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### **Talkback: Who was Rudolf Steiner? :: Sunday Nights**

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s1979075.htm>]

## **Talkback: Who was Rudolf Steiner?**

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### **Why the current controversy over Steiner education programmes in Victorian state schools?**

In Victoria at the moment there is something of a fuss going on in educational circles, and it's not over the latest version of political correctness in the history curriculum or the intrusion of creation science into the biology lab. The current controversy surrounds use in the curriculum of some state schools of the theories of an early 20th century german philosopher, mystic, and educator Rudolf Steiner.

"Rudolf who?" you may ask. Well this evening, on Sunday Night we are going to find out a little of what we can of the life and work of Rudolf Steiner and why 80 years after his death some folk are keen to see his educational principles adopted and spread beyond the confines of the Steiner Waldorf School movement and into the wider state based curriculum.

So who was Rudolf Steiner and why are they saying all those things about him?

Many of you would have heard of Rudolf Steiner schools but know little other than that they offer an alternative curriculum to the one followed in most state and traditional church schools.

Rudolf Steiner was born in 1861, as a student he took a keen interest in both the arts and sciences and was particularly drawn to the work of the great german scholar Goethe. At the age of 23 he edited an edition of Goethe's works for publication. Like many of his time he sought to find a way to link the discoveries of science with those of the world of spirit, this led him to an interest in clairvoyance and eventually to a decade long immersion in the study of Theosophy. Eventually he broke with the theosophists but remained convinced that there were paths to higher knowledge and enlightenment through a fusion of spiritual and natural knowledge. He founded what became known as Anthroposophy. His published works continued to reflect this connection books such as 'Knowledge of the Higher Worlds' and 'From the Akashic Chronicle', and 'Occult Science: An Outline'.

**Producer:** Noel Debien

### **Guests in this story:**

**Rosemary Gentle**

Executive Officer, Rudolf Steiner Schools of Australia,  
Anthroposophist

**John Davidson**  
Teacher at Footscray Primary School

**Further information:**

**Rudolf Steiner on wiki**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf\\_Steiner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Steiner)

**Critics of the Waldorf movement**

<http://www.waldorfcritics.org/>

**Rudolf Steiner's principles of education**

<http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/LEONJ/leonj/leonpsy/instructor/steiner.html>

**Is anthroposophy a religion? (Waldorf answers)**

<http://www.waldorfanswers.org/NotReligion1.htm>

**Waldorf Schools and their critics**

<http://www.stelling.nl/simpos/anthroposophy.htm>

**Anthroposophy**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthroposophy>

**Melbourne Rudolf Steiner school**

<http://www.mrss.com.au/>

**Rudolf Steiner Web (portal)**

[http://www.rudolfsteinerweb.com/a/Karl\\_Heyer.php](http://www.rudolfsteinerweb.com/a/Karl_Heyer.php)

**Rudolf Steiner Schools Association of Australia**

<http://www.steineroz.com/>

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