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**ACT schools data**

**Table 1: Number of schools by sector, 2022**

	Public	CE*	Ind**	Total
Primary	59	24	4	87
Combined (Primary/Sec)	8	0	13	21
Secondary	19	5	2	26
Specialist schools	4	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>138</b>

\* CE includes Catholic systemic schools.  
 \*\* Ind: Independent schools including Catholic non-systemic schools.

**Table 2: Number of students, 2021\***

	Public	CE	Ind	Total
<b>Number of students by year level</b>				
Preschool	4,640	611	841	6,092
Kindergarten	4,115	1227	708	6,050
Year 1	4,195	1219	712	6,126
Year 2	4,083	1291	727	6,101
Year 3	4,031	1289	794	6,114
Year 4	3,742	1254	908	5,904
Year 5	3,747	1212	1027	5,986
Year 6	3,661	1295	996	5,952
<b>Primary Total</b>	<b>32,214</b>	<b>9,398</b>	<b>6,713</b>	<b>48,325</b>
Year 7	3,173	1167	1562	5,902
Year 8	3,014	1183	1563	5,760
Year 9	3,064	1153	1548	5,765
Year 10	3,002	1024	1546	5,572
Year 11	3,281	754	1252	5,287
Year 12	3,297	652	1206	5,155
Older	108	na	na	108
<b>Secondary Total</b>	<b>18,939</b>	<b>5,933</b>	<b>8,677</b>	<b>33,549</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,153</b>	<b>15,331</b>	<b>15,390</b>	<b>81,874</b>
<b>Number of full-fee paying overseas students</b>				
Primary	177		79	278
Secondary	197		33	233
<b>Total</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</b>				
Primary	1,402	226	56	1,684
Secondary	755	159	130	1,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,157</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>2,728</b>

Source: Education Directorate, Census of ACT schools, February 2021.  
 \*A small number of students attend more than one school.  
 na - Not applicable.

**Table 3: Per-student income, non-government schools (\$), 2019**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
<b>Catholic schools</b>									
Fees and charges	4,375	4,417	4,345	5,085	4,532	2,979	2,717	5,118	4,417
Private donations and income	768	425	625	556	412	1,286	1,751	606	614
<b>Total private income</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>4,842</b>	<b>4,970</b>	<b>5,641</b>	<b>4,944</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>4,467</b>	<b>5,724</b>	<b>5,031</b>
State government grants	2,969	2,659	3,008	2,883	3,106	3,452	4,335	2,770	2,913
Australian Government grants	9,607	10,045	10,123	10,030	9,704	11,731	17,540	9,386	9,946
<b>Total government grants</b>	<b>12,576</b>	<b>12,704</b>	<b>13,131</b>	<b>12,913</b>	<b>12,810</b>	<b>15,183</b>	<b>21,875</b>	<b>12,156</b>	<b>12,859</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>17,719</b>	<b>17,546</b>	<b>18,101</b>	<b>18,555</b>	<b>17,753</b>	<b>19,448</b>	<b>26,342</b>	<b>17,880</b>	<b>17,890</b>
<b>Independent schools</b>									
Fees and charges	12,982	14,880	9,219	8,927	9,814	9,124	5,552	14,641	11,865
Private donations and income	1,701	1,150	1,006	1,086	815	1,106	1,156	1,398	1,241
<b>Total private income</b>	<b>14,683</b>	<b>16,030</b>	<b>10,225</b>	<b>10,013</b>	<b>10,629</b>	<b>10,230</b>	<b>6,708</b>	<b>16,039</b>	<b>13,106</b>
State government grants	2,849	1,870	2,850	2,604	3,173	3,077	3,934	1,648	2,610
Australian Government grants	8,009	7,774	9,234	8,774	8,967	9,700	14,232	5,406	8,423
<b>Total government grants</b>	<b>10,858</b>	<b>9,644</b>	<b>12,084</b>	<b>11,378</b>	<b>12,140</b>	<b>12,777</b>	<b>18,166</b>	<b>7,054</b>	<b>11,033</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>25,541</b>	<b>25,674</b>	<b>22,309</b>	<b>21,391</b>	<b>22,768</b>	<b>23,007</b>	<b>24,875</b>	<b>23,092</b>	<b>24,139</b>
<b>Total non-government schools</b>									
Fees and charges	7,842	8,779	6,536	7,091	7,096	5,437	4,289	8,703	7,645
Private donations and income	1,144	727	796	833	608	1,214	1,421	904	886
<b>Total private income</b>	<b>8,986</b>	<b>9,506</b>	<b>7,332</b>	<b>7,924</b>	<b>7,703</b>	<b>6,651</b>	<b>5,710</b>	<b>9,607</b>	<b>8,531</b>
State government grants	2,920	2,330	2,937	2,738	3,138	3,302	4,113	2,347	2,782
Australian Government grants	8,963	9,098	9,723	9,374	9,346	10,919	15,706	7,887	9,286
<b>Total government grants</b>	<b>11,883</b>	<b>11,428</b>	<b>12,660</b>	<b>12,112</b>	<b>12,484</b>	<b>14,221</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>10,234</b>	<b>12,068</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>20,870</b>	<b>20,935</b>	<b>19,993</b>	<b>20,036</b>	<b>20,187</b>	<b>20,872</b>	<b>25,529</b>	<b>19,843</b>	<b>20,599</b>

Source: National Report on Schooling in Australia Data Portal - ACARA.  
 Note: Small rounding variations occur from the original data.

# Summary Statistics for Canberra Schools

## January 2022

For more information please contact Performance and Systems on 6205 9317.

**Table 4: Number of students, ACT, 2017-2021\***

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Public</b>					
Preschool	4,567	4,597	4,641	4,560	4,640
Primary (K-6)	24,739	25,762	26,486	27,212	27,574
Secondary	10,571	11,062	11,598	11,844	12,253
Senior secondary	6,680	6,524	6,427	6,656	6,686
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,557</b>	<b>47,945</b>	<b>49,152</b>	<b>50,272</b>	<b>51,153</b>
<b>Non-government</b>					
Preschool	1,181	1,367	1,447	1,530	1,452
Primary (K-6)	14,019	14,134	14,268	14,478	14,659
Secondary	9,840	9,931	10,197	10,431	10,746
Senior secondary	3,811	3,765	3,688	3,705	3,864
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,851</b>	<b>29,197</b>	<b>29,600</b>	<b>30,144</b>	<b>30,721</b>
<b>Students by level of schooling</b>					
Preschool	5,748	5,964	6,088	6,090	6,092
Primary (K-6)	38,758	39,896	40,754	41,690	42,233
Secondary	20,411	20,993	21,795	22,275	22,999
Senior Secondary	10,491	10,289	10,115	10,361	10,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,408</b>	<b>77,142</b>	<b>78,752</b>	<b>80,416</b>	<b>81,874</b>
<b>Full-fee paying overseas</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,308</b>	<b>2,401</b>	<b>2,527</b>	<b>2,645</b>	<b>2,728</b>

Source: Education Directorate, Census of ACT schools, February 2017-2021.  
 \*A small number of students attend more than one school.

**Table 5: Teacher-student ratios by state/territory, 2016-2020**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
<b>Public</b>									
<b>Primary</b>									
2016	15.6	14.8	14.5	14.9	15.4	15.0	12.6	14.7	15.0
2017	15.8	14.8	14.4	14.6	15.6	14.8	12.3	15.6	15.0
2018	15.4	14.6	14.2	14.5	15.7	14.8	12.6	14.9	14.8
2019	16.8	14.9	14.3	14.5	15.8	14.4	11.8	14.0	15.3
2020	16	14.1	14.3	14.5	15.6	13.9	11.8	13.9	14.8
<b>Secondary</b>									
2016	12.5	12.5	12.5	13.3	12.6	13.2	11.9	11.8	12.6
2017	12.4	12.3	12.4	12.9	12.4	13.1	12.4	12.3	12.4
2018	12.3	12.1	12.2	12.7	12.6	12.9	12.1	12.3	12.3
2019	13.9	12.3	12.1	12.7	12.8	12.7	11.9	12.3	12.7
2020	13.4	12.2	12.1	12.5	12.8	12.5	11.8	12.4	12.6
<b>Non-government</b>									
<b>Primary</b>									
2016	16.1	14.2	16.4	16.0	15.3	15.3	14.7	16.0	15.5
2017	15.8	14.1	16.0	15.9	15.1	15.1	14.6	16.0	15.3
2018	15.5	13.9	15.9	16.5	14.9	14.9	14.6	16.3	15.1
2019	15.3	13.7	15.9	14.5	14.9	14.3	13.4	15.8	14.8
2020	15.2	13.5	15.9	14.9	15.2	14.3	13.3	15.9	14.8
<b>Secondary</b>									
2016	11.5	11.0	12.2	11.3	11.9	11.4	10.3	12.1	11.5
2017	11.4	11.0	12.1	11.2	11.8	11.2	10.5	12.0	11.4
2018	11.3	10.9	12.0	10.8	11.6	11	10.5	11.9	11.3
2019	11.2	10.8	11.9	12.3	11.6	10.9	10.5	11.7	11.4
2020	11.1	10.8	12.1	12.1	11.7	10.8	10.5	11.9	11.4

Source: ABS, 4221.0 Schools, 2020 (Table 53a).  
 Note: Full-time equivalent students divided by full time equivalent teachers.

**Table 6: Year 10-12 apparent retention rates by state/territory, 2016-2020**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
<b>Public</b>									
2016	72.0	81.7	82.7	95.3	78.3	73.4	65.1	100.0	79.5
2017	73.0	80.4	82.9	91.2	81.7	74.1	73.6	100.0	79.8
2018	71.4	79.9	83.7	88.4	83.9	76.5	66.9	100.0	79.2
2019	70.6	77.8	83.4	85.3	84.0	80.4	61.8	100.0	78.0
2020	73.3	78.1	78.5	85.1	84.2	79.5	73.5	100.0	78.2
<b>Non-government</b>									
2016	85.0	89.5	94.8	93.3	83.7	66.1	62.4	77.6	87.9
2017	84.1	91.9	95.8	92.4	84.9	66.4	63.9	74.7	88.5
2018	83.4	91.0	94.3	94.3	86.6	66.7	61.5	75.5	88.0
2019	83.1	90.6	95.3	94.7	87.5	63.8	68.8	73.8	87.7
2020	83.4	91.8	92.1	93.9	88.1	63.5	64.3	74.8	87.8

Source: ABS, 4221.0 Schools, 2020 (Table 64a).  
 Note: Full time students only.

