

MEDIA RELEASE

Identifying what works: research and practice to improve educational quality and equity

Research Conference 2014

1 August 2014: Results from international student surveys such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reveal that some countries are improving both quality and equity in education, and point to the critical need to identify practices that improve both quality and equity in Australia, delegates to a conference in Adelaide next week will hear.

Researchers and practitioners will come together at the annual research conference of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which opens on Sunday 3 August, to address the theme, *Quality and Equity: What does research tell us?*

In conversation from 4.30 to 5.30pm (ACST) on Sunday, ACER chief executive, Professor Geoff Masters AO, and The Hon Julia Gillard, Board Chair of the Global Partnership for Education and former Prime Minister of Australia, will explore the key challenges in achieving educational quality for all in Australia and globally.

Commonwealth Minister for Education The Hon Christopher Pyne will open the conference on Monday 4 August.

Research Conference 2014 will consider research showing the impact of quality education in the early years on later schooling, school attendance and students' ability to self-regulate their learning, as well as the effects of good quality teaching and cooperative learning.

The conference will also address the impacts of gender, rurality and regionality on quality and equity, particularly for Aboriginal and Māori students.

Speaking ahead of the conference, Professor Masters said the key to addressing issues of quality and equity lies not in macro reform but in micro change at the level of interaction between teacher and student.

“Many education systems internationally have attempted to improve quality and equity through incentives such as financial rewards for improvement, threats of sanctions and increased intervention if schools do not improve, performance pay tied to student test results, and the creation of increased competition between schools. The research suggests that macro strategies of these kinds are largely ineffective,” Professor Masters said.

“Instead, the evidence indicates that the crucial steps to improving quality and equity in education are to enhance the quality of teaching and leadership, create professional learning cultures in schools, and promote practices in schools that research shows improve student outcomes.”

Keynote speakers at *Research Conference 2014* include Professor Petra Stanat, Institute for Educational Quality Improvement at Humboldt University of Berlin, and Dr Sally Brinkman, Telethon Kids Institute, with a plenary panel addressing Indigeneity and rurality involving Dr I Gusti Ngurah Darmawan and Professor Lester-Irabinna Rigney, Adelaide University.

Research Conference 2014 takes place in Adelaide from 3 to 5 August.

Further information is available from www.acer.edu.au/rc

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