

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Board's website celebrates 10 years service

The Board of Studies website will this month mark ten years of public service. Over the last decade, the multiple award-winning website has continuously provided millions of teachers, students and parents in Australia and throughout the world with leading-edge, high-quality education resources.

Since its establishment on 10 September 1995, the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au has grown from an initial 1000 page-views a day in the months following its opening, to now being one of Australia's most popular government websites. The website currently manages a staggering 80 000 page-views a day from schools and individuals in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Canada, UK and the United States alone.

In recent years, traffic to the website has been increasing at a substantial rate. In 2003 an average of 83 people used the Board's website in any given hour, taken over a 24-hour period. In 2004, this rose to 140 people each hour. This year, between 180 and 200 people at any given hour use the Board's website.

In fact, Australia's top web traffic ranking organisation, Hitwise.com.au, have recorded the Board of Studies website's highest-ever ranking as the 35th busiest Australian website out of an estimated total of 39,600,000 Australian websites. In the category of NSW Government websites, however, we regularly rank in the top three websites and have on many occasions ranked first.

A decade ago it was hard to imagine that the Board's website would assist schools and students to the extent that

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- 1995** Board website launched.
- 1996** The site reaches 1000 page-views a day.
- 1997** First use of Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) phone for delivery of HSC results.
- 1998** First delivery of HSC results via the internet
- 1999** *Schools Online* launched. More than 4000 principals and teachers are registered users of the system.
- 2001** Educational website *Visit Gallipoli*, created in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Veterans Affairs, wins 'Best Educational Website' award from Australian Publishers Association.

Educational website *Teaching Heritage*, created in partnership with the Heritage Office of NSW, shortlisted for 'Best Educational Website' award from Australian Publishers Association.
- 2003** *Students Online* launched.

Shop Online opened to enable online ordering and purchase of Board documents and products.

HSC and SC multiple-choice self-testing service launched. To date, more than 1.25 million tests have been delivered.

Board online services win the NSW Premier's eGovernment Gold Award.

During October, the Board website achieves a peak of 1 million page-views a week for the first time.
- 2004** Board wins the Premier's eGovernment Gold Award for delivery of HSC results by SMS.

96.5% of all HSC students using *Students Online*.
- 2005** Assessment Resource Centre established. Currently being trialled for public release.

RANGS (Registration and Accreditation of Non-government Schools) online service established. Currently being trialled for public release.

Educational website *Making Multicultural Australia* for the 21st century, created in partnership with the Department of Education and Training, wins 'Best Educational Website' award from Australian Publishers Association.

Educational website *Australia's War 1939-1945* created in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Veterans Affairs, shortlisted for 'Best Educational Website' award from Australian Publishers Association.

Year 10 Computing Skills Test student self-trial service opened. To date, more than 4000 tests have been delivered.

Important Dates

Year 10 (SC)

- 10 Oct** Schools Online grade collection service opens
Schools Online Profile Sheet collection for Special Programs of Study opens
Dispatch Illness/Misadventure forms
- 12 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of intention to issue an 'N' determination
- 17 Oct** Latest date for student appeals against 'N' determinations to be lodged with the principal
- 21 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of outcome of school review of 'N' determinations
- 26 Oct** Latest date for principals to submit 'N' determination appeal forms with related documentation where appeal declined and Board review requested
- 2 Nov** Final date for submission of grades
Final date for submission of Profile Sheets for Special Programs of Study
- 7–8 Nov** SC TESTS
- 7 Nov** School Certificate English-literacy and Science tests
- 8 Nov** School Certificate Mathematics and Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship tests
- 9, 10, 11 & 14 Nov** Optional Online Computing Skills Test
- 11 Nov** Latest date for students to submit Illness/Misadventure appeals to principals

Year 11

- 12 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of intention to issue an 'N' determination
- 17 Oct** Latest date for student appeals against 'N' determinations to be lodged with the principal
- 21 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of outcome of school review of 'N' determinations
- 26 Oct** Latest date for principals to submit 'N' determination appeal forms with related documentation where appeal declined and Board review requested

Year 12 (HSC)

- 24 Oct** HSC Visual Arts itinerant marking commences
- 4 Nov** Final date for submission of VET course competencies achieved and work placement hours
- 11 Nov** Assessment Ranks are available to schools via Schools Online and to students via Students Online
Latest date for submission of HSC Illness/Misadventure appeals
- 15 Nov** Latest date for assessment ranking reviews/appeals to be lodged with principal
- 18 Nov** Latest date for schools to conduct assessment ranking reviews

Board's website celebrates 10 years service

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it does now. Students and teachers in particular now use the Board's website as 'a one-stop shop' for a range of educational resources. It is Australia's biggest education-based website with over 12 000 pages of information now available for viewing, and about 16 000 individual Acrobat (PDF) documents for viewing or downloading.