**Table 7: Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff by gender and sector, ACT, 2016-2020**

	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Public</b>										
Primary	256	1359	275	1379	275	1461	315	1571	344	1621
Secondary	557	851	560	872	552	864	555	887	550	916
<b>Total</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>2,325</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>2,536</b>
<b>Catholic schools</b>										
Primary	99	425	98	433	102	425	106	434	99	447
Secondary	267	390	256	386	272	392	274	395	286	412
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>859</b>
<b>Independent schools</b>										
Primary	64	276	75	271	74	273	81	291	65	301
Secondary	185	277								

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## FUTURE OF EDUCATION

### Talking points

- The *Future of Education* is a comprehensive, long-term strategy that outlines a well-rounded approach to school education and a focus on wellbeing, excellence and equity.
- The first phase has now concluded with the second phase of implementation commencing to build on the achievements and insights from phase one.
- Future of Education phase two will further focus on inclusion, student agency, wellbeing, strengthening partnerships with school communities and learning gain. These priorities demonstrate the commitment of the ACT Education system to taking an evidence-based approach to ensure educational excellence for every child and young person
- The *Future of Education* reflects the vision of the ACT community; including the core themes heard during 2017-18 from over 5000 individuals, half of which were students, along with significant evidence drawn from research and evidence-based practice in high performing education systems.
- *Future of Education* partners with *Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy* for the ACT (Refer to [Brief 1.03 Set Up for Success – An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT](#)).

### 2021-22 Budget Outcomes

- The 2021-22 ACT Government budget, provided a boost for funding to support the delivery of the next phase of the *Future of Education* strategy.
- Committing an **additional \$51 million** to school equity programs over the next four years. This package will support a range of new and renewed policy initiatives to improve access, equity and inclusion for all students. Initiatives include:
  - A new \$11.5 million Future of Education Equity Fund to replace the high school bursary scheme, will help ensure that no child is left behind in ACT public schools by providing disadvantaged families in ACT public schools with a payment to assist with educational expenses, such as school uniforms, school excursions, sports equipment and activities, or music lessons.
  - **\$1.5 million** for a two year trial to provide 1,500 vulnerable students with access to free breakfast and lunch three days a week.
  - An **additional 25 youth and social workers** over the next four years at a cost of **\$7.4 million**. These funds will help provide early intervention and support for students and their families.
  - More **than \$21 million** over the next four years to ensure all Year 7 to 12 students have access to a Chromebook, including an additional \$2.8 million over four years to provide internet access to any secondary school student who needs it and to fund a new e-Safety program.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

- **\$450,000** over the next two years to work with young people with disability, their families, and the broader community to review how inclusive education is delivered. (Refer to Brief 07.06 Access and Inclusion)
- **\$445,000** to provide ongoing free and confidential legal advice to public college students – particularly important as cases of domestic and family violence have increased during the pandemic. The introduction of a legal liaison service in schools reduces barriers faced by children and young people to access legal assistance. This is particularly important for students or family members who are experiencing domestic or family violence.

## Background Information

- The *Future of Education Strategy* was launched in August 2018 and aims to ensure all children and young people have access to high quality, inclusive and equitable education.
- This strategy is underpinned by four foundations; students at the centre, empowered learning professionals, strong communities for learning, and systems supporting learning.
- The vision of the Future of Education is one of equity, based in a belief that all children regardless of their background deserve a great education and the life chances that flow from this.
- The first of the three phases of implementation of the Future of Education was conducted over the period 2018-2020. The second phase implementation plan is currently under way.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Early Childhood Development

## SET UP FOR SUCCESS: AN EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGY FOR THE ACT

### Talking Points

- *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* is the ACT Government's plan for early childhood education and care in the ACT for the **next decade**.
- The goal of this strategy, in line with the *Future of Education Strategy*, is to achieve an education system that sets all children up for success and the opportunity for a fair and decent life. (Refer to **Brief 1.02 Future of Education**)
- Phase one implementation of the Set up for Success Strategy was progressed throughout 2020-21 after the release in August 2020.
- Initiatives progressed during this time are:
  - continuing quality early childhood education for three year olds, providing free education to **500 priority three year olds** for two days per week, 48 weeks per year and **100 places** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Koori Preschools.
  - Establishing community of practice.
  - Delivering trauma informed training.
  - Reforming the Early Childhood Degree Scholarship program.
  - Trialling out of School hours care for preschool children in the preschool environment.
  - Piloting an approach to effective transitions.
  - Co-designing a process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for Koori preschool.

### ***Providing free quality early childhood education and care***

- The first phase of *Set up for Success* is providing up to 500 places of 15 hours per week, 48 weeks per year of free, quality early childhood education and care to priority three year-old children – those experiencing vulnerabilities or disadvantage.
- As at February 2022, places for priority children are offered through 18 providers representing 59 ECEC services.
- Children are primarily identified through Community Services Directorate programs, as well as other directorates and community services.
- The initiative operates a rolling intake process so that children can commence early learning as soon as they turn three. Children are also supported to enrol in and transition to four year-old preschool through the annual school enrolment cycle.
- Two Early Childhood Community Coordinators have been engaged to further strengthen partnerships with providers, services, and warm referrers across the ACT, and to support enrolments into four year-old preschool.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

- As at **7 February 2022**, **358 children** have been referred into the 3 year-old initiative. Since the initiative commenced:
  - **281 children** have accepted a place in a partnering early childhood education and care service.
  - **45 children** have been referred and placement processes are underway.
  - **32 children** did not accept a place in the initiative. Instead, they engaged in an Early Entry to Preschool placement, a Koori Preschool placement, continued in their Children Service's Program Placement, chose to continue with their Additional Childcare Subsidy placement or moved away from the ACT prior to commencing their placement.
- **76 children** are currently accessing early childhood education and care through the initiative.
- **205 children** have transitioned out of the initiative since it commenced in 2020, substantially due to moving on to 4 year old preschool in 2021 and 2022.
- The initiative is currently being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the ACT's COVID-19 outbreaks, some children have been unable to access their placements because of ECEC service closures and quarantine requirements.

## ***Piloting an approach to effective transitions***

- Children transitioning from the three year-old initiative to four year-old preschool are being supported through a *Transition and Continuity Framework and Statement*.
- The aim is to support educators from ECEC services and schools to share children and families' stories and other key information, facilitating positive transitions.
- Transitions to preschool are also supported by Preschool Pathways which is a program aiming to build the capacity of parents to be active partners in their children's education. It includes resources for parents and carers to support their child to experience a smooth transition to preschool. Preschool Pathways includes a fact sheet on supporting the unique context of transitioning during COVID-19.
- Established Communities of Practice, which are purposeful relationships between ECEC services and schools, also help children transition smoothly between these settings, improve sharing of expertise between educators, and increase opportunities for coaching and mentoring.

## ***OSHC for preschool-aged children in the preschool environment***

- In February 2020, the Education Directorate launched a preschool Out of School Hours Care trial at Duffy, Giralang, Monash and Palmerston District Primary Schools.
- Preschool children remained in their preschool room and the qualified OSHC and preschool educators transitioned in and out. This allowed educators and families to connect more easily, to share important information about children and meant they had fewer transitions resulting in a more seamless day of learning.
- The Education Directorate is exploring expanding the model of OSHC for preschool-aged children, in more ACT public schools.



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- Any such consideration will include active engagement with preschool educators. The evaluation of the trial found transitions for children were reduced, educators experienced increased collaboration, and families felt more supported with more convenient hours offered.

## ***Supporting children affected by trauma***

- In July 2020, the Directorate engaged the Australian Childhood Foundation to develop a suite of resources for the early childhood education and care sector to support workforce capability in trauma responsive practice.
- Trauma informed training is designed to build understanding, strengthen existing practices and create networks in early childhood education and care to enhance the learning, development and wellbeing of all children.
- The suite of supports which so far include:
  - Eleven (11) online training modules on trauma informed theory and practice
  - Twelve (12) free webinars on specific topics related to trauma
  - Five (5) relational exchange blog articles on trauma responsive practice and strategies
  - One (1) champions network and up to six professional support networks for educators to collaborate on practice and develop collective expertise grounded in research.

## ***Early Childhood Degree Scholarship program***

- The Government has supported the growth of qualified ECEC staff with the Early Childhood Degree scholarship program.
- In **June 2021 there were 20 scholarship** holders studying towards a degree in early childhood education.
- Since the introduction of early childhood scholarships in **2014, 31 scholarship holders have successfully completed** their early childhood degrees.
- Scholarships of up to **\$25,000** are offered over four years full time or eight years part time. Additional funding of up to **\$4000 per scholarship** is available to support employers to backfill staff when students undertake practical training in different settings.

## ***2021-2022 budget***

- The 2021-22 ACT Government budget committed funds to a range of initiatives aimed at further delivering on the commitment to early childhood development, including:
  - Increasing the **daily rate** paid to providers partnered in the three (3) year-old initiative to reflect the costs required to deliver quality early learning;
  - Engaging an expert consultant for development of a Territory-wide **transitions** methodology and framework;
  - Increasing the number of Early Childhood Teacher Degree **scholarships**;
  - Delivering a **Professional Learning Fund** for educators in the sector;

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- Delivering **grants** for educators to support them in understanding their obligations and rights when working with children;
- Undertaking legislative reform to **recognising early childhood** in the *Education Act 2004*;
- Providing ongoing funding for two **Early Years Engagement Officers** connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to Child and Family Centres, Koori Preschools and schools; and
- Progressing legislative and system changes for all **Early Childhood Teachers to be recognised and registered** by the Teacher Quality Institute.

