

- **Tasmanian Vacations Schools For Gifted and Talented Students:**
  - **Years 3-8**
- **A Discussion Paper: a Proposal and Some Reflection**

- **Dr Grant Rodwell**
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- **Whither Australian Vacation Schools for Children with Special Gifts and Talents?**
- **Australia has a history of vacation schools for children with special gifts and talents.**

- **The Report of the Senate Select Committee on The Education of Gifted & Talented Children: A Ten Year Report Card**

(John Geake 1999)

- **Recommendation 9:** *The Committee recommends that the Government expand its financial support for the various schools, seminars and workshops designed to enhance the skills of gifted and talented children.*

- **‘Whereas, there has been an expansion in the number and variety of vacation schools, seminars and workshops for gifted and talented children, government support is noticeable only by its absence.’**

- **Most universities run gifted camps or workshops, e.g.:**
  - **the Enrichment Studies Weekend at Charles Sturt University, now up to its 54th session (1999)**
  - **the *Scientia Challenge Program*, UNSW, which has been running since 1990, (Years 7-10)**
  - ***Minds for the Millenium* program at the University of Melbourne.**

- **Dharra Vacation School (NTU)  
Charles Darwin University**
- **Hunter Vacation School University  
of Newcastle**



# **Tasmania's History of the Provisions for Gifted and Talented Students**

**There never has been a state-  
wide or regional arrangement  
for vacation schools for  
primary/secondary students.**

**Why?**

**A Proposal!**

# **Vacation Workshops for Children with Special Interests and Needs**

**Students from grades 4-8**

- **Website established**
- **Schools are emailed**

- **Nomination**

- **Students**
- **Parents**
- **Schools**

**Run in each Tasmanian region  
annually by the:**

- **Faculty of Education, in conjunction  
with:**

- **Tasmanian Department of Education**

- **CEO Tasmania**

- **Tasmanian Association of  
Independent Schools**

- **Tasmanian Association for Gifted  
and Talented Children.**

**The vacation school would offer workshops on a variety of topics and would provide the opportunity for students to participate in extension/enrichment activities to further develop their special interests, gifts and talents.**

**The program would be designed within a hands-on workshop situation.**

**Children would work with one or two workshop leaders in a single workshop for a two-day period.**



**The workshop leaders are school teachers, university staff, or experts in their chosen field from the community.**

**All have a special interest in gifted and talented education.**

## **Organisation:**

- **15 students in each workshop**
- **duration = two days (includes opening and closing/presentation ceremonies: 2 ½ hours)**
- **students enrol in one workshop for a two-day period during one school vacation each year**

**workshops to include such experiences as:**

**music and creative arts, visual arts, electronics, chemistry, dance, drama, photography, cooking, design, computers, mathematics, biology/zoology**

- usually a total of 15-20 workshops depending on availability of workshop leaders/mentors
- workshop leaders/mentors are invited from the community, schools, colleges and the university

- **one or two 400 level students from the faculty act as assistants**

**These people are not simply helpers!  
They are a means of ensuring the  
continuation of the vacation  
workshops.**

- **workshop leaders/mentors are remunerated at relief teaching daily rates**
- **all workshops have risk assessments done, and must comply with the university's OH&S policies**

**Because the students are on the university campus for the two days, effectively they are university students and are covered by the normal university insurance.**

**Typically, the vacation school would run at Hobart, Launceston, Burnie once each year over the three school vacation periods, ie., say, Hobart (January) Launceston (May) Burnie (September).**



**There would be an organising committee, with one or two people doing the day-to-day administration and reporting back to a regional steering.**

**The regional steering committee  
would comprise members from all  
stakeholders.**

**All costs are covered and any remaining monies are given over to a central (annually audited) fund. All receipting and accounting are done through a dedicated faculty account.**

**Depending on decisions from the regional steering committees, funds would be made available to provide cost-free entry for some children, on the recommendation of schools.**

***Inter alia*, the benefits of the vacation school for all stakeholders include:**

- a huge amount of goodwill amongst the community and schools;**
- a focal point for undergraduate and postgraduate studies;**

- **the stakeholders are seen as being proactive in building close linkages with the community and schools;**
- **much positive media coverage;**

- **a statement that the stakeholders are being proactive in developing educational programs for children with special interests and needs; and**

- **establishes a mind-set in younger students of an expectation about the availability of university studies in later life.**
- **of particular benefit to older students who come into university via the various pathways routes.**



**Do you wish to assist in the  
establishment of Tasmanian  
vacation schools for gifted and  
talented children?**

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