

MEDIA RELEASE

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TEACHING KIDS ABOUT MONEY – IT’S A DRAMA!

Schools will have a new option to consider in the fast-growing area of financial literacy education when Ethical Investor and BOQ launch a school-based drama this year.

The play, *Centsational Harry and the Balance of Life*, is designed to both inform and entertain students about the tricks and traps of managing money.

It comes at a time when teachers and educators are considering how to integrate financial literacy into the school curriculum by 2008, as mandated by the Federal Government.

Centsational Harry and the Balance of Life is a production put together by boutique publishing and events company, Ethical Investor, and sponsored by Bank of Queensland.

Ethical Investor’s Executive Director Michael Walsh said the production had been developed with reference to the National Curriculum Framework for Financial Literacy learning statements.

“The production has also adapted the widely regarded seven steps to financial success into a format that young people will enjoy and understand,” he said.

“These kids will have fun getting a grip on the ideas of risk and return, diversification, and savings and investments. It’s also about being positive - money as a means to get ahead, provided you learn from your mistakes.”

The one-hour in-school production is written and directed by Paul Johnson, who is also a founder and creative director of leading school-drama company Brainstorm Productions.

Mr Johnson said the drama provided an excellent platform to engage youngsters in otherwise dull or challenging subjects.

“The play will complement other resources that have been developed for financial literacy education,” he said.

“A dramatic narrative is the best way for children to learn because it educates through multiple senses as well as creating emotional involvement.”

Performed by a cast of three young professional actors, the play uses a comedic and circus-skills like approach to engage students with the concepts and challenges involved in understanding money.

The production will be open for bookings from the beginning of the 2007 school year. Initial performances will take place in Sydney during term two before touring nationally.

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Background

The history of financial literacy education in schools stems from visits by the local bank manager, free money boxes and in-school banking.

The advent of technology and a lower emphasis on branch/agency banking has seen some banks develop other materials for use in schools. These include a coursework program Operation Financial Literacy, which is sponsored by Bank of Queensland.

The task of formalising financial literacy education into the school curriculum has been a more recent development coordinated by the Federal Government's Financial Literacy Foundation and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.

This work resulted in the National Consumer and Financial Literacy Framework in February 2006 which identifies national standards (via learning statements) for years 3, 5, 7, and 9.

Ethical Investor is a NSW North Coast based publishing and events business focused on ethical investment, financial literacy, community finance and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

It is also the publisher of *Ethical Investor* magazine. Ethical Investor is a part of The Lifecraft Group, which also incorporates CSR researcher Corporate Monitor and a non-profit research unit Givewell.

Paul Johnson is a playwright, psychologist and school counsellor who co-founded Brainstorm Productions in the mid 1980's and has now written 30 school-based plays.

Centsational Harry and the Balance of Life follows the saga of Harry, a colourful Ocker character, in his quest to purchase a rare commodity to save the lives of his 2 new friends. Integral to his success is the responsible use of mobile phones, balancing a budget, distinguishing wants from needs and setting financial goals. The play utilizes the theatrical devices of circus, song, dance, mime, percussion, comedy and pathos to enliven Harry's journey from tragedy to triumph. He discovers achieving balance in the world of money parallels his psychological progress.