

EDITORIAL

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd hopes his national performance partnerships with the states and territories will enable the ‘biggest school reform agenda in history,’ but expects there’ll be some ‘argy bargy.’ The PM wants to recruit and retain the best teachers; assess and report on students and schools; and use national data to target funding to underachieving schools – plus give school principals autonomy over staffing. The PM’s agenda, like the agenda of the previous Howard government, takes the Commonwealth and state and territory governments back to a familiar states-rights battleground. Why have the battlelines remained the same, despite a change of Commonwealth government? Because there’s been a gradual transfer of state powers to the Commonwealth government since 1901, which goes back to Sections 90 and 96 of the Australian Constitution and the Commonwealth’s power to levy taxes and ‘grant financial assistance’ to the states, a power that has enabled successive Commonwealth governments to dictate policy through conditional grants and has limited the capacity of the states to control policy. That might explain why the PM, speaking on ABC TV’s *7:30 Report* in August, said ‘any state or territory concerned about whether they are going to have enough money in the system long-term to deal with...education challenges will have to have a very good excuse to turn their back on the national performance partnerships.’ It all comes back to taxation – a little word for a big power. **T**

Popular Science

We hope you enjoy the complimentary copy of *Popular Science* enclosed with this print edition of *Teacher*, and trust you’ll find it a useful and valuable resource.

FAST FACTS

Government expenditure on schools calculated as recurrent costs including notional user cost of capital for the 2006-07 financial year for New South Wales: \$8,694,090,000.
 For Victoria: \$5,758,722,000.
 For Queensland: \$5,569,633,000.
 For South Australia: \$1,969,328,000.
 For Western Australia: \$3,239,579,000.
 For Tasmania: \$715,098,000.
 For the Northern Territory: \$493,847,000.
 For the Australian Capital Territory: \$483,359,000.
 For Australia: \$26,923,656,000.
 Recurrent per capita expenditure for NSW: \$11,756.
 For Victoria: \$10,716.
 For Queensland: \$11,881.
 For SA: \$11,802.
 For WA: \$14,053.
 For Tasmania: \$11,835.
 For the NT: \$16,971.
 For the ACT: \$13,860.
 For Australia: \$11,874.

Source: MCEETYA. (2007). *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2007*.

QUICK QUIZ

1. Gesture plays a pivotal role in creating zones of proximal development that help people to learn a task and help them to retain that learning: true or false?
2. David Loader cherishes his notebook computer and takes it with him as a personal aide, but does he take his notebook computer to bed?
3. Which school do or did roughly 10 per cent of Australia’s Olympians attend?
4. Why did Veronica Fraraccio put hula hoops on her classroom floor?
5. Why is Betty Churcher cross with her great, great grandfather?
6. Can an employment contract that is not formally written down on paper still be enforceable?
7. Does Bart Halford have any Australian teachers working at his school, Al Sadiq College, an Islamic school in Sydney’s western suburbs?
8. What is 21CLI?
9. When was Google’s birthday?
10. How old is Google?

Answers: 1. true, according to Jane Orton, in ‘Talk with the hand’; 2. no, not yet, anyway; 3. Lake Giminderra in Canberra; 4. to help her Years 1 and 2 students learn about Venn diagrams; 5. because she sold a block of land in Bourke Street, Melbourne, for £35; 6. look, this was a quick quiz question last month and the answer is still yes; 7. yes, all the teachers are Australian; 8. the 21st Century Learning Institute in Redwood Shores, California; 9. 27 September, maybe; 10. 10, or 12, or maybe 11.

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