

New syllabus aids teachers

LAUREN MARTYN-JONES

Condensed lessons to streamline maths, English

STRESSED-OUT teachers will be given relief from jam-packed maths and English lessons, with the two key disciplines the priority of the State Government's scaling back of the curriculum.

New condensed maths and English lesson overviews are currently being made available for use from next year.

The revised teaching mate-

rials follow a review into the Australian curriculum which found it was overcrowded and hard to implement in full, forcing teachers to tick-off dozens of exercises with little or no class revision or extensions.

Education Minister Kate Jones said new Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) maths and English unit over-

views are now available to help schools plan for next year.

"I have listened to teachers who have told me about the pressures they face in the classroom when it comes to implementing the Australian Curriculum," Ms Jones said.

"That's why we are working to streamline the C2C resources to provide more

clarity for teachers about what to teach."

New humanities and social sciences resources will be released in term one next year.

Queensland Association of State School Principals president Michael Fay said primary schools were looking forward to receiving the new teaching resources for the two

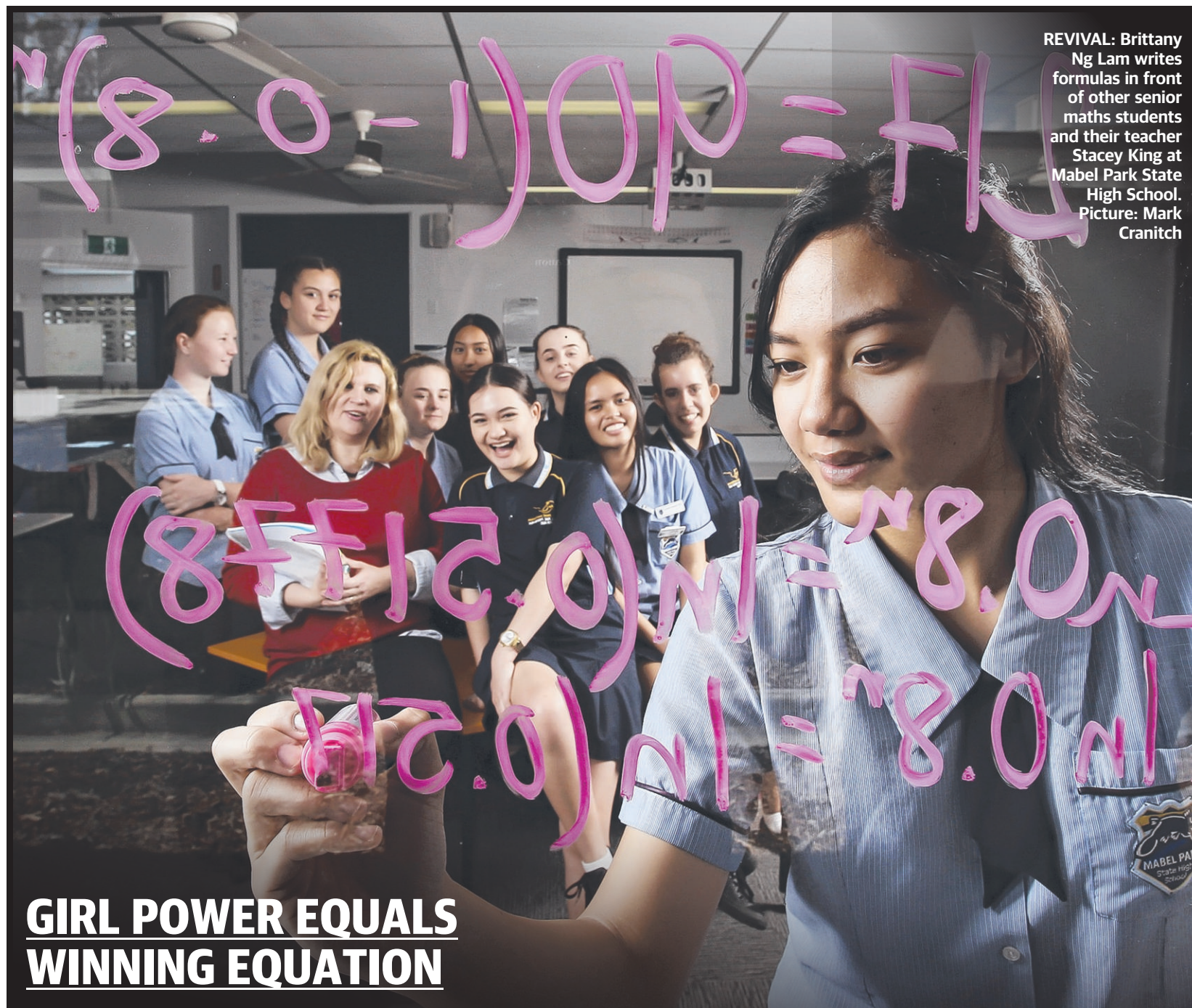
key disciplines. "Maths and English are the two areas that take up the most time already, and it is not about taking important things out of the curriculum, it is about allowing people to focus on what's important," Mr Fay said.

