

IN BRIEF

Charges laid over fight

BRISBANE, Oct 21 - A fight that erupted in front of students outside their school has resulted in a man being charged and a teenager cautioned. The brawl occurred outside Pacific Pines High School as students were leaving for the day. The man was charged with going armed to cause fear, possession of a knife in a public place and driving while under the influence.

Hacker causes carnage

AUCKLAND (New Zealand), Oct 20 - A student from an Auckland college has hacked into their school email database and sent out pornographic images to 2700 of their fellow students. Dale Burden, headmaster of Mount Albert Grammar, told Radio NZ that the culprit created a fake email to break into the email list. An inquiry into the matter is now underway.

School lock down scare

SYDNEY, Oct 20 - Two neighbouring schools have gone into lock down after being sent social media threats. Police were called to East Hills Boys High School and Sir Joseph Banks High School to respond to the situation. "Parents contacting the school are being told that their children are safe but they can collect them if they want to," the NSW Department of Education stated.

Recycled oval watering

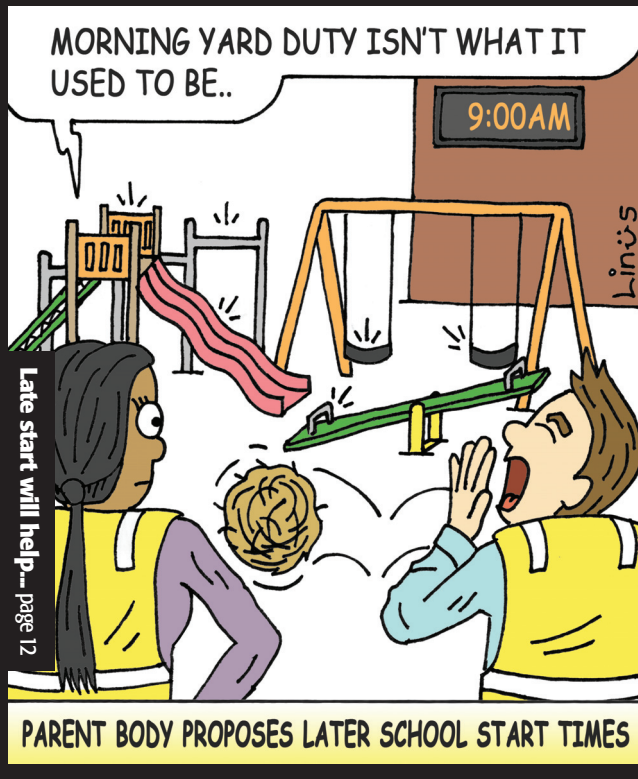
ADELAIDE, Oct 19 - Under a local government scheme, schools across the state are moving towards using recycled water to irrigate their ovals. According to Education Minister Susan Close, the government-led initiative (which has cost more than \$165,000 to implement) is expected to save thousands of dollars each year. Eight schools in the northern suburbs have recently made the switch.

Lilydale TAFE revived

MELBOURNE, Oct 19 - The doors will reopen at Lilydale TAFE next year thanks to a \$10 million Labor pledge to revive the campus. Swinburne University closed the site in 2013 following the Coalition's changes to higher education funding. Box Hill Institute will now run the campus, which is expected to host higher education courses, child care services and a tech school.

Email briefs to classroom@educationhq.com

CHALK IS CHEAP



Welcome Simon!

IT'S been an exciting month in Australian politics. Not only do we have a new Prime Minister, but we've also welcomed Simon Birmingham into the role of Federal Education Minister. In the News section this month, we've taken a closer look at Birmingham's political background and outlined some of the policy changes he's made thus far.

For our Hard Word this month, Keith Heggart has written a scathing review of Christopher Pyne's time in the role, and outlines the many 'failures' of the former Education Minister.

On a brighter note, this issue also includes two special reports, one on PE and Outdoor Education and the other on Music Education.

We're also really thrilled to have launched our *EducationSurvey* for 2015. The survey provides an independent and wide-reaching analysis of the tastes, opinions and thoughts of educators right across Australia. Visit educationhq.com/survey/australia to have your say. I really hope you enjoy this issue.

REBECCA VUKOVIC
EDITOR

Govt school apology for fee charge

A VICTORIAN state school has apologised for charging parents \$270 to enrol their child and has refunded the money.

Parents were asked to pay the non-refundable fee in an online enrolment form to secure a place at Northcote High School.

Victorian Education Minister James Merlino says the school did the wrong thing. It has now withdrawn the enrolment fee, apologised to parents and reimbursed anyone who paid the money.

"This is something that schools should not do," Merlino said.

"We're making sure every school understands education is free. There's no payment, there's no down payment on the enrolment of students."

He did not believe other schools were charging an enrolment fee, but said the Education Department has issued the school a warning over the fee, which goes against Victorian legislation that state schools must offer free education to students.

The department will also write



A Victorian public school has apologised for charging an enrolment fee.

to all government schools to advise them that it's not appropriate to request a payment to secure a place at a school.

"Victorian legislation provides that instruction in the standard curriculum program must be provided free to all students in Victorian government schools," a spokesman said.

Northcote High School principal Kate Morris has reportedly

said the payment was for essential education items, school camps and sporting activities.

"This payment requirement has now been removed by the school's external portal provider and parents can now complete the external online enrolment process without making a payment. The school will clarify the payment options in our next communication to families."

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