each of e-Teaching and e-Leading will be circulated at weekly intervals February through November, and 10 issues of e-Shortcuts.

The e-publications are designed to be 'How to' briefs for busy educators.

Annie Fachinetti, Editor of *Australian Educational Leader* and a regular contributor to *Education Today* is commissioning editor for the two weeklies and Dennis Sleight, also a regular contributor to *Education Today* is editor of e-Shortcuts.

The e-Publications are available on annual subscription (e-Teaching \$60; e-Leading \$80; e-Shortcuts \$50; all three \$170) at the ACEL website.

[www.ancel.org.au](http://www.ancel.org.au)

## Asthma attack spike forecast

The National Asthma Council Australia says that one in 10 school children with asthma face a significant increase in the risk of asthma attacks and hospitalisation during the first few weeks of the school term.

“The ‘February Epidemic’ is well documented both here and overseas, with a big asthma spike in children immediately after school goes back,” National Asthma Council Australia Chief Executive Officer Kristine Whorlow said.

“This is caused by increased exposure to cold and flu viruses when children return to classrooms and factors such as stress, a change of environment or allergens and less strict asthma management over the holidays.”

Studies in Australia and the UK have shown asthma hospitalisations surge during the first month of the school year, with cases in Australia rising as much as threefold in children aged five to 14 years and doubling in preschoolers. While increased risks have also been recorded at the start of subsequent school terms, the February spike is by far the most significant.