## Background Information

- Set up for Success has four foundations:
  - **A fair start for every child:** ensuring access and equity
  - **Valuing educators, values children:** ensuring a high-quality
  - **Every child has a story:** ensuring seamless transitions for children, particularly between ECEC and later schooling, and creating safe environments for children’s diverse backgrounds and needs
  - **Working together for children:** recognising that connected systems and networks between education, health, community, and other services maximise the benefits of early childhood investment
- Under each foundation sits initiatives to be delivered across three phases:
  - First Phase – years one to two (2020-2022)
  - Second Phase – years three to five (2023-2025)
  - Third Phase – years five to ten (2026-2030)
- These align with the foundations and principles of the ACT Government’s *Future of Education Strategy*.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## OVERALL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

### Talking points

- ACT schools as a system have regularly been either the top, or amongst the top, academic performers nationally, based on NAPLAN and other testing results such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
- Despite our successes, there are a significant number of ACT children for whom poor early life circumstances are most likely to result in lower academic achievement compared to students of similar ability but from a higher socio-economic background.
- The Government is committed to an approach to learning grounded in key principles of equity, fairness and universal access.
- At the strategic level, the *Future of Education Strategy* has students at the center, and focuses on improved equity, on early childhood education, on teachers and on interactions with parents and the community.
- Independent reports and the media have on a number of occasions suggested that, despite overall strong results, the ACT was underperforming relative to other jurisdictions by not making the most of its demographic advantages.
- In 2020, education ministers agreed to an ACT/ACARA project intended to explore the operation of socio-educational advantage index in the ACT, particularly in relation to other jurisdictions. The project report, which still needs to be delivered to education ministers, will provide much greater clarity in relation to the between jurisdiction comparisons.
- The 2021 outcomes for all Strategic Indicators will be presented in the 2022-2023 budget papers and the 2021/22 Annual Report. (Refer to [1.06 Strategic Indicator 1](#), [1.07 Strategic Indicator 2](#) and [1.08 Strategic Indicator 3](#))

### National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

- The ACT continues to deliver a very stable performance in NAPLAN, with all results in 2021 being statistically similar to those in 2019. (Refer to [1.05 NAPLAN Results](#) and [1.7 Strategic Indicator 2 – NAPLAN Gain](#)).
- There are slight variations between NAPLAN years that are mirrored across all jurisdictions. At the national level, these variations are due to slight differences between tests each year and to the equating processes used to place the current test results on the historic NAPLAN scales. These variations can be greater in smaller jurisdictions due to the greater volatility created by smaller populations.
- The Strategic objectives included in the Education Directorate 2020-21 Annual Report are designed to measure progress over strategic timeframes, with a focus on the long-term trends.

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- Allowing for measurement uncertainties, the Literacy and Numeracy Equity targets for NAPLAN 2019 and the Literacy and Numeracy gain targets for NAPLAN 2017-19 were met.
- Relative performance in NAPLAN has improved in some other Australian jurisdictions and the ACT is no longer as far in front as in previous years. However, ACT students continue to perform well, particularly in reading.

## Comparative results for NAPLAN

- For some time, the ACT has had concerns about the extent to which the operation of the ICSEA used in the similar schools model has created a bias in interjurisdictional comparisons of NAPLAN performance for the ACT.
- In 2020, the national council of education Ministers agreed to a proposal by the ACT for a joint ACT/ACARA project to explore the operation of the SEA index in the ACT to determine if there were any anomalies that may affect comparisons with ACT schools.
- The COVID-19 pandemic delayed progress with the project, however a joint ACT/ACARA paper summarising the final project report is currently under preparation. The project report provides much greater clarity in relation to between jurisdiction comparisons. More information will be available once the project report has progressed to education ministers.

## International sample assessments

- Results for ACT year 4 and year 8 students from the 2019 TIMSS, were higher than or equal with other Australian jurisdictions across mathematics and in science. Average performance of ACT students in TIMSS has not changed significantly since 1995.
- In PISA 2018, the ACT was the highest performing Australian jurisdiction, achieving significantly higher than the OECD average, and all other Australian jurisdictions in each domain.
- While these results are favourable for the ACT in terms of national comparisons, consistent with Australian results over time, the 2018 performance of ACT students was significantly lower than when each subject was first assessed in PISA in the early 2000s.
- It is not appropriate to compare the performance of all ACT participating students to highest socio-economic groups used in TIMSS or PISA as it assumes all ACT students are members of the highest socio-economic groups.
- While the ACT has a higher proportion of socio-economically advantaged persons, the ABS Experimental Index of Household Advantage and Disadvantage estimated 10 per cent of the ACT population were in the most disadvantaged quartile.

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## **School Identification** (Refer [1.08. Strategic Indicator 3 - centre teaching and learning around students as individuals](#))

- A strong sense of identity (belonging) with a school is important. There is a positive correlation between a stronger identification between a student and their school, and the outcomes that the student achieves. Similarly, positive staff identification and parent/carer identification with the school has a beneficial impact on wellbeing and school culture.
- The 2019 school identification outcomes for the student and staff measures were within confidence interval of the targets. These targets were achieved.
- The results of the 2020 school identification measure (reported in the 2020/2021 mini-Budget Papers) showed significant increases compared with 2019 and exceeded targets in all three measures. These increases may represent a COVID-19 related recognition by students of the important role that school plays in their lives.
- Sixty-six per cent of students had strong identification with their school in 2020 (up from 60% in 2019); for staff - 92 per cent in 2020 (up from 89% in 2019) and for parents and carers – 82 per cent (up from 73% in 2019).
- For the parents and carers school identification measure, in 2019 an extra item was added to the measure, meaning that the 2018 and 2019 figures are not directly comparable. The apparent decline in the strategic indicator was the result of a change in the measurement for this group.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## NAPLAN RESULTS AND PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE OF THE ACT EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Talking points

- NAPLAN online commenced implementation in 2018. The **2021 NAPLAN online** test window ran from **11 May to 21 May 2021**. Approximately **20,700 students in 119 ACT schools participated** online in 2021. (Refer [1.06 Strategic Indicator 1](#))
- ACT students performed well in NAPLAN 2021 with all results being statistically similar to 2019.
- The 2020 NAPLAN tests were cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Indications are, both nationally and here in the ACT that, on average, children’s learning over 2020 did not suffer due to the impact of COVID-19. This is true across all subgroups in the NAPLAN 2021 National Report and is a credit to the resilience of children and young people, the dedication of their teachers and to the support children received from their families and carers.
- The 2021 NAPLAN National Report, released 15 December 2021, showed that overall, the performance of the ACT has been strong, without varying significantly from results in recent years. The ACT has continued to deliver a very stable performance, with all results statistically similar to those in 2019.
- The table below shows the number of domains across year levels in which the ACT had the **highest or equal highest** performance across jurisdictions. In previous years, following quality assurance process, the ACT’s relative performance has tended to improve between the summary results and the final report, 2020 was no exception.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Summary results	14	19	16	15	13
Final Report	18	19	19	18	20

- Over time, most of the variation in ACT performance have tended to mirror changes in national results, both positive and negative. The results show that in the ACT, year 3 and 5 reading, year 3 grammar and punctuation, year 5 spelling and year 5 numeracy are significantly above those achieved in the base year (2008).
- The 2021 writing result for ACT year 5 students was significantly lower than in the base year (2011), but reflective of longer-term trends. The ACT year 9 reading mean score was the only result statistically higher than the national mean score.
- In 2021, ACT NAPLAN participation rates (based on reading) were consistent with national rates.
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students there was a very slight widening of the gap in reading for year 3 and 5 students compared with non-Indigenous

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students. In numeracy, the outcome was mixed, with a slight narrowing of the gap for year 3 and year 9 students, and a slight widening for year 5 and 7 students.

- The ACT Government recognises that all children should have the same advantages when it comes to learning and that this starts in the very early years of their development. That is why it launched Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT which outlines the plan for early childhood education in the Territory for the next decade. (Refer to **1.03. Set Up For Success - An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT**)
- ACT public schools deliver on the Australian Curriculum with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. Learning and teaching models in all ACT public schools focus on student centred learning using multi-age classes and open spaces, both indoors and outdoors.
- In 2021 the ACT Education Directorate implemented the pilot of *Finding the Balance - A targeted approach to mathematics and numeracy improvement in ACT public schools*.
- ACT public schools use the Ten Essential Skills approach to teaching literacy. Implementation of these practices supports oral language development, phonological awareness, letter-sound letter knowledge, and reading fluency. The practices support the acquisition of knowledge and skills to comprehend and compose texts, including spelling and construction strategies grammar and punctuation, literacy motivation and engagement.
- The ACT Government's Early Years Literacy project has been informed by experts and is supporting teachers to enhance their practice in helping students to learn to read and write.
- ACT public schools have commenced a professional learning program for schools on developing teachers' skills to teach numeracy. This has been developed and delivered in collaboration with experts both in the ACT and nationally.
- The Enabling Pedagogies resource and initiative was developed to support schools to develop a coherent pedagogical framework to achieve school improvement plans.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: TO PROMOTE GREATER EQUITY IN LEARNING OUTCOMES IN AND ACROSS ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Talking points

(Refer [1.05 NAPLAN results](#), [1.04 System Performance](#) and [1.07 Strategic Indicator 2](#))

- The strategic indicator is based on the difference in NAPLAN scores in reading and numeracy between educationally less advantaged groups of students (those where highest level of parental education is less than a university degree) and the most educationally advantaged group of students (those with parents with a university qualification or above). The difference in outcomes over time for these two groups represents the equity gap for students in ACT public schools.
- Reducing the gap is the goal, so **lower numbers in the indicator show improvement**. The measure is a long-term indicator of changes that are anticipated. The measure will be subject to fluctuations on a year-to-year basis. For example, the gap might close in any single year due either to the more advantaged group achieving a slightly lower score, or because the less advantaged group achieves a higher score. Equally, the less advantaged group might achieve an increase in their score, but the more advantaged group may achieve a larger increase, thus widening the gap in that year.
- A goal of the ACT Government is to reduce the equity gap in educational outcomes over time. In 2019, the equity gap got smaller. The detailed data for 2021 NAPLAN required for this strategic indicator will be reported later this year in the 2022-23 Budget papers and subsequently in the 2021-22 Annual Report.
- The ACT Government is not only focused on providing equality of opportunity to all our students but also focusses on considering the individual circumstances of every student in order to facilitate more equitable educational outcomes.
- A socio-educational needs-based loading is provided to schools as a component of the Student Resource Allocation which has been developed to reflect the ACT Government's commitment to implement a student needs-based school funding model for ACT public schools.

