Welcome to the fifth edition of the *Values for Australian Schooling Newsletter*, which brings you news and information about the national initiatives in values education that support values education becoming a core part of Australian schooling. It provides updates on national activity including the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2.

**Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2**

The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 (VEGPSP –Stage 2) is part of the Australian Government’s values education initiative funded with $29.7 million over four years (2004–2008).

In May 2006 all schools across Australia were invited to apply for funding to conduct innovative values education projects, and in July 2006 twenty-five clusters of schools from around Australia were selected to participate in this 20-month project.

Clusters come from as far afield as the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education in WA, an interstate group of schools representing SA, WA and the NT, and clusters in Kalgoorlie WA, Townsville Qld, Port Vincent SA, Murtoa in Victoria, Griffith, NSW and Ridgley in Tasmania.

In VEGPSP – Stage 2, four clusters are focusing on building interfaith and intercultural understanding. The **Broader Horizons cluster** from Tasmania is establishing a reciprocal relationship with an Indonesian school to explore values and beliefs from an intercultural perspective. The **Melbourne Interfaith/Intercultural cluster** brings together students from one state high school, a Jewish school, an Islamic school and two Catholic schools through a shared inquiry using the **Socratic Circles methodology**.

Four clusters are also building values education through **sustainability** projects. The Port Vincent cluster in SA is building values through a ‘**Kids Teaching Kids’ methodology** where students plan and lead workshops on sustainable practices and processes. The Pullenvale cluster is using the ‘**Storythread** methodology’ (http://www.pullenvaeeq.edu.au/Book_DVD.pdf) to enable values teaching across KLAs.

**What’s different about Stage 2?**

During Stage 2 clusters will have the support of their local jurisdictions through the Values Education Networks of Engagement (VENE). The VENEs comprise State or Territory Values Education Contact Officers, parent representatives, cluster representatives, the University Associates Network (UAN) and non-grant schools. They will provide local advice and support the dissemination of improved values education practice at a jurisdictional level. Clusters will draw on the learnings of Stage 1 through mentors – experienced values educators who will work with clusters to share their insights and provide a professional learning model based on their Stage 1 work.
First national briefing session for the VEGPSP – Stage 2

The initial briefing session for the VEGPSP – Stage 2 was held on 30–31 October, 2006, in Melbourne.

Participants included two representatives from each of the 25 clusters, 18 university associates networks (UAN), six State and Territory Values Education Contact Officers, the DEST Values Education Project Coordinator and the Curriculum Corporation Values Education project team.

The purpose of the briefing session was to:

• develop a values education learning community engaged in developing and sharing good practice in values education in Australian schools
• review the research components and tools to be used in the projects
• develop a shared understanding of the context, purposes and operation of VEGPSP – Stage 2

The focus of the briefing was the Tool Kit for the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 which outlines the research elements of the project with examples and templates, discussion papers and information about the range of support available for projects.

Clusters exchanged ideas, compared projects and refined their action plans to create achievable goals. Cluster representatives also worked with their State and Territory Contact Officers and UAN colleagues on the action research component of the project which is being used to answer two overriding questions:

1. What would it take to improve the outcomes of our values education programme?
2. How do we provide evidence of the impact of our values education project on teachers, students and parents?

The briefing session was informative and challenged teachers to think outside the square. At the end of the briefing one teacher said:

Values ed is huge. I'm a tad daunted by the expectations within the context of other demands of my job. But it's very exciting and I dare say I look forward to the journey.

Schools starting their own values education initiatives can download the VEGPSP – 2 Research Tool Kit from: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/Research_Resource_Kit_for_the_Values_Education_Good_Practice_Schools_Project5_june.doc

Meeting, thinking and talking

Julie Buckley, Gayle Alessio, (Oxenford cluster) and Ron Tooth, Lorne Willadsen (Pullenvale cluster), Queensland
This new publication, *Values Education and Quality Teaching: The Double Helix Effect*, is an outcome of the work of VEGPSP – Stage 1 and the Values Education Partnership Project. The book presents six rich case studies on the relationship between values education and Quality Teaching.


Available at the National Forum in May.

