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## INTRODUCING THE AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS REVIEW

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**INSIDE TODAY'S 12-PAGE SECTION (STARTS P19)**

## Hockey banks on help for projects

**EXCLUSIVE**  
DAVID CROWE  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT  
WASHINGTON DC

BANKS and big investors are being asked to help finance a government plan to unleash trillions of dollars of infrastructure spending as Joe Hockey seeks firm commitments from chief executives for a deal to be done at next month's G20 summit in Brisbane.

The Treasurer is taking the G20 proposal to chief executives to sign them up as financial supporters of a new global infrastructure centre that is meant to drive down the cost of building major projects.

ANZ Bank chief executive Mike Smith has backed the idea in principle while Westpac chief executive Gail Kelly met Mr Hockey in Washington DC on Friday to talk about the G20 agenda.

"The idea is a good one. It allows you to prioritise, it allows pretty scarce funding to be put on priority projects, and it's good for every country," Mr Smith told *The Australian* on the sidelines of the Washington meetings.

Macquarie Group, whose chief executive Nicholas Moore is in the business group advising the G20, is expected to back the new centre.

In a complementary move, Macquarie has also thrown its support behind a separate scheme backed by the Australian government, a global infrastructure facility launched by the World Bank.

The need to unlock more private spending in major projects was a major theme in the economic talks hosted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in the US capital in recent days.

Mr Hockey emerged from a meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors on Friday with a sense of growing momentum for his proposed global infrastructure centre, which is meant to connect governments with private investors to finance new construction.

While the centre will not raise funds for projects, it will need cash from companies and G20 member states to run activities such as training for government officials to manage the bidding process for public-private partnerships.

There was speculation in Washington that the new centre could be located in Sydney or Istanbul, given the leadership of the G20 will shift from Australia to Turkey at the end of this year.

Telstra chief executive David Thodey, who chairs the infrastructure and investment taskforce within the B20, which advises G20 political leaders, warned last week that the failure of any one member country to back the new centre would result in weaker economic growth and lower standards of living.

Obstacles remain to the centre, he said.

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LITERACY, NUMERACY AND WESTERN VALUES BOOSTED IN CURRICULUM SHAKE-UP

# Subjects fine-tuned as schools go back to basics

JUSTINE FERRARI  
NATIONAL EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

PRIMARY schools should focus on teaching literacy and numeracy, Australia's Judeo-Christian heritage should be given greater emphasis, and a "tokenistic" approach to key classroom themes must be dropped, according to a proposed shake-up of the national curriculum hailed yesterday by Tony Abbott as a "back to basics" approach to education.

The federal government's review of the national curriculum, conducted by Queensland University professor Ken Wilshire and education consultant and senior research fellow at the Australian Catholic University Kevin Donnelly, calls for "immediate and substantial action" to reduce the overcrowding of the curriculum in primary schools.

The report, released yesterday, recommends subjects be removed or "slimmed down" and students in their first three years concentrate on learning the three Rs underpinned by a focus on teaching phonics, the letter-sound relationships in English, in a systematic way.

The report criticises the lack of emphasis on "morals, values and spirituality", and calls for a "rebalancing" in the history curriculum to "better recognise the contribution of Western civilisation, our Judeo-Christian heritage, the role of economic development and industry, and the democratic underpinning of the British system of government".

"Many argue the place of religion, belief systems and values is not being addressed and there is a sizeable degree of support for the greater inclusion and emphasis of this content in the Australian curriculum," it says.

The report also calls for the dumping of "curriculum themes" that required cross-curriculum priorities of indigenous, sustainable and Asian perspectives, and general capabilities, including critical and creative thinking, ethics, personal and social, to be taught across all subjects.

Instead, it says, these topics should be embedded in subjects where appropriate to avoid "promoting a superficial checklist mentality" and "tokenistic" teaching of the issues. "Despite the considerable success in developing a

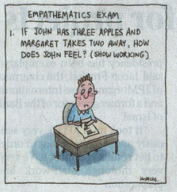


Leon Wunungmurra, Galveston Ganambarr, Delwyn Wunungmurra, Stormboy Mununggurr and Winston Yunupingu at Scots College, Sydney

### INSIDE

Despite attracting strong support from teachers, the national curriculum had become so crowded it was largely unteachable

JUSTINE FERRARI  
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The government immediately endorsed the need to reduce the content in the overcrowded curriculum, particularly in the primary years, and to embed the cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities in relevant subjects. The government also strongly

supported the criticism that the curriculum fails to adequately cater for students with special needs and learning difficulties, and the call to "rebalance" the curriculum by developing an overarching framework.

Commenting on the report yesterday, the Prime Minister said he wanted a "back to basics" school system "where we do the essentials very well".

"I want all of our young people to come out of school with the ability to read, to write, to count, to think, and I want them to know enough about Australia and the world to have a reasonable understanding of the events around them," he said.

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## Trailblazers going places

GINA RUSHTON

"IT'S a long way from home," says Year 9 student Leon Wunungmurra.

The Gapuwiak community in northeast Arnhem Land is indeed a far cry from Scots College in Sydney's exclusive Bellevue Hill, where Leon now boards with four other Yolngu boys.

