

# educationally speaking



April 2007, Edition 3

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## Welcome

It’s time for another issue of *Educationally Speaking*. It’s been a busy first quarter to the year, so this issue is coming out a few weeks later than scheduled.

Over the past few weeks, I’ve been travelling to capital cities across Australia to assist with training of Bank staff for the Commonwealth Bank Foundation’s StartSmart Schools Program – a financial literacy education program tailored for Years 9-11 students. See the Education Calendar for more information relating to the Commonwealth Bank Foundation’s StartSmart series of programs.

In this issue, I’ve decided to focus on the subject of social responsibility education. Something that I believe is quite timely in the current climate relating to the impacts of the drought in Australia and how we, as a community, can work together to reduce this problem. In particular, we hear from Sydney Water and how they’ve developed and implemented an education program including resource material for students and teachers. We also hear from a Primary School Teacher who provides her opinion of corporate-sponsored education programs.

Please feel free to give me a call or send me an email if you would like further information regarding this issue, or insight into how Education Partnerships has worked successfully to unite and develop partnerships between educators and the corporate sector to develop relevant, useful and appropriate resources for the classroom.

I look forward to your feedback from this issue!

*Heather MacDonald*  
*Director, Education Partnerships (Schools) Pty Ltd*

## Teaching Children Social responsibility through Corporate Responsibility

Social Responsibility. You may be more familiar with terms such as “human impact on the environment”, “water consumption and conservation”, “carbon emissions”, “childhood obesity and diabetes”, “reduce, reuse, recycle”. These are just some of the many topical issues facing Australian society at present.

Government initiatives are promoting education programs focusing on children being encouraged to eat more healthily, increase their exercise, and help to reduce risk of diabetes, obesity and other health issues. The corporate sector are providing resources to teach various topics such as recycling, water conservation, financial literacy education and more.

One of the most talked about issues at the moment is the widespread drought and limited water supplies available. The water usage of households and industry are under the spotlight more than ever before. It is paramount to highlight the importance of educating students about social responsibility and these topical

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issues are easily incorporated into primary and secondary school curriculums within Integrated Units, Social Studies, and Values Education.

Teaching children about social responsibility is an important part of a well-rounded education. It has become increasingly important for us as human beings to be aware that we are part of a global community and children learn to be global citizens through the messages and lessons we teach them, not only at home, but also at school.

This is a great opportunity for educators and business to create partnerships to develop and implement worthwhile strategic education programs for students focusing on the important issues that are facing our society and which can be easily incorporated into existing curriculum requirements. This is an area of expertise for Education Partnerships.

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### *A business perspective: Sydney Water - Making water education effective in schools*

Can teaching water conservation in schools produce positive behavioural change and if so, what makes an effective water education program?



Sydney Water's education programs and resources have evolved since tours began at Warragamba Dam in the 1970s. A range of programs have been developed, including tours of our facilities, Streamwatch water quality monitoring, and water conservation in schools. The programs aim to develop knowledge, skills, values, and life long behaviours, while achieving water sustainability, reducing demand and waste, and protecting water quality. Education resources are usually linked to the curriculum, target different age groups, and use a variety of media.

Sydney Water looks to its 1,550 schools as business customers, a target for education programs, and as partners in educating the community.

Recognising the important role schools play in long term water sustainability, Sydney Water developed an education strategy for schools in 2006 in consultation with the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). This new approach to water education will:

- take a holistic approach to education, which values water and develops sustainable lifestyle choices and behaviours;
- integrate behavioural change programs with water efficiency, while considering school infrastructure management;
- foster long-term learning and develop resources which consider teaching trends, child learning, and relevant research;
- continue to work in partnership with the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office, independent schools, professional teacher associations, and the NSW Board of Studies on curriculum development; and
- routinely monitor and evaluate the program by seeking feedback from schools on its use of educational resources and student engagement so opportunities for improvement can be identified.



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These approaches are not revolutionary. They are, however, a shift from the common practice of awareness raising fact sheets and resource kits, one-off guest presentations to a single class within a school, and responding individually to teacher and student enquiries.

Successful water education in schools will help ensure Sydney's future water supply. It requires investment across a range of strategies, is a long-term and evolving process, and requires effective working partnerships.

