



Without Prejudice

**Let's Make SA
the "Innovation State"**



Background:

Traditionally the South Australian economy has been reliant upon the manufacturing, mining and agricultural sectors. These sectors are in decline and the Government needs to re-set its economic compass to sectors of potential growth. Its interest in exploring nuclear power and nuclear waste management as new industries indicates willingness and commitment from the Government to find points of difference in the national and international market place.

The Future:

In recent years the State Government has made strides to become the "Education State" but it would be much better served to use education as one of the key levers in driving towards a more diverse, attractive and ambitious economic vision such as the "Innovation State" or the "Creative State". Putting together a strategy to achieve this would not be overly difficult or, more importantly, overly expensive.

"How can we develop a creative economy without first having a creative curriculum?"

Key Steps:

(i) Embrace the General Capabilities.¹

The Australian Curriculum general capabilities are organised into two sets, with all students needing good *literacy, numeracy, ICT and critical and creative thinking* skills to be successful learners and, in order to be able to better work with others, all students need good development of the other 3 capabilities – personal & social development, ethical understanding and cultural understanding. What if South Australia moved beyond its literacy and numeracy focus, by making its vision clear that all capabilities are needed to produce successful learners, and all capabilities are of equal priority if we are to better prepare our graduates to drive a new "creative economy"?

(ii) What would schools be doing differently?

Schools would need to explicitly teach, assess and report on students' skill progression with ICT, critical and creative thinking, personal & social development, ethical understanding and cultural understanding, in addition to literacy and numeracy development. This would need to be reflected in the DECD Educational Standard (perhaps "DECD Educational Challenge").

(iii) What would the DECD be doing differently?

Such a step would mean that DECD's Teaching & Learning Services would need to harvest the innovation that exists already in our schools around the general capabilities, and explore ways of challenging and supporting all schools to undertake explicit task and assessment design that enables students to demonstrate growth and development in all general capabilities, not just literacy and numeracy.

It would also mean that DECD Improvement and Accountability measures would need to be widened to include evidence of development in all general capabilities not just literacy and numeracy. (This would provide some fabulous good news stories for SA public education!)

(iv) What would the Minister be doing differently?

First and foremost, the Minister would need to make the call on the general capabilities at the State level. On the national front, the ACARA 4 year plan is currently being developed and will be discussed for approval at some point at the Ministerial Council. ACARA has already trialled "assessment other than testing", and would be encouraged by South Australia wanting to engage them in a work sample / portfolio based approach to the general capabilities; in particular, ICT and critical and creative thinking.

¹ The Shanghai education system has expressed an interest in the Australian Curriculum BUT ONLY the General Capabilities. Why? Because they see it as the means of moving schools beyond the narrow focus of PISA.