"I think most teachers would tell you that the curriculum has become overcrowded

in the form that it was in, so this work will be welcomed."

The Queensland Teachers Union this week put out a briefing note to its members about the curriculum overhaul, stating the eight current English units would be consolidated to six units in the new teaching materials, and the eight maths units would be cut back to four units to be taught throughout the school year.

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REVIVAL: Brittany Ng Lam writes formulas in front of other senior maths students and their teacher Stacey King at Mabel Park State High School. Picture: Mark Cranitch

GIRL POWER EQUALS WINNING EQUATION

LAUREN MARTYN-JONES

THREE years ago, not a single student at Mabel Park State High School studied Maths B in Year 12. This year there are 14 teenagers taking on the challenging subject.

The numbers at this Logan high

school seem to suggest a maths revolution is afoot, particularly among female students.

In 2013, only 12 per cent of girls were taking any form of university entry-level maths.

It was a worrying statistic for Stacey King, who had been promoted to

Head of Maths and Science at the school a few years earlier.

She decided to shake up maths teaching and held some classes outside to attract more students.

"If you think about the typical maths class, it is textbook-based and students sit in rows while the teacher

teaches at the front of the classroom," she said. "We flipped that model ... students are active members of the learning, students are encouraged to collaborate."

Today the percentage of female Year 12 maths students at the OP level has climbed to 64 per cent.

Sex classes 'awkward outdated'

AWKWARD teachers are fumbling through sex education classes as if they are teaching subjects such as geography or physics and students are unimpressed.

A major review of sex education research from around the world – including Australia – published today in the journal *BMJ Open*, has panned school sex ed programs as being largely out of touch and unhelpful.

Rather than acknowledging that sex is a tricky subject to discuss, the study finds teachers often ignore the sensitivities of the topic and rely on scientific descriptions or outdated films.

"Students reported that teachers seemed unable to discuss sex frankly and responded unsatisfactorily to questions," the research paper says.

"Teachers themselves were commonly reported to be embarrassed and awkward delivering sex and relationship education," it says.

The review also found young people were critical of sex ed for being overly biological, presenting it as a scientific activity, rather than providing more information about what sex involves and how it happens in reality.

"Young men, particularly, wanted this information, expressing anxiety about being able to 'perform', and disappointment that sex and relationship education did not help with this," it says.

"Many reported turning to pornography instead."

The review found young people were happier with sex ed classes when they were taught by outside professionals with whom they did not have to engage in later classes.

Travellers turn to lay-by for holiday

FINANCIALLY strapped holiday hopefuls are turning to an old-fashioned method of payment to make their dream getaways come true.

Millions of Australians travel overseas every year and many use credit to pay. Now some aspirational jetsetters are using online lay-by travel service LayAway Travel to pay off their dream getaway before they set sail.

The service, which

launched 18 months ago, includes flight and accommodation packages and this week expanded to offer cruises.

LayAway Travel managing director Andrew Paykel said the service, which requires no upfront payments and has no fees and charges, enabled cash-strapped travellers to take off.

Travellers have up to 24 months to pay for the trip and the service requires regular payment instalments.

Single mother Ivette Chedraui booked a holiday to Los Angeles for herself and her son Jacob, 12, a year ago and they leave next month.

"I'm not very good with my finances so I don't want to have credit cards," she said.

Consumer finance expert Lisa Montgomery said consumers should read the fine-print before signing up and ensure they did not pay too much for their travels.

Springsteen shows Oz fans who's Boss



BRUCE Springsteen will be back for his third tour of Australia in four years in January.

The tour has been confirmed ahead of the September 27 release of his memoir *Born To Run*, preceded by its companion album *Chapter and Verse* on September 23, the day his tickets go on sale in Australia. The 67-year-old rocker (pictured) shows no sign of slowing down and has already been named the lead-

ing global touring act for 2016 with almost two million tickets sold for concerts across Europe and the US.

Springsteen has completed a solo record for release in early 2017 so Australian fans may be the first to preview those songs. He will play the Brisbane Entertainment Centre on February 14. Pre-sale tickets will be available from September 20 and general tickets from September 23.