

4. Minister's letter inviting schools to participate in the Values Education Study 2002-2003

\$316,000 boost for Values Education in our Schools

18 November, 2003 MIN529/03

I am today pleased to announce the launch of an important national report, and a further \$316,000 commitment from the Australian Government, to help support values education.

The *Values Education Study* involved 69 schools and features a *Draft National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* to guide debate on this important area.

The additional funding will enable us to enhance values education through increased website support for all schools and a national forum to be held in early 2004 to consider the study's findings and to build on existing school practices. Education is as much about building character as it is about developing specific skills and parents increasingly expect schools to help students develop core values from an early age.

Schools participating in the \$580,000 *Values Education Study* received grants of up to \$7,000 to study and document their values education methods and identify best practice approaches. Projects focused on one or more of the following areas:

- reviewing values education processes;
- developing student social skills and resilience; and
- incorporating values into teaching programmes across the key learning areas.

Ways to tackle violence and anti-social behaviour, improve student and staff health and well being, and encourage community participation were among the issues covered by the study.

Amongst many outstanding projects, Whitefriars Catholic School in South Australia prepared a programme and strategy for students to achieve personal goals while maintaining positive relationships with their peers; Salisbury High School in South Australia established a set of core values to guide its work following extensive consultation with parents, students and staff; and Matthew Hogan School in NSW DD a *Youth Off The Streets* school –

organised a range of community service activities including support for an East Timorese orphanage.

In addition to the case studies, the *Values Education Study* includes a literature review and findings from an online survey of parents, teachers and students. Representatives from project schools, relevant organisations and education jurisdictions will be invited to take part in next years forum.

The Howard Government is committed to helping our children develop the capacity to accept responsibility for their own actions and exercise judgement in matters of morality, ethics and social justice.

The *Values Education Study Report* and *Executive Summary* are available at:
<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications/2003/index.htm>

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