



This week's stories from the media

- Australia singled out for praise in PISA
- Early education scholarships
- Nuclear submarine admiral details STEM challenge
- Early childhood problems linked to absenteeism
- Social media watchdog deadline
- Call for nationwide student wellbeing program rollout

**Early Education Scholarships**

Applications for the state government's early childhood study support program are now open.

The QualifySA in Early Childhood Financial Support Program is part of the government's \$96.6 million commitment to grow, upskill and diversify the early childhood workforce, ahead of the universal 3-year-old preschool roll-out in 2026.

With up to \$25,000 available to offset the cost of approved early childhood studies, there's no better time to become an early childhood teacher or educator.

The program is open to school leavers, career changers, existing students, or educators who are looking to upskill.

[Click here for information](#)



**Australia Singled Out For Praise In PISA**

**Australian students are amongst the highest for creative thinking in the world, according to the OECD's latest PISA 2022 report 'Creative Minds, Creative Schools'.**

"Critical and creative thinking is one of the Australian Curriculum's general capabilities, which are integrated and applied across all the learning areas."

"So, it's pleasing to see Australia as amongst those singled out for praise by the OECD as a high-performing system in the world for creative thinking in education."

Supporting the growth of students' critical and creative thinking capabilities is one of the ways that the Australian Curriculum develops our young people's skills for life.

Thanks to the dedication of teachers and principals right around the country, the Australian Curriculum comes alive in their hands as they make the expert decisions about the learning experience each student needs in order to succeed.

The recently released 2023 NAP Science Literacy assessment also demonstrated students who engage more frequently in Critical and Creative Thinking activities tended to have higher levels of science literacy.

"Overall Australian students' strong creative thinking results are a positive outcome of our country's long-term strategic commitment to creative thinking in curriculum and our assessment and reporting practices."

[More](#)



**“...Australian students are amongst the highest for creative thinking in the world....**

### **Nuclear Submarine Admiral Details STEM Challenge**

**There’s about to be some major competition in Australia for our best and brightest young minds.**

An unknown 15-year-old girl studying science and maths has been pinpointed as an Australian nuclear-powered submarine commander by the chief of the \$368bn project centred on Adelaide.

Declaring one of the nation’s greatest challenges was inspiring today’s STEM students to pursue a defence career, Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead said future AUKUS submarine construction at Adelaide’s Osborne Naval Shipyard should be harnessed and exploited.

“ ... So somewhere out there right now, there is a 15-year-old student, who hopefully is studying STEM, that one day, she’ll be the commanding officer of one of our nuclear-powered submarines.”

“And her friends and peers will be either her shipmates, or work in the laboratories, or work in the sustainment yards, or will work down at Osborne in building the submarine and that. But it’s one of the big challenges that we have in Australia.”

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### **Early Childhood Problems Linked To Absenteeism**

**Children who are not considered "school-ready" by their teachers are more than twice as likely to become persistently absent at some point in their education.**

British researchers analysed data for 62,598 children aged 5-13 from across the Bradford district and compared it with school absence records between the academic years 2012-2013 and 2019-2020 to identify associations between early childhood problems and absenteeism.

The team found that 67% of all persistent absentees with attendance below 90% were considered "not school-ready" when they entered reception.

This contrasted with only 37% of "not school-ready" children who were not persistently absent.

The researchers found that socioeconomic circumstances, measured by eligibility for free school meals, were a major risk factor for persistent absence.

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### **Social Media Watchdog Deadline**

**Social media companies have been given six months to come up with enforceable codes to protect young kids from porn.**

Research found children as young as eight are unintentionally seeing graphic sexual content while scrolling on the apps.

Australia’s online safety watchdog has issued notices to key members of the sector – including Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram – as well as TikTok, Snapchat, X and YouTube, and search engines like Google.

The codes will also cover app stores and apps; porn websites; hosting services; internet service providers; instant messaging, multi-player gaming, online dating services; SMS, chat, and equipment providers.

[Full Story](#)

### **End Of Term**

**This is the last *Education Update* for term 2.**

**Enjoy the school holidays!**



### **Call For Student Wellbeing**

**Schools Plus is calling on the government to implement a nation-wide rollout of its strategies.**

Schools Plus partners with predominantly low-SES schools each year to work with schools to deal with students who need support after a crisis, such as floods or the Covid-19 pandemic.

The not-for-profit says of the schools who apply, 31% in 2018 demanded support for wellbeing-focused initiatives, which rose to 48% in 2023.

Of those wellbeing-focused applications in 2023, 49% of schools said they needed help in building student’s social and emotional skills to manage their emotions and build healthy relationships.

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