

1- AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Pre-Higher Education System

Structure of School System :

Pre-Primary : age level from:3 to:5

Primary : age level from 6 to 12

Secondary : age level from 12 to 18

Certificate/Diploma awarded at end:Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (exact name differs in each state and territory).

School education lasts for 13 years and is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16 (Year 1 to 10). State and territory governments are responsible for school education policies and practices on organisation of schooling, curriculum, course accreditation, student assessment, grading and certification. Curriculum and assessment is underpinned by the 1999 National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty first Century which focuses on the learning outcomes for students and provides a framework for national reporting on student achievement.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians focuses on improving excellence in school education and implementation of a national curriculum in school education.

The Australian Government provides support through funding, policy development, targeted programmes research and analysis of education issues.

Higher Education System

Higher education in Australia refers to university and non university higher education institutions which award degree or sub degree qualifications based on the Australian Qualifications Framework. Australia has self accrediting public and private universities, self accrediting higher education institutions, and accredited higher education institutions. Universities and other self accrediting higher education institutions are established or recognised under state and territory or Commonwealth legislation.

Universities are autonomous multidisciplinary institutions that are responsible for their own management structure, budgets, resource allocation, staff, student enrolments, accreditation of qualifications, quality assurance and curriculum. Australia also has around 170 higher education institutions accredited by state and territory authorities to offer higher education courses. The Australian Government is responsible for higher education policy and finance through the Department of Education. Higher education students in Australia are subject to a range of fees. There are several financial support options available to students. Australian students can undertake higher education studies at an approved Australian higher education provider as a Commonwealth supported student. Students pay a subsidised student contribution for their education, but the Government pays for the majority of costs.

2- Australia's new education report fails to target the roots of structural inequality

In the shadow of two decades of declining results and worsening inequalities, expectations were high for a blueprint to reimagine our schools to ensure all young Australians have a better and fairer education. Unfortunately, the report falls short – especially when it comes to addressing inequalities in student outcomes. Rather than a bold vision for educational transformation, it treads the well-worn path of the status quo, offering few tangible targets to address the structural inequalities that are baked into our system.

As the report notes, Australian schools have some of the highest levels of concentrated socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage across OECD nations and this trend is worsening. These trends map on to our schooling sectors, with concentrated advantage in private schools and concentrated disadvantage in public schools. Australia also has shocking learning gaps in literacy and numeracy between young people from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. By the time students reach year 3, the achievement gap between young people from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds is already equivalent to 2.3 years of learning in reading and this balloons to a staggering 5.1 years of learning by year 9.

These inequalities are mirrored in last week's release of the programme for international student assessment results, showing alarming achievement gaps between Australian students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reading, science, and maths. Far from being the great equaliser, these trends show our education systems exacerbate inequalities – an embarrassing state of affairs for a country that prides itself on the "fair go".

While the report consistently outlines equity challenges and rightly argues all schools need to be fully funded in line with the Gonski funding model, there is not a single target specifically designed to close widening achievement gaps. The closest we get is to tackling achievement gaps are weaker targets to increase the proportion of students in "priority equity cohorts" who meet proficiency standards for reading and numeracy in Naplan. In practice, these targets aspire to little more than getting more kids achieving minimum benchmarks in standardised tests.

D'après Caitlin Cassidy , The Guardian, Sun 26 Nov 2023

3- Education Minister: Australian education urgently needs practical reform

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Education Policy Outlook provides a concise analysis of the current Australian education system, compared to international education systems, including ongoing policy and reform efforts. The revised 2023 report confirmed ongoing issues with teacher shortages, equity issues, and a significant problem with bullying in Australian schools – reportedly three times the global average.

Following a formal review of document, Australia's Federal Minister of Education, Mr Jason Clare, released a statement expressing the need for urgent action from the federal government to achieve more practical reform efforts across Australia's entire education system. "While the report shows we have a good education system by international standards, we know that it should be a lot better and a lot fairer," Mr Clare said.