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**List of VEGPSP – Stage 2 clusters by cluster name and lead school**

**Australian Capital Territory**
- Lanyon – Lanyon High School

**New South Wales**
- Airds–Bradbury Community of Schools – Airds High School
- Merrylands Guilford – Merrylands High School
- Griffith primary and secondary schools – Griffith Public School
- Westpeers – St Joseph’s School, Grenfell
- Shire 4 Values – Gymea High School
- Values Newcastle – Wallsend South Public School
- Unity in Diversity in South Western Sydney – Malek Fahd Islamic School

**Queensland**
- Sustainable Values – Townsville – Townsville Central State School
- Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre (PEEC) – Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre
- North Toowoomba – Toowoomba State High School
- Ferny Grove – Samford State School
- Oxenford – Oxenford State School

**South Australia**
- Sea and Values – Seafield 6–12 School
- E-Schools – Yorke Peninsula – Port Vincent Primary School
- SA Edmund Rice Ministries Enhancing Values Education – Rostrevor College

**Tasmania**
- Broader Horizons – Ridgley Primary School

**Victoria**
- Manningham – St Charles Borromeo Catholic Primary School
- Dunmunkle – Murtoa College
- Melbourne Interfaith Intercultural Cluster – St Monica’s College
- Darebin Schools Network – Preston North-East Primary School
- Dromana Cluster of Schools – Dromana Secondary College

**Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia**
- Cross-Border Values – Victor Harbor Primary School (SA)

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Vanessa Di Francesca, a student at St Monica’s College, created this artwork after attending the Melbourne Interfaith Intercultural cluster’s first meeting. The theme of the painting is ‘many cultures one community’.
The Final Report for the VEGPSP – Stage 1 was released by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, in November 2006. The report, titled *Implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools – Report of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 1*, provides accounts from 26 school clusters of how they interpreted and implemented the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools.

**What can the Report teach us?**

The Report’s *Executive Summary* captures the key messages of what the clusters learnt about good practice in values education.

A constant theme in the Report is how values education programmes contribute to improved student engagement, increased teacher morale, the development of positive relationships between students, and between staff and students, and an increase in student motivation. Some clusters speak about improvements in student learning that arose from their involvement in the project.

In the *Executive Summary* there are six indicators of the educational impacts of values education. The VEGPSP – Stage 1 demonstrated that good practice values education can:

1. lead to changes in teacher professional practice in classrooms and, in particular, in the way teachers relate to and communicate with their students;
2. produce calmer and more focused classroom activity;
3. enable students to become better self-managers;
4. help students develop greater capacities for reflection;
5. increase teachers’ levels of confidence in their approaches to their work and their sense of professional fulfilment;
6. produce strong positive relationships between students and between students and teachers.

The Final Report is rich in suggestions and ideas for implementing innovative values education programmes. At the end of each case study is a ‘key messages’ section with advice about what works and what to avoid. The voices of teachers feature prominently in the case writing examples and these experiences will ‘speak’ to practising teachers. The report is lengthy, but individual cluster case studies are hyperlinked on the Values Education website for ease of use.


**Extracts from the VEGPSP – Stage 1 clusters**

The school is [quoting the principal] ‘a much better place to be’. Children are ‘well behaved’, demonstrate improved self-control, relate better to each other and, most significantly, share with teachers a common language of expectations of values.

**Werribee cluster, Victoria**

… the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my short teaching career. The hours we committed to developing the lessons, the energy we gave to sharing this programme with other teachers and families and the thinking we did around how we could achieve what we wanted to achieve … I found it exhausting. However, this work is also the work I’m most proud of. I think we have done something really important and unique.

**Calwell cluster, ACT**
Stories from the schools – VEGPSP Stage 1

Students, principals, teachers, university colleagues, researchers and State and Territory Contact Officers contributed to twelve months of intense values activity in 2005–06 in 166 schools spanning 26 clusters across Australia.

This activity culminated in the presentation of case studies which formed the core of the VEGPSP – Stage 1 Final Report on what constitutes evidence of good practice in values education.

If there is one message that can be gleaned from the VEGPSP – Stage 1 clusters it is a message about transformation: transforming pedagogies, relationships, purposes, environments, understandings and abilities. All of the VEGPSP – Stage 1 clusters talk about change in some way or another, and the impact that values education has had on them, their students and in many cases their whole schools.

