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MONDAY, JULY 2

**DRY SEASON SCHOOL HOLIDAY FUN**  
Whip cracking workshops with Micks Whips. Other free kids activities throughout the week. **Darwin Waterfront at 10am. FREE**

TUESDAY, JULY 3

**PARK SKATING 101 – JINGILI**  
Aimed at shredders who are just starting out, this two-hour introductory workshop is designed to help you feel comfortable in the skatepark. With demonstrations of ramp types and discussions on “whose turn is it now?“, participants will leave feeling excited, confident and eager to use local skateparks. For ages 12–25. **Jingili Skate Park at 10am. FREE**

**TOADBUSTING AT MARRARA**  
Join the toadbusters and help protect our unique native wildlife. Come and collect toads and put out tadpole traps at Marrara Golf Course. Please bring a handheld or head torch if you have one, plus wear long sleeves, long pants and closed-in shoes. **Marrara Golf Course at 6.30pm. FREE**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4

**GADGETS & GAMES CLUB**  
For kids five to 12 years who like hands-on, problem-based learning activities. Gadgets and Games is based around STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) learning activities and games for fun. **Palmerston Library at 3.30pm. FREE**

THURSDAY, JULY 5

**FIRST THURSDAY COMEDY**  
Top End Comedy presents this monthly stand-up comedy gig on the first Thursday of the month. See some of Darwin’s hottest comic talents unleash some of the more intelligent, interesting and well executed stand-up comedy in the country in the best comedy venue in town. **Browns Mart at 7.30pm. \$10**

FRIDAY, JULY 6

**DARWIN FRINGE FESTIVAL 2018**  
Darwin Fringe is back – bigger, bolder and beastier than ever. From July 6–15, Darwin Fringe Festival will electrify the city with more than 80 local and interstate acts. Showcasing work of every genre (and a few that might be made up), the Darwin Fringe is a community arts festival with bite. **Multiple locations. darwinfringe.org.au**

SATURDAY, JULY 7

**WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY**  
Join a team of 10 people to spend 12 straight hours together writing a young adult book, under the direction of experienced writer and teacher Lyndal Carbery, and aided by resources of the NT Writers’ Centre. Books are donated to children in hospital. **NT Writers’ Centre from 8am to 8pm. \$20**

SUNDAY, JULY 8

**JACK AND GUS AT TERRY’S PLACE**  
Two of Australia’s most exciting young composers, award-winning singer-songwriter Jack Carty and former Papa vs Pretty bassist Gus Gardiner will embark on a much-anticipated Australian tour, including an intimate show in the Rapid Creek backyard of Terry Cleary. **Rapid Creek. \$30**



ANGELA MOLLARD OPINION



**TIME TO LEARN** Our teachers need the help of us, the parents, to make sure our children have the best education

I HAD no idea. I’m the daughter of a teacher, the sister-in-law of a teacher and the friend of multiple teachers.

My children have spent a combined 23 years in school which means I’ve met with at least 50 of their teachers yet still I had no idea.

I’ve been on school excursions and volunteered in the library and helped with reading. I’ve even bumped into my kids’ favourite teachers in the supermarket — far away from the strictures of school — and even though communication is my job I realise now I never genuinely understood.

But now I do. I’ve just finished reading Gabbie Stroud’s remarkable book, titled simply *Teacher*, and I finally have a grasp of what it is to do that most important yet thankless of jobs.

It’s a quiet book — a chewed apple core is the only illustration on a plain white cover — yet its impact on the education landscape will reverberate like the thump of a kindy kid falling off the jungle gym.

As politicians thrash out Gonski 2.0, academics call for teachers to be rebranded as “learning designers” and parents fret about whether to send their kids to school early to save on childcare fees, Stroud’s book parachutes the reader straight into the place that genuinely matters: the classroom.

And what a place it is. At times a place of euphoria, where imaginations dance and passions are explored and children learn to believe in themselves and each other. Yet at other times, a place so raw and stretched and unremitting that you can’t imagine how anyone makes it through six hours.

Stroud was clearly a superb teacher. She writes of creating an environment where she could properly see the children she was

teaching. “I found myself able to almost step inside their way of thinking, to understand where they were coming from and how they were seeing the world.”

She writes of the sacred bond between teacher and pupil, of advocating exhaustively for their needs, of loving them even when they were abusive and damaged and victims of the most heartbreaking of family circumstances.

In one chapter, titled Warren, she tells of a boy whose mother is a drug addict. He’s dragged in and out of foster homes, constantly exposed to violence and is aggressive and violent in class. Stroud doesn’t so much teach him as manage him. Her other students miss out but school offers something Warren can’t find anywhere else: safety.

Ultimately, Stroud gives up being a teacher. She’s broken by the profession but she maintains that she didn’t leave teaching, it left her.

Her book is a clarion call to educators to change a system that values standardisation over creativity, curiosity, progress, self-belief and autonomy.

But valuing teachers is not just a job for the bureaucrats.

As parents there is not another profession that impacts so much on our family lives as that of teachers.

Our children are in their hands — and often their hearts — yet we complain about them, fail to uphold them in front of our children and are contemptuous of their holidays and hours.

We should be ashamed of ourselves.

If we want inspirational teachers for our kids — Robin Williams’s Mr Keating in *Dead Poet’s Society* and Eddie Woo whose WooTube channel has gone gangbusters and gained him global accolades — then we have to be inspirational ourselves.

If we want excellence from our teachers, we need to work in tandem with them to deliver the best for our children. Yes we have increasingly busy lives, but we can’t hand it all

over to schools and forget that we, too, are our children’s teachers.

As Woo says, parents play an essential role in education but once their children go to high school their interest often drops off.

“It’s about having conversations in the car and around the dinner table about what they learned today and what the relevance is to daily life.”

Stroud’s book doesn’t demand anything of parents but when we speak she says she wants parents to stand alongside teachers rather than step aside and leave it all to them.

There are parents, like Warren’s, who won’t or can’t.

They can no more advocate for their child than they can protect them from violence or provide them with breakfast. Ergo it’s imperative that those equipped to do so support our teachers and lighten their loads.

How? By teaching our kids to tie their shoelaces so a teacher doesn’t have to.

By practising taking their jumpers on and off so they can do it themselves.

By reading, reading and reading some more.

By teaching our kids how to deal with conflict so they can resolve their own problems.

By modelling respect so they can treat their teachers accordingly.

By instilling kindness so teachers can spend fewer hours on bullying issues and more on learning.

By inculcating a sense of teamwork and community so they can bring those attitudes to the classroom.

By being organised at home so schools don’t have to chase up permission slips.

If we want our kids to flourish at school, we can’t just cross our fingers that our kids get the best teachers.

We have to be the best parents.

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