The busiest time of year for the Board's website is the lead-up to the Higher School Certificate examination period. Students preparing for the HSC examinations use the website to download calendars of important dates, check and print out HSC examination timetables, download or view the most recent syllabuses, past examination papers and HSC Examiners' reports on student performance in past HSC examination papers.

Since 1988 students have been able to access their HSC results via the website from 6 am on the day results are released.

Apart from the large range of HSC resources, the Board's website also caters for the thousands of Years 7–10 and School Certificate students and teachers by providing access to the latest Years 7–10 syllabuses, past School Certificate test papers and teaching support materials.

One of the most successful and popular additions to the website in recent years has been the Online Multiple-choice Self-testing Facility at www4.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au.

This site allows students (and interested members of the public!) to test themselves with multiple-choice questions from previous years' HSC examinations and School Certificate tests. Students

have the option of choosing tests from 29 HSC subjects as well as each School Certificate test.

Students can nominate the number of questions they want to attempt, and they can also build a test by selecting questions from HSC examinations over a number of years. For example, a student could elect to do a 15-question test using the 2002 and 2003 examinations in a chosen subject as a source. On the busiest day last year – the day before the School Certificate tests began – students were testing themselves (either starting or completing tests) at a rate of 100 tests every minute for eight consecutive hours. Last month, the one-millionth online test was taken; at the time of publication, this figure had reached 1.25 million online tests.

Another significant improvement came in 2001 when the board launched a dedicated website for Primary school teachers and parents at www.bosnsw-k6.nsw.edu.au. This website separated the K–6 materials from the wide array of School Certificate and Higher School Certificate documents on the Board's website.

Over the last few years, the K–6 website has generated its own online prominence with traffic increasing steadily. During May this year, again according to Hitwise.com.au, it was ranked 13th out of all NSW government websites, recording nearly 11 000 pages viewed per day by an average 32 visitors per hour.

Since 1995, the Office has added many new online services to the main website to assist principals, teachers, students and parents, including an online shop at <http://shop.bos.nsw.edu.au> where all of the Board's products can be

purchased, including CD-ROMs, HSC and School Certificate Standards Packages and a large range of publications. In 1998, a complete HSC and School Certificate statistics archive was added at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/ebos/static/ebos_stats.htm

The archive – popular among researchers and journalists – contains examination performance statistics dating back to 1991, enrolment statistics of current and past HSC courses and *HSC Media Guides*.

The Board's website also contains a comprehensive database of schools and their contact details. This database lists most of the

schools in New South Wales and was designed to make it easier for teachers and students to contact schools and view their websites. As an additional service, we have included many contact details for schools in all other Australian states and in New Zealand.

The Board of Studies website continues to be a leader in providing the latest online education services for teachers, parents and students. We are pleased to have reached the milestone of 'Ten years of public service' and our goal is to continue to expand our high quality online facilities in the coming years.

The Australian Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing were presented at the Hilton-on-the-Park in Melbourne on Friday 5 August 2005.

The awards are sponsored by the Australian Publishing Association and *The Australian* newspaper. Entries are judged for clarity of writing, pedagogical implications, illustrations, special features and characteristics, quality of subject matter, innovation and flair.

From nearly 300 submissions, a short list of 75 was selected and the winners in the 16 award categories were announced at the ceremony.

An educational website developed by the Office of the Board of Studies, titled *Making Multicultural Australia in the 21st Century*, won the 'Best Secondary Educational Website' category, beating another short-listed site (also developed by the Office of the Board of Studies) titled *Australia's War 1939–1945*, two Film Australia sites and an ABC educational site. The *Making Multicultural Australia in the 21st Century* website was developed in partnership with the Department of Education and Training's Multicultural Programs Unit. Both sites can be accessed via the Board of Studies website.

Lyndon Sharp, Manager of Information Services at the Office of the Board of Studies and Hanya Stefaniuk, Head of the DET's Multicultural Programs Unit (which funded the development of the website) accepted the award together on behalf of the Office of the Board of Studies and DET.

President's Message

The celebration of a decade of the Board's website provides an occasion to reflect on how quickly our use of electronic communication has grown and impacted on our work. The statistics speak for themselves and show how significantly usage has expanded. We are fortunate to have a very dedicated and talented team who for many years has produced award-winning material and services. Already they are preparing for future opportunities to make our communication and support to teachers and students even more effective. They deserve our congratulations on winning yet another award.