### Key Information

Strategic Indicator 1(a) Reduction in the equity gap between the most advantaged and less advantaged students in **reading**.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 Target
<b>Equity Gap</b>	48	45	57	52	N/A	51

Strategic Indicator 1(b) Reduction in the equity gap between the most advantaged and less advantaged students in **numeracy**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 Target
<b>Equity Gap</b>	45	37	45	44	N/A	42

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 Lead Directorate: Education  
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## Background Information

- The ACT public education system is underpinned by the right of all children to access high quality education. Individual personal circumstances create socio-educational differences among students, and these explain more than a quarter of variation in student education outcomes.
- Not all children are able to access the same educational advantages when starting their education. Some children receive more at-home and early childhood education, than others, while some first access their education at the start of preschool or kindergarten. The difference in accessing opportunities may be the result of socio-economic factors, physical or mental health issues, or a disability, and cultural backgrounds or familial circumstances.
- 2018 was the baseline year for this new measure. This aligns with the ACT's move to more precise assessment through NAPLAN online. Historical data from 2016 have been retrospectively calculated for reference and have limited comparative value.
- The Student Family Education and Occupation Index (SFI) aggregated at school level, uses parental education and occupation levels of both parents of a student to determine school-level need and allocates proportionate funds to schools in need based on SFI score.
- Parental educational level has been used for determining the equity gap for reporting at jurisdictional level because parental education is more stable overtime.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: NAPLAN GAIN: TO FACILITATE HIGH QUALITY TEACHING IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

### Talking points

- The Future of Education strategy sets, as an objective for the Directorate, to ensure student success through the delivery of high-quality learning that engages students and supports the development of learning for life. This will be achieved through collaborative learning; by developing cohesive relationships between schools, communities and whole-of-government. (Refer [1.02. Future of Education Strategy](#))
- The Directorate is also strengthening the pedagogy (teaching practice) to respond to diversity and build learner capabilities as well as content knowledge. Progress in student learning gain is an important measure of evaluating educational outcomes. Drawing on the concept of a year's learning for a year's teaching, these strategic indicators measure the growth in learning of our students.
- Strategic objectives are designed to measure progress over strategic timeframes, where slight year-on-year variations are not as significant as the long-term trends.
- Each NAPLAN cycle, student scores are equated to a common scale. The scaling processes used in the NAPLAN tests create small, non-significant, measurement uncertainty (variation) in national means and in jurisdiction means over time. These variations do not represent an actual change in performance but rather are inherent effects due to measurement uncertainty. (Refer [1.05 NAPLAN Results 2021](#) and [1.04 System Performance](#))
- Between 2016 & 2017, the ACT public school year 3 reading mean increased from 440 to 446 points, while the year 5 public school reading mean decreased from 522 to 520 points.
- This had the effect of reducing the ACT public school gain from 82 points between 2016-18 to 74 points in 2017-19. Similar changes occurred nationally, with the years 3-5 reading gain decreasing from 84 points in 2016-18 to 75 points in 2017-19.
- Similar variations in NAPLAN gain occurred in the ACT and nationally for years 3-5 in numeracy and for years 7-9 in both reading and numeracy.
- The detailed data required to report on this measure for the period 2019-21 became available at the end of 2021 and will be reported in the 2022-23 Budget papers.

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## Key Information

**Strategic Indicator 2(a):** Increase in the ACT public schools NAPLAN gain for years 3-5 in reading.

	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21 Target
Year 3	439	441	440	446	N/A	442
Year 5	515	520	522	520	N/A	526
Gain	76	79	82	74	N/A	84

**Strategic Indicator 2(b):** Increase in the ACT public schools NAPLAN gain for years 3-5 in numeracy

	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21 Target
Year 3	415	411	412	421	N/A	416
Year 5	498	497	497	499	N/A	506
Gain	83	86	85	79	N/A	90

**Strategic Indicator 2(c):** Increase in the ACT public schools NAPLAN gain for years 7-9 in reading

	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21 Target
Year 7	563	566	558	563	N/A	560
Year 9	597	596	599	592	N/A	600
Gain	34	30	41	29	N/A	40

**Strategic Indicator 2(d):** Increase in the ACT public schools NAPLAN gain for years 7-9 in numeracy

	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21 Target
Year 7	552	551	556	561	N/A	556
Year 9	593	594	600	594	N/A	603
Gain	41	43	44	33	N/A	47

## Background Information

- Due to COVID-19 disruptions, the NAPLAN 2020 testing event did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for the 2018-20 gain cycle.
- Students generally experience a higher gain in their early years of schooling while developing a foundation and understanding of new concepts in numeracy and literacy. This is reflected in the national NAPLAN results where students experience twice the gain between years 3 and 5 compared with the gain of students between years 7 and 9 students. The gain measure accounts for these different starting points and differences in the rate of expected growth.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 – TO CENTRE TEACHING AND LEARNING AROUND STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

### Talking points

- A strong sense of identity (belonging) with a school is important. There is a positive correlation between a strong student identification with their school, and the outcomes that the student achieves. Similarly, positive staff identification and parent/carer identification with the school has a beneficial impact on wellbeing and school culture (Refer [1.04 System Performance](#)).
- School Identification (sense of belonging) for students was 67% in 2020 which exceeded the target set of 61%. Staff School Identification met the target of 92% in 2020.
- School Identification in 2020 for parents and carers was 82%, well in excess of the target of 74% of parents strongly identifying with their childrens' school.
- We know that the first period of remote learning impacted on connectedness for students in particular but also families substantially in a very positive way as schools became an even more important part of the lives of school communities as they navigated stay at home orders.

### Key Information

- The School Satisfaction and Climate Survey was conducted in Term 3 of 2020, when students had returned to school following lockdown. The Directorate believes that two factors contributed to the increases in School Identification:
  - Under the extraordinary circumstances of Term 2, 2020, the efforts of Directorate staff to ensure that student learning was not interrupted was seen and appreciated. This contributed to a greater sense of belonging.
  - In line with Social Identity theory, on which the survey components are based, the extended absence from school heightened the salience of the school community; in other words, students, parents and carers were more motivated to appreciate the value of face-to-face schooling.
- The 2021 School Satisfaction and Climate Survey was conducted in Term 4 of 2021 due to COVID-19 related delays. The results will be reported in the next Budget Papers and Annual Report.
- The School Identification scale was developed as part of the Australian School Climate and Identification Measurement Tool by the ANU Research School of Psychology.
- The following table outlines proportions of students, staff, parents and carers with strong, neutral and weak identification in the years 2019 and 2020.

	2019			2020		
	% Strong	% Neutral	% Weak	% Strong	%Neutral	% Weak
<b>Student</b>	60%	25%	11%	67%	25%	8%
<b>Staff</b>	89%	6%	1%	92%	6%	2%
<b>Parent</b>	73%	20%	3%	82%	15%	3%

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 Contact Officer name: Robert Gotts  
 Lead Directorate: Education  
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# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Early Childhood Development

## REPORT ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES (ROGS)

### Talking points

#### Chapter 3 Early childhood education and care

- In 2021, the ACT had the highest proportion of children aged 0 to 5 years attending an Australian Government approved early childhood service nationally. **59.2 per cent** of ACT children **attended a service in 2021** compared with the national average of 47.2 percent.
- Quality preschool programs involve quality educator-child interactions, and structures to support these interactions. In 2021, the proportion of ACT Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services **exceeding the National Quality Standard (44.4 percent)** was higher than the national result of 28.1 percent.
- In 2021, **76.6 percent of ECEC services** in the ACT **achieved a rating of meeting or exceeding** the National Quality Standard, compared with 75 per cent in 2020. While this percentage is lower than other jurisdictions, the ACT is continuing to see a growth in the number of services meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard, and improvement in quality across the sector. The national results increased 4.8% in 2021, predominately due to a 9.1% increase in NSW.
- In **2020, 99.1 per cent** of ACT children in the **year before full-time schooling** cohort were **enrolled in a preschool program**, compared with 97 per cent in 2020, including 100 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- In 2020 the ACT Government launched *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* which outlines the plan for early childhood education in the ACT for the next decade.
- Through *Set up for Success*, the ACT Government is addressing equity and access to quality early childhood education and has committed to working towards providing universal access to free, quality early childhood education for all three year-olds.
- Currently, the ACT Government is delivering the first phase of this commitment to up to 500 priority children – those experiencing vulnerably or disadvantage – by providing two days per week, 48 weeks per year of free quality early childhood education at participating ECEC services.
- This commitment also includes up to 100 places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander three-year-old children at Koori Preschool to enhance culturally safe and supportive early learning experiences.
- Along with other states and territories, the ACT has committed to the Preschool Reform Agreement with the Australian Government, which replaces the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (NP UAECE).

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## Chapter 4 School Education

- Education is fundamental to making life choices and to have the opportunity to participate in society. Empowering children and young people to learn creates a lifelong legacy.
- Fostering student engagement and centring teaching and learning around students as individuals enables educational growth for every child year on year. Focusing on engagement and learning growth strengthens equity across our system and ensures that all children and young people get a great education and life opportunities.
- Since 2007, the ACT has conducted a telephone-based **survey of all government and non-government students** who successfully completed an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate in the preceding year. The 2021 survey found that **94 per cent of 2020 ACT year 12 graduates were employed and/or studying in 2021**, and 79 per cent found years 11 and 12 worthwhile.

## Background

### Chapter 3 - Early childhood education and care: ACT performance

- In 2020-21, the ACT reported **219 serious incidents per 100 NQF-approved service** as compared with 125 incidents nationally. (Refer [9.01. Childrens Education And Care Assurance \(CECA\) Investigations](#))
- The ACT Regulatory Authority, Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) has encouraged ACT services to adopt a proactive reporting approach for serious incidents since the events of 2015 surrounding the assaults of children in a Civic service and a number of incidents of children exposed to medications and chemicals.
- The ACT Regulatory Authority has a very high level of engagement with the ACT sector and the sector is particularly proactive in raising any concerns and complaints. CECA believe that the high reporting rates in the ACT relate to the sector's high level of awareness of and compliance with the notification requirements rather than a particularly high number of serious incidents in comparison with other jurisdictions.
- A serious incident does not mean that a provider or service has breached the national law. In 2020-2021, the ACT recorded **217 confirmed breaches** against the national law, compared to 349 in 2019-2020.
- The ACT had the **second lowest rate of confirmed breaches** against the national law, with 59 per 100 services compared to 164 nationally.
- The **median weekly cost of centre-based day care** in the ACT in 2021 **increased by \$6 (1.0%) from 2020**, while nationally the increase was \$10 (1.9%). For **family day care**, the median **cost in the ACT decreased by \$26 (-4.3%)**, while nationally there was an increase of \$8 (1.5%). (Refer [9.02. Education and Care Place - Affordability and Availability](#))

### Chapter 4 - School education: ACT performance (Attachment B)

#### Funding

- Compared with other jurisdictions, the **ACT ranks as the second highest in cost per FTE student**, second only to the Northern Territory. Government expenditure for the ACT was **\$23,159 per FTE student** which is **14.8 per cent higher** than the national average of \$20,182 per FTE student.