Leon and his cousin Delwyn received scholarships last year from the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, which is building a \$140 million fund to enable 7000 students to attend some of Australia's leading schools and universities.



The AIEF has succeeded where many government and not-for-profit initiatives have failed. The program has a 93 per cent Year 12 retention rate. The national average is 55.1 per cent for indigenous students and 82.9 per cent for non-indigenous pupils.

The Scots boys are yet to experience homesickness but all have expressed the desire to return home with university degrees and qualifications.

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## ANZ upbeat on stimulus

**EXCLUSIVE**  
MICHAEL BENNETT

ANZ chief Mike Smith is confident a "return to normality" with the end of the US stimulus program will push cash sloshing around institutional markets into "real" economies and that businesses can withstand rising interest rates. However, he warned of lower revenue growth for banks.

FULL REPORT P19  
FINANCIAL SERVICES P23

## Split good for all: Lowy

**EXCLUSIVE**  
TURI CONDON  
PROPERTY EDITOR

FRANK Lowy believes he has been vindicated for pushing through the restructuring of the \$70 billion Westfield shopping centre empire. Mr Lowy said the split had proved a "very good move for the companies and paid off very well for shareholders".

FULL REPORT P19  
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## Doubts for retail group

**EXCLUSIVE**  
DAMON KITNEY

AUDITORS of women's fashion retailer Noni B have warned that the failure of a takeover bid from a finance house run by former Babcock & Brown senior staffers could threaten its ability to continue as a going concern. BDO said Noni B might "be unable to realise its assets and discharge its liabilities".

FULL REPORT P21

## Taught to hate News

**EXCLUSIVE**  
SHARRI MARKSON  
MEDIA EDITOR

FIRST-YEAR media students at some of the nation's leading universities are being taught the federal government media policy process is "corrupt" and that News Corp uses "naked political pressure" to the detriment of democracy and the media sector.

MEDIA P27  
MEDIA DIARY P28



## Mental health 'tied to job market'

**EXCLUSIVE**  
PATRICIA KARVELAS

THE welfare system must be dramatically reformed to get more people with mental health issues into work, the head of Tony Abbott's welfare reform group says.

Patrick McClure says mental health is intimately linked to

being "connected", and that includes being connected to the labour market.

Writing exclusively for *The Australian* today, he says the new income support payments system needs clear rewards for those with the capacity to work. The system also needs to be flexible, "responsive and able to smooth the pathway to employment".

"We also heard that some people with mental illness will

never have the capacity to work to financially sustain themselves and they should be appropriately supported," Mr McClure says.

"There is no doubt we could be doing better at supporting those with mental ill-health, and reform of our income support system should be mindful of the opportunities for those affected."

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PATRICIA MCCLURE P12

## Barnett dives, but still a chance

**NEWSPOLL**  
WA: TWO-PARTY-PREFERRED

	Age-Jun	Sep-Oct
COALITION	50	50
LABOR	50	50

**BARNETT'S PERFORMANCE**

SATISFIED	34	32
DISSATISFIED	56	56

FULL TABLES P6

**EXCLUSIVE**  
ANDREW BURRELL

AFTER six years in the job, West Australian Premier Colin Barnett's popularity has fallen to another record low but he remains a contender to lead the Coalition to a third victory at the next election.

The latest Newspoll, conducted exclusively for *The Australian*,

shows Mr Barnett is jostling with Queensland's Campbell Newman for the title of Australia's most unpopular political leader.

The poll — taken between July and last month — also shows that West Australian Labor's primary vote has jumped from a disastrous 27 per cent to 31 per cent, about the same level it recorded at the state election 18 months ago.

FULL REPORT P6

## FUTURE OF INDUSTRY

Medical, biotechnology, food processing?  
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# Trailblazers going places

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give back to their communities. Scots College appreciates how the students have enriched the school, as the flow of knowledge works both ways. Leon was joined by four day students from the school during a recent visit home.

"We took them swimming and showed them how to cut a didge, and we went fishing too," he says.

Indigenous leader Noel Pearson has questioned the reality of offering quality secondary education in remote communities, while several submissions to the recent Wilson review into indigenous education in the Northern Territory argued for students to complete their studies at boarding schools in urban centres.

AIEF founder and chief executive Andrew Penfold says there are many boarding facilities in regional and remote Australia with empty beds, but he is unable to meet the demand from indigenous families for more places in his program.

"(They) desperately want their children to go to these schools because they offer quality teaching, 100 per cent attendance,

a wide range of subject choices and three healthy meals a day," he says.

"And they offer extra tutoring and structured homework sessions in the evening ... on-site health facilities, a safe place to sleep and early nights."

Mr Penfold stressed the flow-on effect these scholarships had within communities such as Gapuwiak in transforming attitudes about education.

"The one or two kids from a community who go off to boarding school are the trailblazers and it can be a tough experience to be the first one... but what we've seen happen many times is others will follow them," he says.

"Others will see a kid in their community in a blazer and think, 'I want one of those'."

The impact has a more nuanced effect than just encouraging further scholarships, he said.

"Not all kids will or should go off to boarding school but what it does is raise aspiration and expectation ... it leaves an impression that education is something that can take you places and should be valued."