



New Education Foundation Australia Report: Crossing the Bridge

Poverty and disadvantage amongst young people are strongly linked to poor educational outcomes. Compared to their more affluent peers, Australian students from poorer backgrounds are twice as likely to under-perform in literacy and numeracy. They are more likely to have negative attitudes to school, be suspended or expelled and leave school early. As a result, they are more likely to struggle with the transition from school to work and less likely to take up or succeed in further studies.

Disadvantaged young people are most at risk of underachievement, disengagement and early leaving during the middle years of schooling (Years 5 to 9). Breaking this cycle is a serious challenge for schools, but some are meeting the challenge with success. With funding from The R E Ross Trust, the Foundation has spent 18 months researching the work of nine Victorian schools that are improving educational outcomes for their students through student-centred learning. *Crossing The Bridge: Overcoming entrenched disadvantage through student-centred learning* is the new report of that research.

The schools are all located in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne. In 2006, this region had the highest proportion of government schools in Victoria with a significant number of students deemed to be disadvantaged. All of the schools have high student need, but all have noted better achievement and engagement since the introduction of a student-centred approach to learning.

At Debney Park Secondary College, for example, traditional year levels have been replaced by small classes. Students are allocated to these classes according to their personal learning needs and style. They are taught by a team of just four teachers, who support their welfare and attendance as well as learning. Each student has an individual learning plan. The middle years program also includes SCRAYP, where community arts mentors work with students to develop performance art, and SoundHouse, an innovative music and creative media program based on the school campus in a new purpose-built multimedia centre.

Yet despite their success, the schools still face multiple barriers to their efforts to improve student outcomes in the face of family and community disadvantage. The report proposes a number of new solutions to these barriers.

Crossing The Bridge was launched by Professor Glyn Davis AC, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Melbourne, on 17 May at Cranlana. The evening also celebrated the Foundation's 18th Annual General Meeting and Public Education Day, which took place nationally on the day.

80 guests from government, business, philanthropy and the community sector attended the launch. The Foundation thanks Joanna Baeviski from the Myer Foundation for making Cranlana available to us, Baillieu Myer and Elgee Park Wines for their generous provision of wine for the event and Sylvia Geddes and the Trustees of The R E Ross Trust for their generous funding of the *Crossing The Bridge* research project.

Print copies of *Crossing The Bridge* are available on request: call Rosalyn Black on 03 9665 5903 or email ros.black@educationfoundation.org.au. The report is also available on the Foundation website at www.educationfoundation.org.au

Rosalyn Black, Research Manager

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Message from the CEO – Adam Smith

It's hard to imagine a time when education has drawn more attention than it does today. We're in the midst of a federal election that in part is hinged on both sides of the political spectrum, developing policy that will ensure our education system is able to deliver economic, intellectual and social prosperity for our nation in the short, mid and long term.

Such a level of recognition of the core value of education in this country is reassuring and Education Foundation Australia is certainly well placed to be contributing to this important direction in both knowledge and in practice.

Our research continues to be supported, valued and recognised by education professionals, Government, corporate Australia, and various opinion leaders. A recently announced partnership with The R E Ross Trust will ensure that for the next three years our research will continue to add value to educational thinking and practice across Australia. The focus of this work will be on exploring new models of excellence in curriculum and pedagogy, school design, and partnerships and will enable us to have a voice in a realm of education that is looking for specific ways to overcome disadvantage, build social capital and expand current measures of success.

Our commitment to providing direct support to students, teachers and communities remains stronger than ever with over 3000 students expected to attend the City Centre this year; more than 300 scholarships to be awarded; and a successful Back to School Day campaign across Australia throughout May. With the support of AMCOR, the Fouress Foundation, the Dennoch Foundation and the John T. Reid Trust, ruMAD? also continues to engage, challenge and inspire students and communities across Australia.

This significant work is only possible through the strongest commitment from our staff and supporters and it was a delight to acknowledge this commitment at our recent AGM held at Cranlana, the prestigious Myer family estate.

Adam Smith, CEO

Opportunity Scholarships Hot News: \$110,000 distributed in Round 1

A record 160 Opportunity Scholarships, ranging from \$200 to \$1000, were awarded in Round 1 in March.

From the 190 applications received, our Selection Panel was hard pressed to decide on the final 160 awards with a total value of \$110,000. A rural student of performing arts when told by her teacher of her successful application for a scholarship "yelled a huge thank you and promptly burst into tears and then hugged me".

Round 2 Opportunity Scholarships open on Monday 16 July and applications close on 20 August 2007.