When asked about the cause of such a high rate of bullying in Australian classrooms, Mr Clare said it is difficult to pinpoint. "It's not just in the playground, it's online. Students can escape physical bullying in the playground when the school bell rings, but that online bullying continues after they leave," he said. "I think this is part of the fallout in the aftermath of the pandemic. Teachers will tell you that they're still seeing children struggle with their mental health following two years of on and off lockdowns. I think you can draw a line between bullying and why a lot of teachers are leaving the profession, feeling worn out and burnt out. A lot of teachers will tell you that when they leave university and jump into the classroom for the first time, they don't feel prepared to deal with some of these challenges."

Despite the country's National Teacher Workforce Action Plan recently coming into effect, the Department of Education has projected a shortage of 4,100 secondary school teachers within the next two years.

"We've seen a big drop over the last ten years in the number of people going to university to study teaching, about a 16 percent drop," said Mr Clare. "To help turn that around, we're investing in the budget, and in scholarships, to encourage more students to become teachers. We've got to improve the way we teach teachers at university. We have to make sure that people are better prepared for the classroom. Believe it or not, about 50 percent of teachers quit the profession in the first five years, and there are things that we can do to tackle that problem."

Mr Clare further commented on the disparity in academic performance between students from affluent inner-city communities and Indigenous students or those with socio-economic disadvantages such as living in a remote community. "If you're a young person from a poor family or from the bush or an Indigenous Australian, you're three times more likely to fall behind at school," said Mr Clare. "The fact is, you're less likely to go to preschool, you're more likely to fall behind in primary school and you're less likely to finish high school, let alone go on to university. We've got a great education system in Australia, amongst the best in the world, but not for everyone.."

The OECD is an international organisation that works together with governments and policy makers to coalesce education data into an ongoing comparative analysis that examines country-specific work and seeks to establish international standards for education policy and reform.

4- Remote Education system

The Remote Teaching Service is made up of a dedicated group of more than 200 teachers living and working in 37 remote communities in Western Australia. They deliver flexible and innovative education programs to ensure students in remote areas have access to high quality learning programs.

Schools in the Remote Teaching Service are located in some of the most isolated parts of the state. They may be in community settings or small towns, and the majority of students are from local Aboriginal families.

Teaching in a remote school offers a range of professional opportunities for teachers who are engaging and resilient. If you are flexible and like working as part of a team you have the opportunity to be part of this innovative learning community. Skills and interests in literacy, numeracy and English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) are highly valued.

We support our teachers by providing a range of additional allowances and benefits. When you teach in a remote school you will be eligible to apply for Remote Teaching Service leave. Once you have completed 3 years of continuous service, you will receive 10 weeks of paid leave. After 4 years, you will receive 22 weeks of paid leave (this includes the first 10-week entitlement). This leave is in addition to all other leave entitlements.

You are eligible for permanency after 2 years of satisfactory service. On completion of your three-year contract, you will be allocated a case manager to help you secure a position in a location of your choice.

Use our [benefits calculator](#) to view rural, regional and remote allowances.

You can apply to our [Remote Teaching Service pool](#).

Department en Education, Government of Western Australia, Remote education, updated in August 2024

5- School of the Air – Jack's Story

Australians are great inventors because this vast arid continent constantly challenges us to be innovative: Necessity is the mother of invention. Many children in Australia live in remote areas which we call "The Bush" many of these children have been schooled by a combination of home schooling from parents and via the School of the Air a uniquely Australian way of getting an education using a combination of traditional correspondence teaching methods complimented by cutting edge technology. This is a story about a day in the life of an 8-year-old child living in Australia on a Cattle Farm 300 kilometres from the nearest school. He leads an active life learning hands on skills from interaction with his family and station workers. He is enrolled in the 'School of The Air'.

