



This week's stories from the media

- Standardised test scores don't show decline
- Mid-year intake returns
- National Spelling Bee
- What happens when you pay kids to perform on NAPLAN
- Australian families spend more on private schools
- MindChamps early educator franchise coming to SA

Mid-Year Intake Returns

Thousands of children around SA will start Reception this week as the mid-year intake in public schools returns for the first time in a decade.

About 4400 students from 426 schools start in Term 3, the first mid-year Reception intake in South Australia in a decade.

It was reinstated to provide families more choice in deciding when their child should start school based on their age, maturing & emotional wellbeing.

Students born between May 1 and October 31 are eligible to start school in Term 3 and the new Reception children follows the inaugural preschool mid-year intake last year.

Education Minister Blair Boyer said he was "so excited for our youngest students to start their schooling journey".

"It was clear after speaking to families, that a mid-year intake and more choice of when their children started school, was something they wanted to see brought back."

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Standardised Tests Don't Show Decline

A University of New England researcher has studied 25 years' worth of Australian test results and found there has been no significant decline in three out of the four major tests students take.

Since the year 2000, when Australia began taking the PISA tests, students' reading and maths literacy results have steadily declined.

However, the latest PISA results placed Australian students fourth best in the world for creative thinking skills out of 81 countries.

Expert in education assessment Dr Sally Larsen found that the narrative of student's decline in their ability to attain critical academic skills is not supported by data from NAPLAN, PIRLS and TIMSS tests.

"Ask almost anyone how Australian students are going in tests of basic skills, and the perception is that results are getting progressively worse," Dr Larsen said.

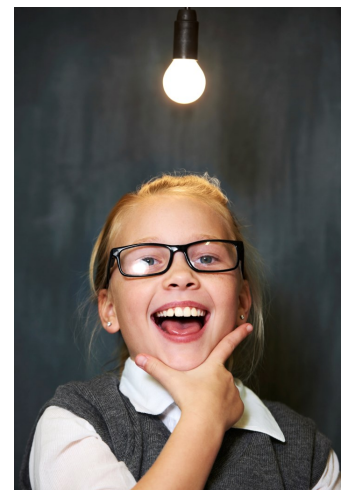
"In reality, student achievement is only declining in PISA."

PISA tests how students apply knowledge in many areas of learning - it does not specifically test the content in the Australian curriculum, unlike the other three tests.

Dr Larsen's research also found that, overall, Australian students have made progress in literacy and numeracy in NAPLAN since the start of the tests in 2008.

"If we're serious about making improvements to the outcomes measured by standardised tests, we have to have an accurate and unbiased understanding of all assessment data, and not jump to conclusions based on only one test."

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“...PISA ... does not specifically test the content in the Australian curriculum, unlike the other three tests....”

National Spelling Bee

The fourth annual Prime Minister's Spelling Bee opens Monday as the PM rallies Australian kids to take part, as technology changes the world.

Mr Albanese said the national spelling challenge was “a fun way to test yourself against the clock, against your classmates and against students your age all over our nation” – not to mention against the man himself.

National champions annually delight in testing the PM's spelling during their grand prize private meeting at Parliament House.

Reigning Years 3-4 winner Samuel Wright swiftly brought Mr Albanese undone last year with “Caesar”.

“With the skyrocketing use of social media platforms by young people, we are providing kids with a digital way of engaging with traditional literacy pathways.”

Registrations and the national school round opened Monday 22 July at spelling-bee.com.au

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What Happens When You Pay Kids For NAPLAN

Next month, we are expecting the results from the annual NAPLAN tests, which students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat earlier this year.

But what if students weren't trying as hard as they could in these tests?

In a new study, Year 7 students were given small financial rewards if they reached personalised goals in their NAPLAN tests.

Researchers found this improved their results.

The students were at a coeducational public high school in Queensland and mostly came from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The average scores improved by as much as 1.37% in writing, 0.81% in reading and 0.28% in numeracy.

This is not to say we should be paying students for their test performances - but it does suggest poor performance in low-stakes tests may reflect students' efforts rather than their ability or their learning.

[More](#)

Australians Spend On Private Schools

Australian families spend far more on private schooling than many other countries.

On average, private sources contribute 10% to primary education across the OECD.

But in Australia, they contribute 20%.

This makes Australia the fourth highest out of 40 countries.

In upper secondary school, on average, OECD households provide 9% of the total funding for school education.

But in Australia, households provide 21.4% of the total funding for these years.

In Finland it is only 0.4%.

[Full Story](#)

Homelessness Australia

Homelessness Prevention Week is August 5 - 11



MindChamps Coming To SA

A Singapore early childhood educator that advocates a keto-style diet and a mindset of “respect and no fear” is coming to Adelaide.

With operations in five Asian nations and 22 centres in NSW, the alternative childcare centre now has a South Australian franchisee partner.

It also has a partnership with UniSA, recently hosting a research team in Singapore for a study on how music, computing and neuroscience can benefit young children.

The company, listed on the stock exchange, has a mission to “build a world of MindChampions who possess the 3 Minds (Champion, Learning & Creative) and are empowered with the mindset of 100% Respect, Zero Fear”.

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