For more details, go to:

www.educationfoundation.org.au



realestate.com.au funds Memorial Scholarship

realestate.com.au found a special way to honour the memory of a team member: a memorial sports scholarship via Education Foundation Australia's Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Former realestate.com.au CFO Bill Spring passed away due to cancer over a year ago. His former colleagues and friends at the online real estate advertising company fondly remember him.

Bill was a funny, fun loving man who was passionate about kids' sports. To remember him, his colleagues have created the Bill Spring Sports Scholarships. The Foundation manages the scholarship fund on behalf of realestate.com.au.

Twenty kids have already benefited in 2006, and there will be more every year. It's a legacy Bill would have been proud of.



City Centre Luncheons

On 30 April and 22 May Goldman Sachs JB Were generously hosted two information sharing and fundraising luncheons for the City Centre. Initiated by the City Centre's Business Advisory Board, the luncheons brought high profile business and community leaders together to hear about the City Centre's work.

Key speakers for the lunches included Sir Gustav Nossal, the City Centre Patron, Terry Campbell AO, Chairman Goldman Sachs JB Were, Craig Drummond, CEO and Managing Director Goldman Sachs JB Were, and Simon McKeon, Executive Director, Macquarie Bank.

We were also delighted to have teachers and students from Latrobe and Cranbourne Secondary Colleges provide first-hand accounts of the impact of the City Centre. The stories of the two students, Jon Hicks and Lidiya Hanin, provided clear evidence of the worth of the program as it challenges and changes the lives of young people.

The City Centre manager left guests with a favourite quote: "there are two things we must give our children: one is roots and the other is wings".

Those who attended left convinced that the City Centre makes a significant contribution to engaging young people in learning and preparing them for the full flight of successful adulthood.



Education Minister launches Back to School Day!

Minister Lenders launched Back to School Day 2007, along with Victoria's Education Week at his former school Trafalgar High School. The sixth Annual Back to School Day event invited back over a thousand former students to inspire 100,000 current students.

This year returning Back to School were Janet Holmes a'Court (Perth Modern School WA), Australian Cricketer Darren Lehmann (Gawler High School SA), Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile (Taree High School NSW), ACT Education Minister Andrew Barr (Turner High School ACT), Channel Nine personality Joseph May (Rainworth State School WA), Channel 9 travel reporter Jules Lund (Solway Primary School VIC) and Shane O'Bree from the Collingwood Football Club (Beaufort Primary School VIC) one of 10 AFL players supporting Back to School Day.

We would like to thank Melbourne Cares for their tremendous support of Back to School Day in helping to encourage former public students to register on the website and make contact with their former public schools (register now for 2008), and also for making possible the fantastic TVC (ADG Creative) that was aired courtesy of Channel 7 and supported by Peter Mitchell Channel 7.

Special thanks to Simon McKeon (Chair of Melbourne Cares) who has given ongoing support to the Back to School Day program. Last, but by no means least – leading the way, Don Larkin our Chairman went back to Lloyd Street Primary School (VIC). Thanks Don!



ruMAD?

It's safe to say that ruMAD?'s national expansion is growing in leaps and bounds at present as we have been travelling the country promoting the ruMAD? Framework and philosophy at a number of conferences whilst also forming some exciting new partnerships.

Our most recent partnership is with 'Speak Out Limited' (www.speakout.com.au) who are based in Queensland and have strong involvement with schools and communities all over the state. With good support from Education Queensland they will soon be delivering ruMAD? and will become our northern-most colleagues.

(continued next page)

"Speak Out limited is a leading social enterprise that creates tangible opportunities for people to change their world through creative innovation, economic participation and socially responsible enterprise."

Can you feel the synergies here?!

In New South Wales, we have secured a real value-add through forging a partnership with 'Act Now' (www.actnow.com.au), a program of the Inspire Foundation (www.inspire.org.au).

"ActNow provides young people with opportunities to learn about and take action on social issues that affect them and their community... and to tell others about it. Launched in May 2006, www.actnow.com.au is driven by young people and responds to their desire to understand issues, articulate their opinions, and take action in their community."

So you can see why ruMAD? and Act Now were both excited about this strategic partnership and the potential for both programs!

As a further add to the work we do in Victoria, we have teamed up with 'The Long Walk' (www.thelongwalk.com.au), to strengthen our ties to the Indigenous community, but also to create an amazing resource for students and teachers when engaged in projects centred around Indigenous communities, human rights, racism and the like. The Long Walk have recently begun some great work in schools in Victoria and are looking to develop their educational programs through ruMAD?

[We were recently invited to take part in 'The Long Walk to Dreamtime at the G' as part of the AFL's Indigenous round. I attended with Dean Delia from the City Centre and it was an inspiring thing to be a part of! (We enjoyed the game as well).]