Below is an extract from the Maroondah North, Victoria, cluster’s case study. The project sought to identify ‘universally acceptable behaviours’ as the basis for implementing values education in the schools, but with a particular emphasis on relationships in the learning process. In this extract they discuss how to drive and support values education change at a school level.

Through our work we have raised the consciousness of values in our school communities. Teachers are more aware of the implicit values in the curriculum they teach and are actively highlighting these with their students. Students have a greater understanding of what values look like, sound like and feel like. The momentum among staff has grown with many asking about or trialing strategies and ideas.

We believe that in order to succeed, a project of this nature needs to be invitational. Unless a person is inclined to actively improve relationships, it is difficult to tell them that they have to and less likely to expect that this will occur. The level of enthusiasm of members of the Implementation Team has been infectious and has ‘spread the word’ to others across the cluster – our Implementation Team has since grown by approximately 20 teachers.

We are very firm in the belief that if values education is to be sustainable it should not be ‘packaged’ as a programme, but rather, should be approached as an evolution of teacher pedagogy. In this way it is less likely to be regarded as an ‘add on’ and less likely to be ‘taught’ in a contrived fashion with no specific linkages to the whole school programme/culture/identity.

The drive and support for the change we seek needs to come from school leadership. We are providing a briefing for principals on our progress. In doing this we expect to maintain their continued enthusiasm and support for the project. Without this, the changes that we are seeing will remain in isolated classrooms and not become a school-wide and cluster-wide change.

Other accounts and more stories from the schools themselves may be found in the Final Report, which is available for downloading from the Values Education website: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/VEGPS1_FINAL_REPORT_081106.pdf
Resources

What’s new online?
The latest Values Education Teaching and Learning Resources

Lesson plans
KLA-based lesson plans with a values focus (approximately 50 minutes in length) are available for downloading from the Values Education website as PDF files. Each lesson includes teaching and learning strategies with introductory activities to engage students, a guided inquiry and culminating activities. Some of the topics include: ‘Am I an Australian?’, ‘Well played’, ‘Whose words are they?’, ‘Can we use mobiles at school?’ and ‘Searching for scientists’. The lesson plans are grouped under students’ developmental stages – early years, middle years, early adolescence and late adolescence.

Co-curricular activities
Co-curricular activities include ideas, information and suggestions on how schools are implementing the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools outside the formal classroom context. Written by school-based practitioners of values education they contain practical activities for teachers to use or adapt in their communities. The topics include: ‘Philosophy in the classroom’, ‘Student action teams’ and ‘Student leadership and values education’.

This section of the website is updated with new lesson plans regularly and can be accessed at: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=15648

Annotated Values Education Resource Directory
The Directory is an annotated guide to a range of values education resources for Australian schools. Resources are organised by use for principals, other school leaders, teachers, parents and students. The Directory is available at: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=17903

Parents
This section of the website is devoted to resources and information about values education for parents. It contains information about the values education projects, links to parent partnership programmes and other relevant resources. Some values-related reports that may be of specific interest to parents include: TeenMatters, Mission Australia: Social Policy Reports – Youth Issues and Every Child Needs a Hero.

Find more information at: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=16428

New resources in development
Following the distribution of the Values for Australian Schooling Kit (Primary and Secondary) to all schools in 2006, new values education curriculum and professional learning resources are being developed for distribution to all Australian schools.

For teachers and students – Teaching and Learning Units
Thirty-two units (eight in each level) are currently being developed for: Early Years (K/P/R–2), Middle Childhood (Years 3–6), Early Adolescence (Years 7–10) and Later Adolescence (Years 11–12). Overall, eight KLAs are represented.

For teachers and school leaders – Values across the School – A Handbook
This resource is designed for use by school leaders with parents and school community partners and provides strategies to support the integration of values education in:
• the mission and ethos of the school
• the organisation of the school
• policy development.

For teachers – Professional Learning Modules
A series of professional learning modules is being developed to support teachers to:
• develop further knowledge and understanding of values education and values learning in schools
• integrate values education within classroom practice
• develop strategies to further develop cross-discipline values education in their school contexts
News from the States and Territories

New South Wales

Valuing Pastoral Care Conference 23 and 24 July 2007

This conference is being hosted by the Association of Independent Schools NSW. Its focal point will be how pastoral care can be a springboard for whole school values education.