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- While the ACT's ranking has not changed from last year, it has remained consistent with 2018-2019 where the ACT was 14.5% higher than the national average.
- The ACT's cost per FTE student is higher on average primarily due to:
  - comparably high capital related expenditure due to a comparatively high asset base, differences in accounting policy, as well as aging infrastructure; and
  - ACT Government cost disadvantages.
- Capital related items include the User Cost of Capital, Depreciation and Repair and Maintenance which are heavily influenced by asset valuation and jurisdictional accounting policies.
- ACT Government cost disadvantage in the provision of education services is largely the result of 'grandfathering' of inherited Commonwealth Government employee entitlements, higher cost of workers' compensation insurance compared with other jurisdictions, and payroll tax.

## **NAPLAN Achievement:**

- Overall, the ACT, along with Victoria and New South Wales, maintained the high level of achievement in NAPLAN of previous years. The ACT has continued to deliver a very stable performance, with all results statistically similar to those in 2019.
- The performance of ACT students has generally remained stable for several years while the performance of students in other jurisdictions has been improving. As a result, the gap between the ACT performance and the national performance has been decreasing.
- Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia have achieved sustained improvement in reading and numeracy outcomes, particularly in the primary years.
- Outcomes for students whose parents have a tertiary qualification are on average lower in the ACT than outcomes for students of similar background in NSW and Victoria. In year 9 numeracy, ACT students whose parents had an educational background of bachelor's degree or above had a mean scale score of 613 points compared to NSW students of similar background who achieved a numeracy mean scale score of 628 points.
- Average student performance from families of senior management and qualified professionals was lower in the ACT than in NSW and Victoria across most year groups and domains, particularly at years 3 and 5. This can be seen in the ACT year 5 numeracy performance of 513 points being statistically lower than both NSW (531 points) and Victoria (530 points).

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

Early Childhood Development

## 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT SCRUTINY SECTION INQUIRIES

### Key Information

#### Auditor-General Reports – Pages 59 - 65

- **Twenty-two** (22) recommendations arising from **ten** Auditor-General reports were in progress as at **30 June 2021**.
- Recommendations are actively tracked by the Directorate to ensure a response to actions within agreed timeframes. This process is overseen and monitored on a quarterly basis by the Directorate's independent Audit Committee.
- The **Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems** recommendations are in addition, subject to annual review and where applicable, confirmation of closure by the Auditor-General.
- Three recommendations from the ACT Auditor-General's Report **Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure Report No. 11/2019** were accepted for closure at the June 2021 Audit Committee meeting.
- Outstanding Auditor-General Report recommendations are outlined below for each individual report:

Report Name	Outstanding Recommendation/s
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2016-17 Financial Audits Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 11/2017	<b>Two recommendations</b>
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2016-17 Financial Audits Computer Information Systems Report No. 4/2018	<b>One recommendation</b>
ACT Auditor-General's Report Physical Security Report No. 6/2018	<b>One recommendation</b>
ACT Auditor-General's Report Five ACT Public Schools' Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, Families and Community Report No. 7/2018	<b>One recommendation</b>
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2017-18 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 12/2018	<b>Two recommendations</b>  Please note that these recommendations are the same as noted in AG Report 2016-17:No. 11/2017. No new findings were identified in this report.

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 Contact Officer name: Paul Short  
 Lead Directorate: Education  
 TRIM Ref: FOL22/25



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ACT Auditor-General's Report 2017-18 Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems Report No. 4/2019	<b>One recommendation</b> Please note that this is the same recommendation noted in AG Report 2016-17:No. 4/2018.
ACT Auditor-General's Report Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure Report No. 11/2019	<b>Seven recommendations</b> Three were accepted for closure at the June 2021 Audit Committee meeting.
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2018-19 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 10/2019	<b>Two recommendations</b> Please note that these recommendations are the same noted in AG Report 2016-17:No. 11/2017 and AG Report 2017-18: No. 12/2018. No new findings were identified in this report.
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2018-19 Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems Report No. 2/2020	<b>One recommendation</b> Please note that this is the same recommendation noted in AG Report 2016-17:No. 4/2018 and AG Report 2017-18: No. 4/2019.
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2019-20 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 10/2020	<b>Four recommendations</b> Two recommendations are the same as noted in previous AG Report 2016-17:No. 11/2017; AG Report 2017-18: No. 12/2018; and AG Report 2018-19: No. 10/2019.

## Legislative Assembly Reports – Pages 66 - 79

- **Seventeen** (17) recommendations arising from **six** Legislative Assembly reports were still in progress as at **30 June 2021**.
- The outstanding Legislative Assembly Report recommendations are outlined below for each individual report:

Report Name	Outstanding Recommendation/s
Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2017-18 – Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – March 2019 Report 4	<b>One recommendation</b>
Standardised Testing in ACT Schools Report Title – Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – March 2019 – Report 5	<b>Five recommendations</b>
Management and Minimisation of Bullying and Violence in ACT Schools – Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – September 2019 – Report 6	<b>Four recommendations</b>

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# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2018-19 – Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – March 2020 – Report 8	<b>Two recommendations</b>
Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT – Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – August 2020 – Report 9	<b>Four recommendations</b>
2020-21 ACT Budget and the Appropriation Bill 2020-21 – Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion – April 2021 – Report 1	<b>One recommendation</b>

## Background Information

- The Annual Report Directions require directorates to report on the status of Recommendations that are either “agreed” or “agreed in principle” by the Government for both Auditor-General reports and Legislative Assembly Committee reports.
- Once a recommendation has been completed no further reporting is required.
- Regarding those recommendations related to NAPLAN, it should be noted that NAPLAN was suspended in 2020 during COVID-19, and commenced again in 2021.

Report title	Rec #	Recommendation text	Government Response	Government/Directorate Action	Implementation Status
Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2017-18 - Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs. March 2019 Report 4	22	<p>The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate enact the four recommendations made in the Caple Report, including:</p> <p><b>Key recommendation 1.</b> Provide better targeted training and support for staff in schools who work with students with complex needs.</p> <p><b>Key recommendation 2.</b> Utilise a Workplace Health and Safety compliant risk assessment process and a case work approach for students and families with the most complex needs.</p> <p><b>Key Recommendation 3.</b> Review the options for a more suitable centrally controlled incident reporting tool for occupational violence to improve the quality and amount of data captured as well as to improve the useability and access to the data.</p> <p><b>Key Recommendation 4.</b> Develop closer working relationships with Universities to ensure preeducators and early educators are provided placements and support to teach students with complex needs.</p>	Agreed	<p>The government has a strong and ongoing commitment to working with staff to support safety.</p> <p>The Education Directorate is implementing a mandatory work health and safety training package; role specific work health and safety training; and strengthening site specific work health and safety training based on the site's specific work health and safety risk assessments and identified mitigations.</p> <p>The Education Directorate Occupational Violence Management Plan articulates a risk management approach to supporting safety in schools and managing risk. Using this approach, the Directorate has implemented a case management response for those students with the most complex needs.</p> <p>The Directorate has developed a centralised process for analysing data related to workplace health and safety incidents, complex needs and behaviours, and occupational violence risk .</p> <p>The Directorate is working closely with the University of Canberra to deliver the Future of Education Strategy initiative, Affiliated Schools Program. The Program is designed to strengthen pre-service and in-service, including early career, teacher capability and further enrich the learning culture of the Directorate. The components of the program are to host professional experience placements and school-based teacher education clinics; university delivered professional learning; scholarships for masters-level study; school-based coordinators in full program affiliated schools; and research programs. There are specific elements of inclusion and equity throughout the program and pre-service teachers are benefitting from the ability to work with students, including those with complex needs, early in their education.</p>	In progress
Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 6 – Inquiry into management and minimisation of bullying and violence in schools	1	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government partner with community agencies to provide independent support and guidance to students and their families when preparing for a formal restorative conference following incidents of bullying or violence.	Agreed	<p>The Directorate will continue to strengthen the use of restorative practices in ACT schools as a means of supporting positive school culture based on positive relationships, safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Directorate continues to work with other agencies in increasing staff capability and confidence when using restorative practices in response to incidents requiring this form of resolution.</p>	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 6 – Inquiry into management and minimisation of bullying and violence in schools	7	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate the increased use of support workers to provide structured play options at breaks for students with complex needs and challenging behaviours.	Agreed	The Directorate continues to support schools through coaching of school staff, developing behaviour and individual learning plans with school staff, professional learning and consultation and advice to teachers and school leaders. Playground strategies are considered as part of the broader supports for schools and individual students	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 6 – Inquiry into management and minimisation of bullying and violence in schools	18	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government introduce a parent self-reporting portal for incidents relating to bullying, violence and occupational violence	Agreed in principle	The Directorate encourages parents to raise incidents of bullying, school-based violence and occupational violence with their school. However, there are processes in place that give parents the opportunity to raise complaints or concerns regardless of their nature with the Directorate. This is through an online feedback and complaints form or through direct contact with the Feedback and Complaints phone line. The Directorate will provide a link to information on how to provide feedback and complaints on the Parent Portal which is currently being piloted.	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 6 – Inquiry into management and minimisation of bullying and violence in schools	19	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government introduce a student self-reporting portal for incidents relating to bullying, violence and occupational violence.	Agreed in principle	The Directorate encourages students to raise incidents of bullying, school-based violence and occupational violence with their school, which may include reporting to their teacher, a school counsellor or a school psychologist. However, there are processes in place that give students the opportunity to raise complaints or concerns regardless of their nature with the Directorate. A link to information on how to provide feedback and complaints will be published on the Digital Backpack in Term 3 to support easy access for students.	In progress