This year has been one in which the primary curriculum of the Board has been a major focus of professional discussion and work. The NSW syllabuses are widely regarded for their rich content but inevitably any overview of how they are used will bring forth a range of views. What has been encouraging is the very professional manner in which people have engaged in the discussion about the most effective way of responding to the recommendations of the Eltis Review. The Board's response to Eltis has drawn on teachers' extensive experience with our syllabus documents so that the recommendations about manageability and flexibility in programming will ensure that the needs of all students are met.

The views of end-users including employers have influenced the changes to reporting proposed for the School Certificate in 2006. Standards-referenced reporting was pioneered with the School Certificate and experience gained with the external SC tests was invaluable in the development of the Board's judging process for standards setting which has been applied to the HSC since 2001. However, reporting the SC tests with separate sheets for each of the tests, as is done for each subject in the HSC, has overemphasised their importance relative to school assessment which is the major focus for the SC. The decision to list test results with the subject grades on one record of achievement will make for a more balanced reporting of results.



(Professor) Gordon Stanley

Key developments on K-6 Curriculum

The Board of Studies has now agreed on broad directions for making the K-6 Curriculum more manageable for Primary school teachers. The decision affirms the professional judgement of the large numbers of NSW Primary school principals, teachers and key education groups who responded to the Board's statewide consultation process around improving manageability of the K-6 curriculum.

In order to assist Primary teachers to better manage curriculum demands, the central focus of programming, assessing and reporting will be shifted away from the 316 syllabus outcomes and on to six broad statements of essential learning – one statement for each key learning area (KLA). The new statements – drawn from the original stage statements – will encompass at a level broader than syllabus outcomes the key knowledge, skills and understanding in the K-6 curriculum and so describe the standards of student achievement in each stage of learning. Student achievement can be assessed and reported in terms of

the new statements of learning and Primary teachers will not need to formally assess, record or report on individual syllabus outcomes.

There will be greater certainty and assurance about the essential knowledge and skills to be developed, but teachers will have the flexibility to select the syllabus outcomes most suited to the needs of their students. Primary teachers will now have the certainty they have been asking for in relation to the questions 'What do I teach?' and 'How do I balance the different subjects?' Schools will also be provided with suggested weekly time allocations for each KLA, giving teachers broad guidance about what is a reasonable balance of time to allocate across the curriculum.

Schools will receive comprehensive information during Term 4. For more information please contact Margaret Malone, Inspector, Primary Education on (02) 9367 8199 or malone@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Stage 6 Mathematics review

As an interim arrangement for the introductory years of the new Higher School Certificate, the Board of Studies maintained the course content, internal assessment arrangements and examination specifications of the 2, 3 and 4 unit Mathematics courses from the previous HSC.

The new HSC standards-referencing procedures that were introduced for all new HSC Board Developed courses were also put in place for these Mathematics courses, which were renamed *Mathematics*, *Mathematics Extension 1* and *Mathematics Extension 2* respectively. The Board also agreed to undertake a longer-term, comprehensive review of the three courses.

In response to the NSW Government's announcement of the review of Years 7-10 Mathematics in 2000, the review and development of K-10 Mathematics became the focus of mathematics curriculum development in the period 2000-2002.

Following completion of the new K-6 and Years 7-10

Mathematics syllabuses, a plan was established for the review of Stage 6 Mathematics courses. The plan recognised the importance of teachers having appropriate time to focus on the implementation of the new *Mathematics Years 7-10 Syllabus* and the value of obtaining their feedback on implementation of the new syllabus. The Board also felt that it would be necessary to review the full Stage 6 Mathematics provision, taking account of the needs of less able students as well as those who would undertake the higher-level calculus-based courses.

The Board has decided that the first phase of the review and development of Stage 6 Mathematics courses will commence in the latter part of 2005. The purpose of this first phase will be to review the existing Mathematics syllabus provision and to establish a plan for revision or development.

On completion of this first phase, feedback will be presented to the Board for further consideration and finalisation of the timeline.

Support for the 2005 Year 10 trial Computing Skills test

The Office of the Board of Studies is providing a range of support services to schools taking part in this year's trial Computing Skills test for Year 10 students, which is being offered only online this year. As in 2004, the trial test will be offered using a flexible delivery approach over a four-day period, from Wednesday 9 November to Monday 14 November. Schools will be able to choose the time and the day during this period to have their students sit the test, or have different groups sit the test on different days.