The keynote speaker is Mr John Marsden, children’s author and founder and principal of Candlebark School in Victoria. Mr Marsden will speak about philanthropy in young people and how this translates to values education. School stories in which values education is established and integrated within the school pastoral care programmes will be showcased.


Queensland

Values Education Professional Learning Day on the Gold Coast 24 April 2007

Dr Neil Hawkes, education adviser to schools and UNESCO from the UK, will be presenting.

For more information go to: http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/values

Victoria

Building Positive school Communities – Values, vision and community perspectives – Victorian Values Education Conference 2 May 2007

The conference will be hosted by the Victorian Department of Education in collaboration with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the Independent Schools Association of Victoria.

It is open to educators from across Australia and is designed as a complimentary event to the National Values Education Forum to be held in Melbourne on 3–4 May.

The focus will be on partnership, participation and building relationships with students, parents and the community. The conference will consist of a day session and an evening session. The evening session will feature a debate: Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion – Real values in today’s world or rhetoric for the well-meaning?

Registration is $55 for the day session and $33 for the evening session.

For further information go to: http://valuesconf.edublogs.org/national-values-education-forum-2007/

Western Australia

Western Australia has seen some changes to the people working in Values Education projects for 2007.

- Patricia Dunnett, Principal Project Officer, is now responsible for Values Education; Health and Physical Education; English.
- Elizabeth Roberts, Project Manager, is responsible for the Values Education Project.

Contact details for all the Values Education Contact Officers are available on the website at: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=8772

Australia-wide

Values Education Networks of Engagement (VENEs)

May 10
Combined Victorian and Tasmanian meeting in Melbourne

May 11
South Australian meeting in Adelaide

May 14
ACT meeting in Canberra

May 15
NSW meeting in Sydney

June 4
Queensland meeting in Brisbane
On the national scene

Values education school forums across Australia

States and Territories and non-government education authorities are coordinating the conduct of values education forums in every Australian school. Examples of work being done by schools follow:

- Melrose Primary School, ACT, implemented an ongoing programme of self-assessment with their community. This included surveying the community and developing a future action plan.

- Norris Bank Primary School, Vic, reinforced school values through their performing arts programme. Two staff members wrote and produced a school musical, V is for Values, which involved all students. The musical was performed twice publicly.

- The forum of the Whyalla Secondary Cluster (comprising Whyalla High School, Stuart High School and John Eyre High School) explored a whole school approach and developed a set of agreed values which each school will adopt.

- De La Salle College, NSW, had 850 participants at their forum in August 2006 which illustrated how the Values for Australian Schooling Framework had become a part of the everyday culture of the College.

- Newstead College, Tas, Years 11 and 12, held forums over three lunchtimes for approximately 60 students. Each group had a teacher facilitator and the responses were presented to the whole staff during professional learning sessions. The forum will be repeated in 2007.

For funding to conduct a values education forum schools need to contact their State or Territory Values Education Contact Officer. More information can be found at: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=8867

2007 National Values Education Forum

The National Values Education Forum will be held on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 May 2007 at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre, Melbourne, Victoria.

The Australian Curriculum Studies Association is managing the forum on behalf of the Department of Education, Science and Training. The forum aims to:

- Explore the implementation of the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools
- Update participants on developments in the Department’s Values Education Programme
- Share good practice in values education in Australian schools
- Involve student voices in values education
- Facilitate discussion about future directions for values education.

The forum will bring together keynote speakers, international panellists, education and parent associations, teachers, principals and students. Workshops and presentations will provide the impetus for discussion about current and future directions in values education in Australia and internationally. Keynote speakers include Dr Neil Hawkes from the UK, and Professor Nel Noddings and Professor Andy Furco from the USA, all outstanding educationalists.

For more information go to: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=17253

Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) Values Education Partnership Project

This partnership project continues to roll out forum sessions for pre-service teacher educators in universities across States and Territories. The forums inform teacher educators about values education nationally and internationally, and encourage teacher educators to review their teaching programmes in line with the quality teaching needs of values education. Fourteen university forums have been planned – from June 2006 to June 2007.