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Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 5 – Inquiry into standardised testing in ACT schools	2	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development explore, through Education Council, whether the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) values are being calculated in a way that accurately reflects disadvantage, especially in smaller jurisdictions.	Agreed in principle	In March 2020, the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) agreed to the establishment of a joint project between the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the Directorate. The project assesses whether an anomaly in the operation of the Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA) index would materially impact inter-jurisdictional NAPLAN comparisons involving the ACT	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 5 – Inquiry into standardised testing in ACT schools	12	The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate investigate ways it can better utilise standardised testing data to improve academic outcomes.	Agreed	The Directorate is investigating ways to better deliver results and improved advice to schools on the outcomes of standardised testing.	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 5 – Inquiry into standardised testing in ACT schools	14	The Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate work more closely with ACARA on further development and delivery of online NAPLAN testing with a view to delivering results to schools and parents faster than current practice.	Agreed	The ACT has transitioned to NAPLAN Online with 100% of schools participating online in 2021. Along with other jurisdictions, the ACT is in discussions with ACARA on improvements to NAPLAN testing, including the delivery of results, that can be recommended to Education Ministers for approval.	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 5 – Inquiry into standardised testing in ACT schools	16	The Committee recommends that further consideration be given to how NAPLAN results are made available and whether publication on the My School website is an appropriate repository of such information.	Agreed	The ACT Government participated in a review of NAPLAN including reporting along with Queensland, Victoria, and NSW. Recommendations from this and other reviews will be considered by Education Ministers in 2021. Outcomes from the joint ACT-ACARA Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA) project may impact on My School 2021 reporting	In progress
Government Response to Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs Report 5 – Inquiry into standardised testing in ACT schools	18	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development explore with Education Council whether a sampling approach is more appropriate than a full student cohort NAPLAN testing.	Agreed	The issue of a sampling approach rather than full cohort testing for NAPLAN is one of the issues that will be considered by Education Ministers during 2021	In progress
Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2018-2019 - Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – March 2020 - Report 8	7	The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate work to ensure that schools have access to youth workers, social workers and chaplains, as well as psychologists, if requested by students or staff.	Agreed in principle	The Directorate continues to collaborate with ACT Health, the Community Services Directorate and the Office for Mental Health to strengthen information sharing and linkages. This includes: promotion and distribution of health and wellbeing services and resources (mental health referral pathways) to schools, psychologists and families. development of the operational procedures of Adolescent Mental Health Assessment and referrals to the School Youth Health Nurse Program. participation in the review of the Child Development Service.  The release of the Youth Navigation Portal for Mental Health services is planned for September 2021.  In 2021, the Directorate is funded for 81.6 FTE psychologists and 22.0 FTE allied health professionals within NSET.  ACT public schools have transitioned from the National School Chaplaincy Program. Non-government schools continue to participate in the program. The Directorate continues to support student wellbeing through a range of supports including wellbeing teams that include allied health professionals, psychologists and youth and social workers	In progress
Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2018-2019 - Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – March 2020 - Report 8	11	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues to provide flexible and secure employment options for workers.	Agreed in principle	In December 2019, the Directorate finalised a 12-month work program to implement the <i>ACTPS Policy on Taskforce Conversion to Secure Forms of Employment</i> (Conversion Policy). It is also noted that the Directorate has successfully progressed conversion of temporary teachers through the internal teacher ratings system since July 2019, outside of but within the Insecure Work Taskforce intent and principles. In November 2020, the permanent conversion for Stage 1 employees was endorsed by the Head of Service. Stages 2 and 3 of the work program will be finalised in July and September 2021, respectively.	In progress

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Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs, Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT. August 2020 Report 9	3	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government recruit more youth workers in schools.	Agreed in principle	All ACT public schools have access to school psychologists along with allied health. The Directorate recognises the value of Social and Youth Workers in all ACT schools and recognises that supervision to manage and support the proposed workforce will be required.	In progress
Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs, Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT. August 2020 Report 9	5	The Committee recommends the ACT Government improve privacy for students accessing counselling services at schools.	Agreed	Privacy forms a key part of service delivery for a health professional. Information collected from a student is confidential and only shared under exceptional circumstances (in situations of risk or when permitted by law).  The Directorate will explore whether a perception of 'privacy' might impede students seeking counselling services. Strategies may include appropriate placement of the psychologist's office and increased visibility of a psychologist to normalise help seeking behaviour.	In progress
Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs, Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT. August 2020 Report 9	63	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government integrate wellbeing into the curriculum through evidence-based mental health programs and e-mental health, including cognitive behavioural therapy, that help students cope with stress and boost self-esteem, increasing mental health literacy and preventing bullying.	Agreed	The ACT Government promotes wellbeing through evidence-based programs that align with the Australian Curriculum. These programs target social and emotional skills, resilience and mental health literacy; to help students develop skills to cope with stress and to help promote help seeking behaviour. Schools utilise social and emotional learning programs which are appropriate for the needs of students and the school community. The Directorate's <i>Safe and Supportive Schools Policy</i> requires every ACT public school to explicitly teach social skills and positive behaviours in accordance with the Australian Curriculum. This is undertaken as one of the seven essential features of the PBL framework.	In progress
Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs, Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT. August 2020 Report 9	66	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government roll-out the mental health promotion program which is found to be most effective for 8-12 year olds as a matter of urgency, including to non-government schools.	Agreed in principle	The Directorate and ACT Health are committed to continually reviewing evidence-based programs in schools and will work together to ensure appropriate programs are available. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing are reviewing service provisions that exists for students in this age range. The Directorate will support this review and work on recommendations with ACT Health.  The Directorate works closely with non-Government schools, to share best practice and approaches to mental health and health promotion.	In progress
2020-21 ACT Budget and the Appropriation Bill 2020-21 – Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion – April 2021 – Report 1	5	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expedite the feasibility study for further college capacity in North Canberra, and if required, construction of further college facilities in Canberra's north.	Agreed	Consideration is being given to college demand responses on Canberra's northside to meet future anticipated enrolment growth in public education at the college level. A Priority Enrolment Area One-Way Shared Zone has been established for residents of Gungahlin who may also apply to enrol to attend Dickson College in 2022. This arrangement will support long term demand management across both Dickson College and Gungahlin College and the Directorate will continue to monitor enrolment patterns and growth in this region as well as considering future capacity and growth responses.	In progress

Report title	Recommendation text	Government/Directorate Action	Implementation Status
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2016-17 Financial Audits Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 11/2017	<p>The Audit Office issued an unqualified audit report on the Directorate's 2016-17 financial statements.</p> <p>The Audit Office reported two previously unresolved audit findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• salary reports distributed to schools and business units did not always have evidence of review. This control weakness increases the risk of erroneous or fraudulent salary payments not being promptly detected and corrected; and</li> <li>• the Directorate's school administration system (Maze) does not have the capability to generate audit logs showing the activities of users accessing the system and its data. The Directorate also does not have a documented policy for the review of audit logs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary reports – the Directorate is continuing to reinforce compliance in this area; and</li> <li>• Audit logs – the Directorate will address this as part of its replacement of the school administration system.</li> </ul>	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2016-17 Financial Audits Computer Information Systems Report No. 4/2018	<p>12. Monitoring of Audit Logs</p> <p>a) The Education Directorate should:</p> <p>i) incorporate procedures for the review of audit logs in the new Schools Administration System; and</p> <p>ii) perform periodic reviews of audit logs in accordance with these procedures.</p>	The Directorate will address this as part of the planned replacement of Maze with the new School Administration System which is expected to be operational in late 2020.	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report Physical Security Report No. 6/2018	<p>6. The Education Directorate should, on completion of its Threat and Security Risk Assessment and Security Plan, increase awareness of physical security risk for school-based staff and implement a long-term rolling program of site specific security risk assessments.</p> <p>Government Response - Agreed and action commenced.</p>	<p>A range of physical security measures are continuing to be implemented across ACT public schools. The measures are designed to harden the existing physical security controls already in place.</p> <p>Security risk assessments will continue to be undertaken as part of a rolling program. In addition, the Directorate is collaborating with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to implement a suite of security guidance materials for staff.</p>	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report Five ACT Public Schools' Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, Families and Community Report No. 7/2018	<p>7. The Education Directorate should finalise and implement the next Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and support action plan and, in so doing, give particular emphasis to increasing the number of, and support provided for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and school leaders.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	The Education Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network were engaged to develop a comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan (the plan). The plan was considered by the EGC in early 2020 with further work to be completed to prioritise actions over three years. Due to COVID-19 this work has not yet progressed however will be prioritised for the second half of 2020.	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2017-18 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 12/2018	<p>The Audit Office issued an unqualified audit report on the Directorate's 2017-18 financial statements and an unqualified report of factual findings on its 2017-18 statement of performance.</p> <p>The Audit Office reported that the Directorate did not resolve the two previously reported audit findings relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the review of salary reports which has been reported since 2013-14. Salary reports distributed to schools and business units did not always have evidence of review. When these reports are not evidenced as being reviewed there is a higher risk that incorrect or fraudulent salary payments will not be promptly detected and addressed; and</li> <li>• the Directorate's school administration system (Maze), as it does not have the capability to generate audit logs showing the activities of users accessing the system and its data. The Directorate also does not have a documented policy for the review of audit logs. This increases the risk that erroneous or fraudulent changes to the system or data will not be promptly detected and rectified. This audit finding was first reported in 2011-12.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary reports – the Directorate is continuing to reinforce compliance in this area; and</li> <li>• Audit logs – the Directorate will address this as part of its replacement of the school administration system.</li> </ul>	In progress