Teachers from participating schools have been invited to attend workshops at regional venues across the state that have been organised to run during September and October. These workshops are designed to provide teachers with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the test management tools available in *Schools Online*, and with the procedures for downloading the computer diagnostic tool and the actual trial test. The workshops also enable teachers to share experiences and expertise with teachers from nearby schools that are also taking part in the trial.

Further information about the workshops, as well as general information about the trial, is available on the Trial Computing Skills Updates page on the Board's website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc/computing_skills_assessment.html

Participating schools can go to *Schools Online* to find everything they need in order to administer the test to their Year 10 students. Principals are able to grant access rights to *Schools Online* for any teachers at their school who will be involved with the organisation and administration of the test.

Students who wish to practise questions similar to those they will encounter in the trial test can follow the link on the home page of the Board's website and test themselves with questions from past trial tests.

Test management tools have been developed to assist schools in running the trial test. Prior to the test, schools can allocate their students to groups and generate attendance lists. They can print information sheets for students, which include the students' identification numbers that they will need to log on to the test. During the test, supervising teachers will be able to go to *Schools Online* and monitor the progress of their students as they log on, work through the test, and submit their responses to the Board's computer.

Schools taking part in the trial are able to download a computer diagnostic tool, and use it to ensure that all the computers they plan to use will be able to successfully run the test application. Students who wish to practise questions similar to those they will encounter in the trial test can follow the link on the home page of the Board's website and test themselves with questions from past trial tests.

From the beginning of Term 4, further information and materials will become available to participating schools through *Schools Online*. There will be an information package that outlines what should be done in preparation for the online test. The information package will give simple step-by-step instructions for downloading and installing the test, and provide answers to frequently asked questions. Schools are also encouraged to download and install the practice test. This operates the same way as the actual test, so schools can rehearse the installation and administration of the test, including giving their students the experience of taking a test online, which may be new to them.

Schools requiring help with technical issues associated with downloading and running the online test can seek help by email at csthelph@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au or by phone on (02) 9367 8408 or 0407 264 666.

HSC 2 unit Aboriginal Studies

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do students have to be Aboriginal to study this course?

No. This course is for all students. It concentrates on social and political issues that affect all Australians. It does not require in-depth studies of cultural issues.

How does Aboriginal Studies assist with post-school options?

Aboriginal Studies covers many topics that relate to courses at tertiary institutions and to a range of areas of employment. Project work is particularly good preparation for the types of tasks required in many university courses.

How is Aboriginal Studies scaled for the Universities Admission Index (UAI)?

As a category A subject, Aboriginal Studies is treated the same way as all other HSC courses. A high performance in the course is likely to positively contribute to a student's UAI.

Is the course hard?

Aboriginal Studies is similar to other 2 Unit subjects and is designed to make students think and come up with their own ideas about Australian society today. It gives students lots of skills whether they proceed directly to work or continue to study after school.

How does this subject fit in with other courses?

The contemporary social and political issues analysed and discussed in Aboriginal Studies complement areas of study in other HSC courses such as Standard and Advanced English, Legal Studies, Studies of Religion, Geography, Society and Culture, Visual Arts and Community and Family Studies.

School Certificate reporting from 2006

At its May 2005 meeting, the Board of Studies decided that from 2006 there would be some modifications of School Certificate credentials to coincide with the first cohort of students studying the revised Years 7–10 syllabuses. The modifications are aimed at providing clear and simple information to students, parents and the wider community concerning the full scope of each student's achievements.

As is currently the case, students will receive a Record of Achievement each year in which a result is recorded in any Stage 5 course, and a School Certificate testamur when they meet the requirements for the School Certificate. However, the Record of Achievement will be a single document that reports the student's grades in all Board Developed and Board Endorsed Stage 5 courses, as well as the results achieved by the student in the School Certificate tests. Currently, a student's grades and test results are reported on separate documents. A statement concerning eligibility for the award of the School Certificate will also appear on the Record of Achievement. The mandatory study requirements will be recorded as 'Completed'.

Teachers will follow the approach they use to determine the school-based grades for each student in each 100-hour or 200-hour course completed in Stage 5. They will use the Course Performance Descriptors that have been developed for each course to allocate one of five grades: A, B, C, D or E. (In Mathematics, one of nine grades will be awarded: A10, A9, B8, B7, C6, C5, D4, D3 or E2.) The text on the reverse side of the Record of Achievement will describe in general terms the level of student performance at each of the grades.