Both our Western Australian and Tasmanian partners have been doing some hard work recently. Helen Hortle (Tasmanian Centre for Global Learning) has been clocking up the kilometers around Tassie visiting and training teachers, and the 'Bank of Ideas' in Western Australia are in the process of recruiting a new ruMAD? Facilitator to support the growth of their work.

So it is safe to say that it is all happening!

The www.rumad.org.au website is well into development and is due to be launched in less than 6 weeks. This is an exciting time and the launch itself will be a great event to be held in mid-July. More details about the launch will be released shortly. Until then the most up to date information on ruMAD? is on the www.educationfoundation.org.au website, and if you are wanting to register your school for ruMAD? or just receive some information, please send an email to: rumad@educationfoundation.org.au.

And finally, we welcome Angelique Odyssea who will be with us for the next 6 weeks. Angelique is doing an internship with the Foundation and will be fully immersed in all things ruMAD? We very much look forward to some of the research and feedback she can provide on the program whilst engaging in a totally new learning experience.

NB: If you're a school out there who is currently running ruMAD? or has been for quite some time, we'd love to hear from you via email. Let us know what you're doing and how things are going. This will aid us with our database consolidation to ensure you don't miss out on any exciting upcoming happenings.

Cheers!

Josh Levy, ruMAD? National Facilitator

Homelessness and Education in the Middle Years

Children experiencing homelessness have lower school attendance, lower levels of educational attainment and are more likely to leave school early. This leads to reduced life opportunities for these children.

Education Foundation Australia is delighted to announce a new three year partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Hanover Welfare Services to conduct an innovative pilot project, Homelessness and Education in the Middle Years.

The project has been funded by the Australian Government to improve educational provision and outcomes for homeless children in the crucial middle years of schooling, Years 5 to 9. It will be accompanied by a significant research and evaluation process to improve our understanding of homelessness, its impact on children and families, and what is required to reduce its effect on educational outcomes for children.

For more information, contact Rosalyn Black, Research Manager, on 03 9665 5903 or ros.black@educationfoundation.org.au



Indigenous Cultural Awareness & Creative Arts Program

The Education Foundation Australia grant has been a wonderful gift to our schools as this has empowered our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with new skills and abilities to perform traditional ceremonies in our community. These new skills and abilities have been passed down to our young people by Elders and leaders from the Aboriginal (Auntie Flo Watson & Karen Hall) and Torres Strait Islander (Auntie Sarah & Uncle Fred Wapau) Community. We have been learning from the traditional owners of the land about the importance of how our culture is past down to generation to generation through story telling.

The grant from the Foundation gave the opportunity for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to do a Cultural Awareness program in the City (Brisbane) where Uncle Bruce Harbottle took us on an excursion which involved the boys receiving their very own didgeridoo and the girls receiving a set of clap sticks and an Australian brigalow hardwood boomerang. The young people were taught the cultural importance of these Aboriginal artefacts and shown how to paint these items in the traditional way.

The grant had created a huge positive effect on the Indigenous students who visited the Australian Indigenous Tribal Art Gallery last week. Many of the students expressed how this made them feel proud of being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and how learning about their culture, traditional protocols and customs encouraged them to be positive about their future. Also learning traditional skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways and how to play the didgeridoo and clap stick has given them confidence to share their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture with others and to share this knowledge and skills so as to pass it on to the next generation.

We are currently practicing for several upcoming programs such as National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.

The students of Mitchelton State High School and Grovely State School would like to thank Education Foundation Australia for its generosity in supporting us to connect with our cultural heritage and learn traditional instruments and new skills which have given us the confidence to share with our schools and our community. Thank you!

Written by the young people and Uncle Bruce Harbottle
(Indigenous Community Partnership Officer)

Young Australians with talent deserve the best we can give them...

Kids can do anything with a great education! You can help us to combat disadvantage in public education.

Donate Online

Make your tax-deductible donation to Education Foundation Australia before 30 June by credit card on our secure website at www.educationfoundation.org.au/donate or telephone 03 9665 5913.

Join our Monthly Giving Program

Just 33 cents a day or \$10 a month will provide a student with resources, role models and real life learning opportunities to enhance their education and life prospects. Go to www.educationfoundation.org.au/donate.

Establish a Scholarship Fund

Support a disadvantaged, talented student to achieve a dream by establishing a named Scholarship Fund administered by the Foundation. For more information go to www.educationfoundation.org.au/donate or contact Adam Smith on 03 9665 5912.

Make a Bequest

By including the Education Foundation Australia in your Will you will be investing in building Australia's future, supporting our children's education. For more information contact Maxine Miller on 03 9665 5913.

Workplace Giving

Engage your workplace or school to financially support innovative projects in education. For more information contact Maxine Miller on 03 9665 5913.