For more information on Sydney Water's education programs and resources visit [www.sydneywater.com.au](http://www.sydneywater.com.au)

Kylie Yeend, Community Education Manager  
Sydney Water

### ***An Educator's Perspective: Teaching social responsibility in the Primary classroom***

As a teacher, I have found that Integrated Units on concepts such as recycling, water conservation, the environment and cultural diversity have become important components of planning a balanced curriculum.

It can be difficult to source appropriate educational resources that are both cost effective and up-to-date, and it is becoming more popular for these materials to be provided through support from the corporate sector. I found this recently when I was sourcing material to teach my students about the recycling industry.

Corporate-sponsored education initiatives give teachers and schools the opportunity to access a range of free education materials; however, I believe it is also important for teachers to exercise caution when deciding to use an education program developed by a particular company.

Though such initiatives often contain a wealth of information, as a teacher, we must be aware of bias and teach our students to discriminate between what is fact and what is simply advertising. Teachers need to wade through the often large amount of material to find exactly what is appropriate for students.

Before deciding to use such resources, I ensure that I research the company and the education program/material to ensure that it has been developed in consultation with the relevant educators and/or education authorities and, most importantly, that the material will be easily adaptable or appropriate for the curriculum and my students.

Sourcing educational materials to teach children about social responsibility can be a challenge for teachers as there is always a good deal of information on the Internet and elsewhere to sift through before you find something that is appropriate.

In my experience, corporate-sponsored materials are a great starting point which I then use to tailor relevant units to suit my students' prior experiences, ability and interests.

Fiona Connan, Year 2 Teacher  
Strathcona Baptist Girls' Grammar School, Victoria

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## Education Calendar

<b>April 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 14-22 – National Youth Week <a href="http://www.youthweek.com/">http://www.youthweek.com/</a></li><li>■ 16-17 – Term 2 commences: NT, QLD, VIC</li><li>■ 23 – World Book &amp; Copyright Day (UNESCO) <a href="http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5125&amp;URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&amp;URL_SECTION=201.html">http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5125&amp;URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&amp;URL_SECTION=201.html</a></li><li>■ 23 – Term 2 commences: NSW, WA</li><li>■ 25 – ANZAC Day</li><li>■ 30 – Term 2 commences: ACT, SA</li><li>■ Commonwealth Bank Foundation StartSmart Workshops – Wodonga, Wangaratta <a href="http://www.startsmart.com.au">http://www.startsmart.com.au</a></li></ul>
<b>May 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 20-26 – National Archaeology Week <a href="http://www.archaeologyweek.com">http://www.archaeologyweek.com</a></li><li>■ 13-19 – National Families Week <a href="http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek">http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek</a></li><li>■ 15-21 – National Volunteers Week <a href="http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org">http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org</a></li><li>■ 21-27 – Library &amp; Information Week <a href="http://www.alia.org.au">http://www.alia.org.au</a></li><li>■ Commonwealth Bank Foundation StartSmart Workshops – Bendigo, Launceston; and StartSmart Forums – Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne <a href="http://www.startsmart.com.au">http://www.startsmart.com.au</a></li></ul>
<b>June 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1 – Term 2 ends: TAS</li><li>■ 4-10 – National Career Development Week <a href="http://www.nationalcareerdevelopmentweek.com.au">http://www.nationalcareerdevelopmentweek.com.au</a></li><li>■ 20 – World Refugee Day <a href="http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/refugee/">http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/refugee/</a></li><li>■ 22 – Term 2 ends: NT, QLD</li><li>■ 29 – Term 2 ends: NSW, VIC</li><li>■ Commonwealth Bank Foundation StartSmart Workshops – Victor Harbor, Nuriootpa, Geelong, Broken Hill, Mildura; and StartSmart Forums – Canberra, Darwin, Hobart <a href="http://www.startsmart.com.au">http://www.startsmart.com.au</a></li></ul>

## Enquiries

To contact Education Partnerships by email, [click here](#). Alternatively you can phone Heather on 0427 008 827, or mail Education Partnerships, PO Box 307, Redlynch QLD 4870.

[www.educationpartnerships.com.au](http://www.educationpartnerships.com.au)