

**EDITORIAL**

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd wants a national curriculum to raise standards and improve retention, a major step in his promised education revolution to make Australia ‘the best educated country, the most skilled economy and the best trained workforce in the world,’ as he put it in January last year in an address to the Melbourne Education Research Institute. When the PM appointed Professor Barry McGaw as the head of the new National Curriculum Board in late January he described the task of developing a national curriculum as formidable. ‘I’m being entirely upfront with you about how complex I think it’s going to be,’ he said. ‘The objective we’ve set is for a national curriculum in the four key subject areas of English, History, Maths, Science to be delivered...by early 2011.’ Talk of a national curriculum goes back at least to the 1989 Hobart Declaration. When Julie Bishop, the previous Minister for Education, called for ‘a common model curriculum across the country’ in a speech to the History Teachers Association of Australia in 2006 she met some resistance. Rudd’s appointment of Professor McGaw may sidestep that. Professor McGaw has a background in curriculum and assessment, was a former director of Education for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and was the former chief executive of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Bishop commissioned ACER in May 2006 to examine the existing Year 12 curriculum across Australia to assess the feasibility of a consistent national model. That report found plenty of common ground across the states and territories. According to ACER chief executive Professor Geoff Masters, Professor McGaw is the right person for the task. **1**

**FAST FACTS**

- The percentage of Australian school principals who ‘love’ or ‘like’ the role of principalship: 86 per cent.
- Percentage who have a positive view of their performance: 80 per cent.
- Percentage who define themselves as perfectionists: 70 per cent.
- Percentage who feel that they are coping in the role: 44 per cent.
- Percentage who are working in an executive team where ‘a few’ or ‘very few or none’ are experienced: 14 per cent.
- Percentage who have a medically diagnosed illness which they attribute to, or believe has been exacerbated by, their work: 31 per cent.
- Percentage who are running a school in which the enrolment is not stable: 60 per cent.
- Percentage who are running a school in which the enrolment is declining: 23 per cent.

*Source: The Best Job in the World, With Some of the Worst Days Imaginable: 2007 school leader welfare survey by the Australian Secondary Principals Association, Australian Heads of Independent Schools Association and Catholic Secondary Principals Australia.*

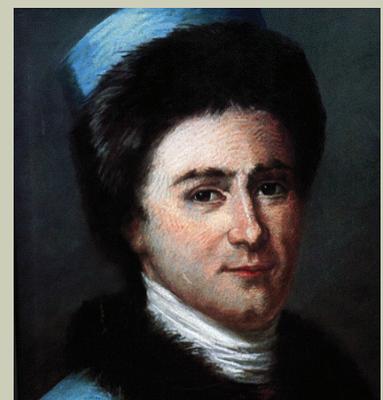
**QUICK QUIZ**

1. Who said, ‘I’m sure the majority of Camden residents will welcome additional educational facilities in our area as they welcomed all other schools in rural areas,’ on hearing that the Quranic Society wanted to build Camden College in Sydney’s outer west?
2. Was he right?
3. Does Coca-Cola University really exist?
4. Why was Sarika Singh prevented from attending classes at Aberdare Girls’ School in the United Kingdom?
5. What percentage of educators have been bullied at work?
6. What’s the fundamental rite of passage in Australia?
7. Why does water boil when you pull the plunger on a syringe?
8. How many verses are there in ‘Advance Australia Fair’?
9. How many years did Elizabeth Cook actually live with her husband, James Cook?
10. What was English teacher Kaleb Tierce’s terrible mistake?

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given us by education.*

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU,  
1712-1778, PHILOSOPHER AND  
COMPOSER



Answers: 1. NSW Labor parliamentarian Geoff Corrigan; 2. not exactly; 3. Yes, check out [http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/careers/benefits\\_rewards.html](http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/careers/benefits_rewards.html); 4. she was wearing a kara, worn by Sikhs as a reminder to do good – and, yes, she was at Aberdare, not Aberdein, Girls’ School; 5. 90 per cent; 6. getting your driver’s licence; 7. because tap water has air dissolved in it and because the decreased pressure on the water turns the liquid to water vapour; 8. five; 9. four; 10. he distributed recommended reading list that included Cormac McCarthy’s *Child of God* to Year 9 students.