ACT Auditor-General's Report 2017-18 Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems Report No. 4/2019	<p>10. Monitoring of Audit Logs</p> <p>e. The Education Directorate with respect to MAZE should:</p> <p>i. incorporate procedures for the review of audit logs in the new Schools Administration System; and</p> <p>ii. perform periodic reviews of audit logs in accordance with these procedures.</p>	The Directorate will address this as part of the planned replacement of Maze with the new School Administration System which is expected to be operational in late 2021.	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure Report No. 11/2019	<p>1. The Education Directorate should revise Module 7 of the School Management Manual to clearly identify responsibilities for repairs and maintenance activities between the Infrastructure and Capital Works Branch and schools, and in doing so ensure that there is consistency and clarity in language in both Module 7 and the building condition assessments reports.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	A review of Module 7 of the School Management Manual will commence in late 2020.	In progress
	<p>2. The Education Directorate should complete the development of property quality standards and incorporate them into the asset management system. Property quality standards should then be used to assess the performance of assets and identify if the assets are being appropriately used, maintained and are fit for purpose.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	Property quality standards will be developed and incorporated into the asset management system. This information will be combined with condition information to provide data for analysis of asset use and maintenance approaches.	In progress
	<p>3. The Education Directorate should develop operational asset management plans for its school infrastructure assets. The plans should contain information to inform long term strategic asset planning for the Education Directorate and should address matters such as responsibility for the asset, arrangements for monitoring asset performance, operational training and estimated operating costs.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed in principle</p>	The Directorate supports the development of operational asset management plans in all schools. This work will follow the development of the annual maintenance plans, subject to budgetary constraints.	In progress
	<p>4. The Education Directorate should prepare and execute comprehensive annual maintenance plans for school infrastructure assets, which outline the specific tasks which are to be undertaken during the year as well as the estimated resources and cost of maintenance activities. The annual maintenance plans should align with, and support, operational asset management plans to be developed as part of Recommendation 3.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	The development of annual maintenance plans has commenced with the appointment of School Network Support Officers. As part of their role, the Network Officers work with schools to identify the annual maintenance actions and forecast costs.	In progress
	<p>5. The Education Directorate should:</p> <p>(a) recommence its rolling program of building condition assessments; and</p> <p>(b) populate its asset management information system, SPM Assets, with the results of the building condition assessments in order to facilitate and inform asset maintenance planning.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	<p>a) Recruitment of a new team of Infrastructure and Capital Works, School Network Support Officers has been undertaken. All four of these officers have commenced with the Directorate. Building condition assessments are being conducted by the School Network Support officers.</p> <p>b) In conducting the building condition assessments, data is entered into the asset management information system directly and is immediately available for reporting and asset maintenance planning.</p>	In progress
	<p>6. The Education Directorate should develop baseline data for the cost of activities undertaken under the Service Level Agreement. Expectations should be developed for the benefits that the Service Level Agreement aims to provide and the expectations should be periodically reviewed to inform the performance of the Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	<p>Baseline data for the ACT Property Group Service Level Agreement has been developed. This data will be used to review performance throughout 2020.</p> <p>A review of the expectations of the Service Level Agreement will be undertaken during 2020.</p>	In progress
	<p>7. The Education Directorate should state the purpose and scope of the Specific Works Program and prepare guidelines and funding criteria. Record keeping should be improved with all funding decisions comprehensively recorded.</p> <p>Government Response – Agreed</p>	The usefulness of the Specific Works Program will be reviewed to determine whether this program should continue in operation.	In progress

ACT Auditor-General's Report 2018-19 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 10/2019	<p>The Audit Office issued an unmodified auditor's report on the Directorate's 2018-19 financial statements and an unmodified limited assurance report on its 2018-19 statement of performance. The Audit Office reported that the Directorate did not resolve the two previously reported audit findings relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the review of salary reports which has been reported since 2013-14. Salary reports distributed to schools and business units did not always have evidence of review. When these reports are not evidenced as being reviewed there is a higher risk that incorrect or fraudulent salary payments will not be promptly detected and addressed; and</li> <li>the Directorate's school administration system (Maze), as it does not have the capability to generate audit logs showing the activities of users accessing the system and its data. The Directorate also does not have a documented policy for the review of audit logs. This increases the risk that erroneous or fraudulent changes to the system or data will not be promptly detected and rectified. This audit finding was first reported in 2011-12. No new audit findings were identified in 2018-19.</li> </ul>	Salary reports – the Directorate is continuing to reinforce compliance in this area; and Audit logs – the Directorate will address this as part of its replacement of the school administration system.	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2018-19 Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems Report No. 2/2020	<p>Monitoring of Audit Logs</p> <p>Since 2011-12, the Audit Office has reported to the Education Directorate that Maze (the school administration system used by ACT public schools to process and record the revenue and expenses of schools) does not have the capability to generate audit logs on user access to the system and changes made to its data and therefore audit logs cannot be reviewed. This weakness continued to exist in 2018-19. This increases the risk that erroneous or fraudulent changes to the school administration system and data will not be promptly detected and rectified.</p>	The Directorate will address this as part of the planned replacement of Maze with the new School Administration System.	In progress
ACT Auditor-General's Report 2019-20 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 10/2020	<p>The Audit Office issued an unmodified auditor's report on the Directorate's 2019-20 financial statements and an unmodified limited assurance report on its 2019-20 statement of performance. The Directorate partially resolved an audit finding relating to the review of salary reports and did not resolve an audit finding relating to the review of audit logs for its school administration system. Two new audit findings were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bank signatories who can make payments using cheques or electronic funds transfer from the Directorate's bank accounts are sometimes not current ACT Government employees. Whilst payments require authorisation of two bank signatories, this increases the risk of fraudulent payments being made from the Directorate's bank accounts; and</li> <li>A result was not measured in accordance with the Financial Management Act 1996 in the statement of performance for the accountability indicator: 'Disability Education - Individual Learning Plans completed for students in special and mainstream schools who access special education service'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salary reports – the Directorate is continuing to reinforce compliance in this area;</li> <li>Audit logs – the Directorate will address this as part of its replacement of the school administration system;</li> <li>Bank signatories – the Directorate will address this audit finding; and</li> <li>Statement of Performance result – The shift to remote learning as part of the ACT Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic occurred at the time this annual Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) Audit would usually be conducted and at a time where the Directorate was supporting schools to prioritise a focus on the immediate learning and wellbeing needs of students. This impacted the timeframes for the conduct of the ILPs Audit. The return to face-to-face learning has now provided an opportunity for a continuation of the ILP audit process. An ILP audit will be undertaken in 2021 and results will be provided in the next reporting period.</li> </ul>	In progress



# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## 2021 – 2022 HALF YEARLY STATEMENT OF PERFORMANCE

### Talking points:

- The results for most accountability indicators show that the Directorate's performance as at 31 December 2021 was generally in line with expectations.
- The ACT Government's Performance Measurement Framework guidelines define a variance of 5 per cent or lower as immaterial, and that of 10 per cent or higher as material and requiring an explanation of the material variance. A variance of between 5 and 10 per cent is material where it is considered significant and as such is a matter of judgement.
- Historically, the Directorate has applied a consistent approach of providing explanations for variances of  $\pm 10$  per cent from the target. Give this, the Statement includes explanations for variances that are  $\pm 10$  per cent from the target (or pro-rata six monthly targets).

### Key Information

#### Positive variances

- In Output Class 1, Early Childhood Education indicator (b) '*Number of enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in preschool in public schools*' has a **variance of 15.7 per cent as a result of an increase in the enrolments** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in preschool that was greater than anticipated.

#### Negative variances

- **Negative variances** are recorded against **two indicators under Education and Care Services** and **one indicator under Senior Secondary Education** categories from Output Class 1. These indicators relate to Education and Care Services (a) '*Assessment and ratings completed within legislated timeframes*' and (b) '*Annual compliance audit is delivered in full*', and Senior Secondary Education (g) '*Percentage of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in public schools who received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate*'.
- Variances for percentages for the completion of assessments and ratings of education and care services within legislated timeframes and the delivery of the annual compliance audit are **minus 10 per cent and minus 24 per cent**, respectively. It is noted that the variance for the annual compliance audit indicator (Education and Care Services indicator b) has been calculated on a pro-rata, half-yearly target.
- The negative variances are a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the early child education and care (ECEC) sector in the ACT. **Compliance audits were suspended** between 1 August 2021 and 6 December 2021. 10 of the 39 scheduled reportable compliance audits for the year were completed between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2021.
- Variances for the percentage of all year 12 students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 12 students in public schools who received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (Senior Secondary Education indicator g) was **minus 25.6 per cent**. This

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larger negative variance can be impacted due to the proportionally smaller number of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

- A total of **134 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students were enrolled in year 12** at the February 2021 census (including Older O and O2), and **90 students** received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate leading to the **67 per cent completion rate**. The smaller number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can result in large percentage variances due to changes in circumstances during the school year and must therefore be interpreted with caution.

## Other indicators

- In addition to the accountability indicators, the Controlled Recurrent Payments indicator from Total Output Class 1 Public School Education recorded a **positive variance of 11.4 per cent**. The variance was due to a drawdown of cash in December 2021 to pay the first payroll in January 2022 and a drawdown for workers compensation and insurance premiums for the full year.
- The Total Cost and the Controlled Recurrent Payments indicators from Output 2.1 Non-government Education recorded a **negative variance of 44.7 per cent and 15.9 per cent** respectively, implying the spending on non-government education was below the pro-rata target for the July-December 2021 period. The variances are **due to timing of payments** associated with the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the National School Chaplaincy Program National Partnership.

## Background:

- Last financial year (2020-21) was the last reporting year against several indicators relating to the percentage of year 12 students who received their Tertiary Entrance Statement, percentage of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who received their Tertiary Entrance Statement, percentage of students who received a national recognised vocational qualification, and the apparent retention of public school students. These indicators were discontinued, and minor amendments were made to the indicators for reporting from 2021-22.
- Previous discontinued indicator (f) *'Percentage of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who receive a Tertiary Entrance Statement'* from Senior Secondary Education category of Output Class 1 recorded large variances over the last few years. This indicator and reported variances were the subject of queries from the media and members of the Assembly.
- Although this indicator was discontinued from 2020-21 onwards, the indicator 'g' from Senior Secondary Education category of Output Class 1 *'Percentage of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in public schools who received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate'* has a recorded significant negative variance for this Statement. This variance may generate queries from the media or members of the Assembly.

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- It is noted that data to calculate results for some indicators are **not** available during the first six months of the financial year. These are:
  - **Disability education**
    - a. Individual Learning Plans completed for students in special and mainstream schools who access special education services,
  - **Senior secondary education**
    - a. Percentage of year 10 students in public schools who proceed to public secondary college education,
    - b. Percentage of year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in public schools who proceed to public secondary college education,
    - c. Apparent retention of all public school students from year 7 to year 12 (discontinued indicator),
    - d. Percentage of all year 10 students in public schools who proceed to year 12 at a public senior secondary college, and
    - e. Percentage of year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who proceed to year 12 at a public senior secondary college.
- These indicators need data from sources including the audit of Individual Learning Plans which is undertaken in May, the February student census, and the Schools Australia publication of the Australian Bureau of Statistics released in February/March.
- Results for these indicators are measured in the second half of the financial year and are reported in the Directorate's end of year Statement of Performance and in the Annual Report.