Jack wakes up at dawn to feed the chickens and let them out of their coop. He then finds his Dad and helps with the other morning chores. Then it is back to the house at 7 am for some breakfast. 8 am is his scheduled class with his teacher. He leaves the kitchen and goes to the study room. He sits in front of the computer and waits for his classmates and teacher to come online. The microphone is in position so the small group will hear his contributions to the lesson. This system is called Interactive Distant Learning (IDL) He has seven half hour lessons using IDL with the School of the Air each week. On Monday mornings everyone in his School of the Air participates in an assembly using the HF (high frequency) radio. The school supplies the Radio Transceiver for each family. The Australian Government funds the education of all students enrolled in School of the Air, which costs about double the cost of standard education.

Today's lesson is about using Fractions in Maths. Instead of a blackboard, the teacher uses an electronic whiteboard to demonstrate the use of fractions. A simple presentation introduces a few new ideas. The main lesson points and exercises are prepared in a word document which has been shared for all the students to access instantly on the website. The teacher asks the students questions and all can hear their responses. There is a quick quiz on the website for the students to complete at the end of the lesson. This gives the teacher instant feedback on the students' current understanding of fractions. The next lesson will be adjusted accordingly. The teacher signs off for the day leaving the students with direction on how to find an online lesson package on Fractions. These E-learning packages have been specifically written to match with Jack's Mathematics Curriculum.

After the lesson Jack has quiet time to work alone on his projects. Sometimes a tutor will come to help him through certain subjects. His sister did the same lessons 3 years ago so he can ask for her ideas and direction. His mum helps him too, making sure he studies at least 5 hours a day. He has writing books, pens and traditional learning materials organised in his desk. Each term he receives a learning package in the post with audio and videocassette tapes, library books and computer software. Once a year all of his friends go to a classroom in the town for one week. Jack's favourite day was when they played football on Friday. During the week he got to know his teacher who he can phone on the free call 1800 number. They usually practice reading together. Jack is looking forward to camp again next year. He will spend time with his fellow students and teachers face to face. They are going on camp with the 'townies' who attend the school in town. One of the townies is in Jack's study group. She is sick and can't go to a standard school so she joined the School of the Air.

Another highlight of the year is the mini-school. This year it is going to be at Tim's house. Last year Jack's family hosted the event. Libby Standley, a guest teacher specialising in Writing and Drawing for Children's Literature, came to visit for three days and all the local (relatively speaking) kids came to stay. They didn't fit in the lounge room so they cleared out the Shearing Shed and had the workshops there. This year an African Dancer, Sheelagh Langerburg, is coming to stay for three days. Cool! Everyone is really excited.

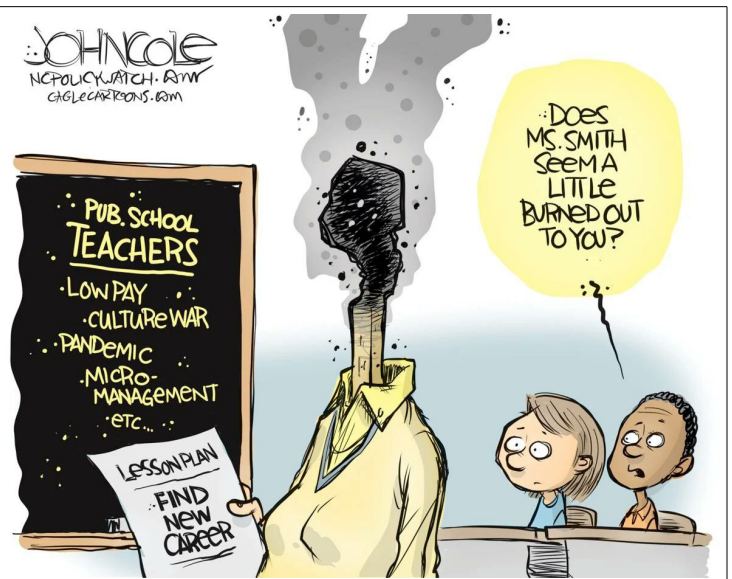
For now Jack is free to go back outside. His new horse is waiting for him, there are cows to muster with his Dad and that Maths eLearning unit can wait until the afternoon study period. Jack's Dad completed his schooling though the School of the Air in 1975. They didn't have the Internet back then but things weren't so different. Jack's dad sat down in front of his radio each morning for a ten-minute session with his teacher. She would give him a list of work and assignments to work on that day. They didn't have camps, mini-schools and classroom time like Jack does now. Nevertheless, he finished his schooling and stayed on the land like his father before him and as Jack plans to do. Jack's son will likely be a student of the School of the Air. The technology that will be available to him is beyond our imagination.