Students' results in the School Certificate tests in English-literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship will continue to be reported as a mark and a corresponding performance band. Individual Test Reports will no longer be issued. However, information explaining the reporting of the School Certificate tests will be provided on the reverse of the Record of Achievement, and a general test report for each test will be available on the Board's website. The reporting arrangements for the Computing Skills test are yet to be finally determined.

Where students are undertaking one or more Life Skills courses, results in these courses in each key learning area (KLA) will be reported as 'Completed' on the Record of Achievement. Schools are able to exercise flexibility in catering for students with special education needs. Where there are multiple subjects within a KLA, the course developed for a student may either be taken from a single syllabus or, alternatively, may consist of a combination of appropriate Life Skills outcomes and content drawn from several syllabuses. To report more completely the achievements of those students who have undertaken Life Skills courses, they will also be given a Profile of Student Achievement that lists the specific outcomes from each syllabus that they have achieved.

designTECH

An exhibition of outstanding Major Design Projects from Higher School Certificate Design and Technology students.

3 December 2005 to 12 March 2006

Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris Street, Ultimo

School excursion groups visiting the exhibition at the Museum need to book in advance Tel: (02) 9217 0222 or email edserv@phm.gov.au

Design and Technology Student Seminars

• Year 12: 20–24 February 2006 • Year 11: 28 February–3 March 2006

For seminar information and booking forms visit the Board of Studies website: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/exhibitions/index.html



ENCORE

A selection of outstanding performances and compositions by 2005 Higher School Certificate music students. Presented by the Board of Studies NSW and the NSW Department of Education and Training.

**Concert Hall
Sydney Opera House
27 March 2006
Matinee 1.30 pm,
Evening 7.30 pm**

Adults: \$26.00
Students: \$20.00
Booking fee: \$6.50

Tickets on sale: 28 November 2005

Ticket information:
Sydney Opera House
Box Office ticket sales

Tel: (02) 9250 7777
Fax: (02) 9251 3943
Online bookings:
www.sydneyoperahouse.com

OnSTAGE

A presentation and exhibition of outstanding individual and group performances by Higher School Certificate Drama students. Presented by the Board of Studies NSW and the NSW Department of Education and Training.

**York Theatre, Seymour Theatre Centre
Cleveland St, Chippendale
4 + 6–11 February 2006
Matinee 1.30 pm, Evening 7.30 pm**

Adults: \$35.00
Students: \$26.00
(includes GST and booking fee)

Writers OnSTAGE/OnSCREEN

A reading of two scripts and screening of three video dramas – individual projects by Higher School Certificate Drama students.

**Everest Theatre, Seymour Theatre Centre
7–10 February 2006 10.30 am**

Adults: \$26.00
Students: \$20.00
(includes GST and booking fee)

Schools can only purchase tickets by posting booking forms available from the Board of Studies website: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/exhibitions/index.html

Postal bookings for school groups open on 8 November 2005

Tickets on sale: 28 November 2005 Box Office: (02) 9351 7940



General (non-booking) enquiries for all exhibitions: Jody Ziesel (02) 9367 8309

What's new on the BOS website?

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/aa_main/news.html



- School Certificate tests for 2006 and beyond, with scope statement and test specifications for English-literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Computing Skills.
- The Stage 6 Industry Curriculum Frameworks Support Document for Students with Special Education Needs is now available for viewing or downloading. The industry curriculum frameworks are Business Service, Construction, Entertainment Industry, Hospitality, Information Technology, Metal and Engineering, Primary Industries, Retail, Tourism.
- The 2006 Higher School Certificate and School Certificate key dates are available for viewing.
- Distinction Courses will be offered in 2006 for study by eligible students across New South Wales. As in past years, they will be available in Philosophy, Cosmology and Comparative Literature and will be delivered through distance education by universities.
- The 2006 Distinction Courses Memo and Expressions of Interest are available now for viewing.
- The 2005 Higher School Certificate Examination timetable and School Certificate Test timetable is available for viewing or downloading in PDF and HTML format.
- The current list of approved scientific calculators (July 2005) for use in the 2005 Higher School Certificate Examinations is now available.
- Studying for the Higher School Certificate - An Information Booklet for Year 10 Students, 2005 is available for viewing or downloading.
- Board Bulletin Vol 14 No 3 (June 2005) is available for viewing or downloading.
- Guidelines for Board Endorsed VET Courses to commence/continue in 2006 are available for downloading.

The *Board Bulletin* is a regular publication by the Board of Studies NSW. Principals are requested to circulate it among teachers and members of the School Council, P & C and parents. One copy should be filed for reference. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome.

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