



# Disability Education Reference Group

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27 October 2023

9:00am - 10:30am

## Communiqué

In attendance at the Disability Education Reference Group was the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, and representatives from the ACT Down Syndrome Association, ACT Community Services Directorate (Office for Disability), a member of the ACT Community Services Directorate's Disability Reference Group, Australian Education Union, Advocacy for Inclusion, Carers ACT, ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association, Imagine More, Women With Disabilities ACT and the ACT Education Directorate.

Minister Berry welcomed members and spoke about the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) Final Report and the 222 recommendations. Minister Berry advised that the ACT Government are currently working through the recommendations, including those that will need a national response.

The Executive Branch Manager, Strategic Policy (EBM) guided members through the Inclusive Education Strategy and First Action Plan. The 10 year Strategy sets out the Directorate's vision and principles for inclusive education in ACT public schools. The principles include the right to education, a whole of system commitment which is underpinned by continuous improvement, supported by an evidence base, planned in consultation with school staff, parents, carers and children and young people. The EBM outlined the key concepts of the Strategy and talked through the 7 focus areas: Culture, Relationships, Learning, Key transitions, Workforce, Resourcing, and Infrastructure. The 7 focus areas are aligned with the four foundations of the Future of Education strategy: Students at the Centre, Empowered Learning Professionals, Strong Communities for Learning, and Systems Supporting Learning. Members were generally supportive of the Strategy overview and discussed how the DRC recommendations might inform future work.

The Senior Director, Inclusive Education Strategy provided an overview of the Inclusion Coach model. In the first instance the coaches will be based in the Tuggeranong network with a try, test and learn approach, which will allow for different models to be tested before the model is scaled up. The Education Directorate has been working closely with Tuggeranong principals in co-design workshops to consider the most effective use of the coaches. The coaches will be school based, part of the leadership team, and they will set goals related to inclusion with their school leaders. The goals will be tailored and may focus on different areas of the Strategy. Members discussed the coaches as an exciting opportunity to support inclusion in ACT public schools.

Members also provided updates from their organisations.