"Big deal, an A in math. That would be a D in any other country."

"Big deal, an A in math. That would be a D in any other..."
Mike Twohy

Picture A



Picture B

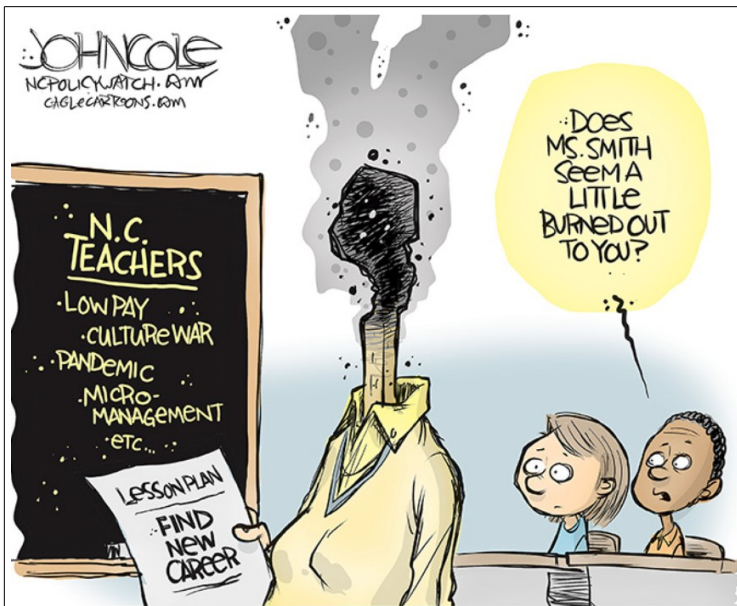


Picture C



Child reading 'Schools failing to teach basics' upside down.
Grizelda

Picture D

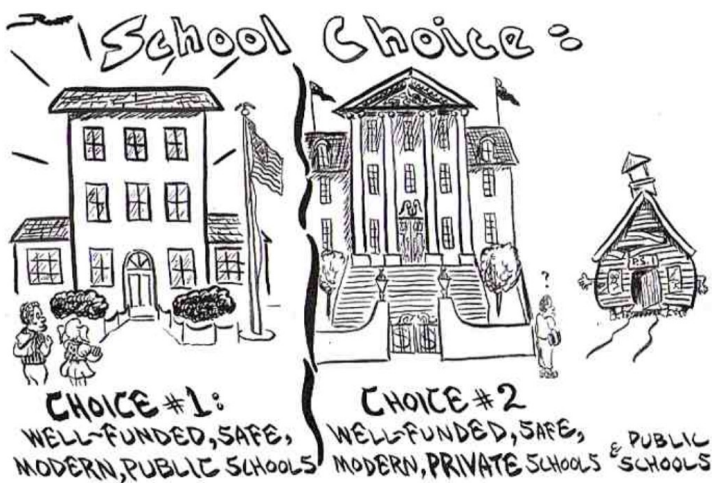


Picture E – John Cole Burned out



- I'm now switching to online bullying...

Picture F- Online Bullying



Picture G - School Choice



Picture H- Choose your Path