



This week's stories from the media

- Scholarships for early years teachers
- Report exposes kids mental health crisis
- Prescription for vapes for under 18s
- Calls for year 1 maths screening test
- Physics gone by 2035
- Girls going through puberty earlier

Kids Mental Health Crisis

Report calls for overhaul amid shocking surge in child mental health issues.

A major review into child mental health services has made 94 recommendations to overhaul services.

It follows complaints from parents about a system under stress, and revelations by The Advertiser that in 2021 desperate children in mental distress sought help at Adelaide emergency departments almost 4500 times – or 12 times a day.

Presentations have risen steadily from about 2000 – or at least five a day – a decade ago.

SA Health data also reveals primary school-aged children are among a growing number being admitted to the Women's and Children's Hospital's psychiatric ward.

Of these, 45 recommendations have been accepted, and 49 are supported in principle.

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Scholarships For Early Years Teachers

Scholarships of up to \$25,000 will be offered to entice people to become early childhood teachers in a government bid to tackle a looming workforce shortage.

Almost \$97m has been committed to a new Early Childhood strategy which will also offer aspiring childcare workers support with resume writing and interview skills, and make changes to encourage more Aboriginal workers into the sector.

The scholarships will be open to school leavers, people looking to change careers and students already enrolled in an early years teaching degree.

The state government has pledged to extend at least 15 hours of preschool a week to every South Australian three year old, in a staged rollout from 2026.

A royal commission delivered late last year found the state will need 660 more early childhood teachers and 1000 other staff to meet the increased demand.

Early Childhood Development chief executive Kim Little said to expand preschool to all three year olds the state would “need more people from all parts of our community to join the early childhood workforce”.

“If you're considering upskilling or pursuing a career in early childhood, there has never been a better time.”

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“...If you’re considering upskilling or pursuing a career in early childhood, there has never been a better time....”

Under 18s Can Buy Vapes With Prescription

Vapes will be made available at pharmacies without a prescription after the Albanese government backtracked on its plan to ban the commercial sale of e-cigarettes so it could strike a deal with the Greens.

Children under the age of 18 will be still able to buy vapes, but will require a doctor’s prescription to do so.

School, parent and medical associations have been advocating for the complete ban of recreational vape use by children under the age of 18.

Data revealed nine out of 10 vaping stores are within walking distance of schools.

Almost one in 10 people over the age of 14 have used e-cigarettes.

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In 2023, 3.2% of Australian female students in non-school education, were studying Engineering - the highest proportion in a decade.

Calls For Year 1 Maths Screening Test

Students struggling with maths are not getting the help they need early enough, which is causing them to fall further behind, new research has found.

Data from the Centre for Independent Studies has found that as many as 400,000, or 10% of students, require extra support or are below the international benchmark in mathematics.

Of those, only one in five will ever catch up to their peers.

“This makes early and effective screening the best possible way to help the children most in need of support.”

The call echoes recommendations made by independent reviews to Australia’s education ministers, including the recent Better and Fairer reviews that inform the next National School Reform Agreements.

It comes as the number of high school students choosing mathematics subjects towards the end of their education has plummeted in recent years to record lows.

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Physics Gone By 2035

Uni WA’s David Blair says if school physics enrolments continue to fall, there would be no female school leavers qualified to study physics by 2032.

Blair, who won a Prime Minister’s prize for his role in the discovery of gravitational waves, also says there will be no males studying physics by 2025.

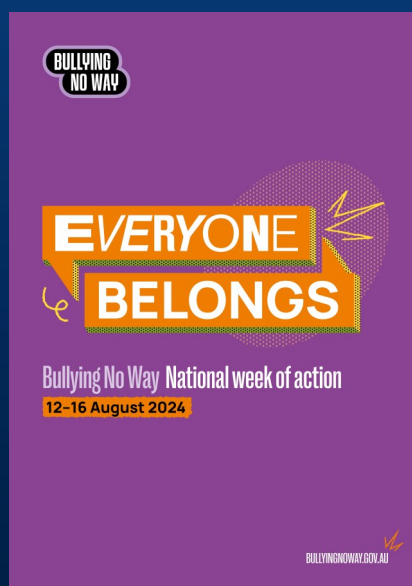
“We are on track to have no young medial physicists, no physicists to become tomorrow’s astronomers ... no physicists to support the nuclear industry - not just submarines, but crucial medical products - and no climate scientists.”

Girls made up 42% of year 12 physics students in 2015, but only 31% by 2023.

[Full Story](#)

Bullying No Way 2024

Bullying No Way - national week of action is August 12-16



Girls Going Through Puberty Earlier

The average age of the onset of puberty has been dropping - with some girls starting to develop breasts at 6 or 7.

Meta analysis shows that puberty onset is dropping by three months per decade, or a more than a year from 1977 to 2013.

Puberty is triggered by the hypothalamus which releases the GnRH hormone.

A number of factors may be causing this, including higher childhood obesity, which affects body chemistry.

Diet may also be a factor, as may stress linked to early life adversity.

Some research even suggests stressors during Covid may have led to a recent spike in early puberty.

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