

Barrier Daily Truth

No. 30,448

MONDAY, JULY 30, 2012

www.bdtruth.com.au

PRICE \$1.10*

BROKEN HILL TODAY: 14°



TUE:
14°



WED:
15°



THU:
16°



FULL REPORT:
PAGE 14

Concerns for students

By Erica Visser

A new State Government policy for funding in schools has resulted in further concerns for the future of students in the far west.

The Resource Allocation Model (RAM) was announced last week as a part of the proposed 'Local Schools, Local Decisions' policy.

The Government compared the RAM to the nationally-funded Gonski review as both

favour giving principals more power over school budgets.

However, local NSW Teachers Federation representative, Brett Bertalli, accused the Government of trying to "cash in" on the popular Gonski review, which was completed with the aim of improving literacy and numeracy outcomes.

The RAM, however, was completed in the aim to "improve efficiency" by focussing on teachers' salary costs and class size standards.

The RAM also calculates funding via

the number of staff at a school, rather than the number of students.

"This is the mess that the O'Farrell Government has created by allowing Treasury to develop a staffing system based on dollars as opposed to student enrolments," Mr Bertalli said.

The RAM was praised earlier in the week for the provision of a funding loading for schools with students with a low socioeconomic status, Indigenous backgrounds or a disability.

But Mr Bertalli said that for Far West NSW,

funding was not the main problem, but ability to attract teachers.

Currently, a large number of teachers are attracted to Far West NSW by the incentive transfer system, which promises increased points which would allow for a transfer to an area of their choice.

"It's teacher transfers, more than money, that gets teachers to areas like Broken Hill, Menindee and Wilcannia," Mr Bertalli said.

"Local Schools, Local Decisions weakens the transfer system by

empowering schools to block transfers from Western NSW.

"When a teaching position on the east coast of NSW becomes vacant, the school will be empowered to convert the permanent position to casual and block the incentive transfer from Broken Hill.

"We have always argued that to get more experienced teachers to these difficult to staff areas that we need a better incentive package but no government has yet been prepared to fund it."

Furthermore, the State Government is still yet to unveil exactly how the reforms would be rolled out in schools.

It is yet to meet with teachers, who have lobbied for transparency since the beginning of the school year.

"The State Government is demanding we 'trust' them as they shift class sizes, funding and staffing formulae out of guaranteed industrial agreements and into government policy," Mr Bertalli said.

"Our democracy does not ask or require

us to trust our political representatives and the opposite is the reality, it recognises that power can corrupt and that 'trust' may not be in the best interests of the community."

The Government has so far failed to sign a 'Putting Students First' charter, released by the NSW Teachers Federation and has not made any written guarantees.

The changes are due to begin at the beginning of next term.



Woolworths Store Manager, Nick Cantoni with trainee Connor Gers and NOVA Transitions to Work Job Coach Kristie Baumann. PICTURE: Gavin Schmidt

Smooth transition into workforce

By Emily Roberts

NOVA Employment is having huge success with its Transitions to Work program with two new trainees recently completing some work experience.

NOVA Transitions to Work Job Coach Kristie Baumann, said trainees Connor Gers and Jordan Crabb have completed their last week of work experience at Woolworths.

Ms Baumann said the first

year trainees are pretty quiet but they seem to be enjoying themselves.

"The boys are loving it, it has been a great experience for them," she said.

"This is their last week."

Ms Baumann said NOVA Transition is a two year course which assists school leavers with moderate to high support needs to acquire employment skills to become job ready for the future.

"So far this year, Connor and Jordan have had work experience placements at

Foodland and Woolworths, working within a variety of departments and gaining valuable skills and experience that they will have for life," she said.

Trainees in the program work towards gaining their Certificate I in Work Education - a nationally accredited certification.

Throughout their two year program, trainees learn how to live independently, job seek, look after themselves and develop interpersonal

communication skills for the workplace.

"Woolworths have been fabulous. They've (the boys) worked in the grocery section stacking selves, in the bakery, crushing boxes and Jordan worked in the butchers stacking meat," Ms Baumann said.

"Part of NOVA Transition means the clients need to get a wide variety of work experience. There are specific industries they need to cover"

Ms Baumann said NOVA

has had the pleasure of working with some of Broken Hill's top employers over the years.

"NOVA would like to give the community a big thank you and most importantly to the businesses who continue to support both NOVA Transition to Work and NOVA Employment," she said.

Ms Baumann said NOVA will also be having an open day.

"NOVA's Transition to Work in conjunction with NOVA Employment and

Training will open their doors to the public on Thursday September 13 for their Annual Open Day," she said.

"All students at both high schools who have a disability are encouraged to come along to the offices in the Exchange Arcade, with their families between 11.30am and 1.30pm.

"NOVA will be hosting a free sausage sizzle with great prizes to be given away on the day."