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**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## EDU COVID-19 RESPONSE & EXPOSURE IN ACT SCHOOLS

### Talking points:

- In line with revised reporting approaches across ACT Government, schools will not be listed as exposure sites in the way they were in 2021.
- As Minister for Education and Youth Affairs outlined on 31 January 2022, ACT Government reporting on COVID-19 cases will not include individual named educational settings.
- **The priority is communicating directly with those who may be impacted.**
- Schools will continue to communicate directly with parents and carers when there is a COVID-19 case in their child's cohort and advise them of any action they need to take.
- In most cases, impacted people are alerted to monitor for symptoms but can continue to attend school if they don't have symptoms.
- The Government's school Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) program is also helping identify positive COVID-19 cases before they come to school.
- During the week ending Sunday 20 February 2022, 1001 cases of COVID-19 were reported to 120 ACT schools. This data includes both public and non-government schools (years K-12) in the ACT. ([https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements/covid-19-cases-in-schools/\\_nocache](https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/covid-school-arrangements/covid-19-cases-in-schools/_nocache))

### Key Information

- The actions for specific school settings in response to a COVID-19 exposure are outlined in the Health Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Education.
  - These guidelines have been developed through consultation with ACT Health and the Education Directorate.
  - The attachment outlines the actions that will be followed across three broad settings:
    - P-12 school settings
    - Individual situations in specialist settings and small group programs
    - Early Childhood Education and Care Services (ECECS).

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- The Directorate has ongoing consultation with key stakeholders including:
  - CPSU
  - AEU
  - UWU
  - ACTPA
  - ACT P&C Council
  - AIS and CEO

## Background Information

- The ACT lockdown commenced at **5:00 pm on 12 August 2021**.

## Key dates for the Education Directorate response include:

Date	Milestone
Pre-lockdown	The Directorate was undertaking planning for their COVID-19 response, which included a strategy for a snap lockdown, a case at one, or multiple schools and delivering remote learning.
12 August 2021	Lockdown commenced at 5:00pm. The Directorate moved to operationalise the Lockdown Response Team to oversee operations during lockdown. The Deputy Director-General was appointed Lockdown Response Lead. Five pupil free days were declared to prepare for remote learning.
13 August 2021	Lockdown Response Team responded to positive cases at one or more schools.
20 August 2021	The Directorate moved to remote learning.
Remote Learning period	Over the 11 weeks of lockdown (12 August – 27 October 2021), the Education Directorate managed a series of exposure sites at ACT Schools including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• twenty six (26) public schools,</li> <li>• seven (7) outside school hours care providers,</li> <li>• 19 Early Childhood Education and Care providers (including three (3) Family Day Care educators); and,</li> <li>• fifteen (15) non-Government schools.</li> </ul>
5 October 2021	Year 12 students returned to on-campus learning in part to allow for preparation for the AST which sat on the 12 - 13 October 2021.
18 October 2021	Year 11 students returned to on-campus learning
25 October 2021	ACT public schools commenced a staggered returned to on-campus learning

## Return to school in 2022

Date	Milestone
24 January 2022	The ACT Government announced that students would be returning to face to face learning for Term 1 2022, supported by the provision of Rapid Antigen Tests for the first 4 weeks of Term 1. The return to school was also supported with updated Health Guidelines and the Term 1 Plan.
31 January 2022	New students commenced face to face learning.
1 February 2022	Returning students commenced face to face learning.
17 February 2022	The ACT Government announced that Rapid Antigen Tests would continue to be provided until the end of Week 8 of Term 1.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## RETURN FOR TERM 1 2022

### Talking points

- On 31 January 2022 Kindergarten, year 7 and new students across the system returned to school.
- On 1 February 2022 the remaining year levels of returning students returned to school.
- It has been a positive start to the school year with more than **50,000 students welcomed back** to ACT public schools as planned.
- While the pandemic is posing a significant challenge to schools and the communities that surround them, we are doing what we need to in order to keep them as safe as possible and ensure a great education for our next generation.
- During January 2022 school staff were busy preparing for the return of students including reviewing and preparing their **COVID Safety and Assurance Plans** and ensuring all measures including sanitisers, cohorting, physical distancing, ventilation, and personal protection equipment (PPE) were ready and in place to ensure a successful and safe start to the school year.
- As part of the ACT Government's COVID-19 Risk mitigation strategy for the safe commencement of the 2022 school year, each student and school staff member were provided with two **Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)** per week for the first four weeks of term 1.
- The use of RATs is voluntary but is encouraged so that individuals in the education sector are able to proactively manage their health and to support decision making.
- While we must remain vigilant, there are significant health and wellbeing benefits of face-to-face learning for our children, and schools should be open where possible.
- The *Back-to-School* arrangements for term 1 2022 provide a consistent framework for translating health guidelines across public school sites. The plan manages the safety of staff, children, and young people.
- This plan, along with comprehensive FAQs are publicly available on the Education Directorate website.
- Each school will have its own COVID-19 safety plan in place, tailored to the individual circumstances of the school environment, staffing arrangements and student cohort. Safe practices including: cohorting, mask wearing, and improved cleaning, ventilation and hygiene measures continue.
- The Education Directorate is continuing to engage with key stakeholders to ensure schools support their community.

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## Key Information

- Work Health and Safety is at the core of the COVID-19 safety plan with a suite of resources and tools to ensure consistency between schools while allowing them to adapt the health guidelines to their local context.
- The plan is supported by a communication campaign which supports the health, safety and teaching and learning approaches taken across ACT schools to ensure our community receives messaging at the same time in relation to COVID-19 plans and updates.
- **Mandatory vaccinations** for all staff working across early childhood education and care services, primary schools, out of school hours care, and specialist and flexible education settings. This also applies to staff in preschool to year 10 schools where they share a campus with those younger year groups.
- ACT public school staff or other staff who work in our schools who choose not to be vaccinated without a medical exemption, will be supported to work from home where suitable duties can be identified, or **redeployed to suitable duties within the Education Directorate or broader ACT Public service**.
- **Ventilation and indoor air quality** are being optimised to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Good ventilation is one part of a suite of measures to minimise transmission in schools, like vaccination, physical distancing, good hygiene, cleaning, and mask use.
- Careful planning has informed our response, should a school become identified as a **COVID-19 exposure location** by ACT Health. The Education Directorate works with schools through a systematic process from response to initial notification, management of site to the return back to onsite learning.

## Background Information

- The response to COVID-19 by ACT schools and early childhood education and care services has been informed by advice from the ACT Chief Health Officer. The advice has led to a sensible, measured approach to inform and educate school communities and service providers.
- This includes non-government schools affiliated with Catholic Education and the Association of Independent Schools.
- The Plan ensures:
  - continuity of education to children and young people
  - support for staff and student's health, safety, and wellbeing
  - minimised impacts of the pandemic on the ACT education and early childhood education and care sectors.

## Portfolio/s: Education and Youth Affairs

### RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING UPDATE

#### Talking points

- As part of the ACT Government's COVID-19 Risk mitigation strategy for the safe commencement of the 2022 school year, each student and school staff members, in both government and non-government schools, were provided with two Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) per week for the first four weeks of term 1.
- RATs are also available for staff in Early Childhood Education Centres during this time.
- By the end of Week 4, Term 1 the ACT Government will have provided approximately 800,000 RATs to support the ACT education sector.
- On 16 February 2022 the ACT Government announced that it would extend the provision of RATs for a further four weeks, until the end of week 8, Term 1 (25 March 2022). A further 800,000 RATs will be provided between weeks 5 to 8.
- Providing RATs to the ACT education sector enables children and staff who are symptomatic access to testing and will assist with identifying COVID-19 cases as early as possible.
- Use of RATs is voluntary, but is encouraged so that individuals in the education sector are able to proactively manage their health and support decision making.
- Where use of a RAT leads to a positive test result for COVID-19, the result will need to be registered with ACT Health and the school or care provider must be notified. The individual will be required to isolate for seven days, and close household contacts will be required to take a test as soon as they can and quarantine in accordance with current ACT Health requirements.

#### Key Information

- Both the New South Wales and Victorian Governments have committed to Rapid Antigen Testing in education settings as part of their Term 1, 2022 return to school plans. The guidance for using RATs, and distribution models **differ between the states**.
- The Education Directorate is being supported by ACT Health and ACT Emergency Services Agency to make RATs available to education settings across the ACT for further distribution to their staff, and ACT school students.
- As of 11 February 2022 four week's supplies of RATs have been provided to all ACT schools, with onwards distribution to staff and families in progress. ECEC services received their week three and four allocation of RAT kits for staff between 11-14 February 2022.
- The Education Directorate is working closely with ESA and ACT Health to distribute RATs to support the ACT education sector through weeks 5 to 8.
- In ACT public schools, college students have been able to collect their RAT allocation. Families were required to collect RAT allocations for students in P-10. From



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4 February 2022, student collection has been available across all schools unless parents opt out of that collection method.

## Background Information

- The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved a number of rapid antigen self-test (home use) kits for supply in Australia from 1 November 2021. Rapid Antigen tests are available through pharmacies, local retail outlets and online.
- Rapid Antigen Test kits enable individuals to test themselves for COVID-19 at home with results available between 10 and 20 minutes.
- The Commonwealth Government has confirmed it will subsidise 50 per cent of the cost of rapid antigen tests in education settings for the first four weeks of term.

## Portfolio: Education and Youth Affairs

### MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR EDUCATION WORKERS

#### Talking points

- As at 16 February 2022, approximately **98 per cent school-based employees have complied with the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination** or have provided an approved exemption. There are a total of **37 staff members who have not provided** the mandatory information comprising ■ school leaders, 25 classroom teachers and ■ non-teaching staff.
- Any ACT public school staff who choose not to be vaccinated without an approved exemption will continue to be **supported to undertake alternative duties or redeployed to other suitable roles** within the Education Directorate or broader ACT Public Service.
- The Education Support Office (ESO) within the Education Directorate has been working to implement the Public Health Direction on behalf of schools including ensuring any new employees and employees transferring to mandated sites are compliant with the public health order.
- At the time of implementation of the Public Health Direction, the Education Directorate sent information to all impacted staff, including casual staff, about how to comply with this Public Health Direction. Staff have been provided with three ways to provide evidence of their vaccination status or approved exemption: via a smartform, online appointment or face-to-face.
- Throughout January 2022, contact has been made with all new employees and employees returning from long term leave in 2022 on how to comply with the Public Health Direction and provide evidence of their vaccination status or approved exemption.
- The recent announcement regarding the extension of the Public health Direction until 13 May 2022 has been communicated to all employees.
- Job advertisements and recruitment processes have been updated to ensure compliance with the Public Health Direction for new employees.
- Education Directorate employees, along with all workers in the ACT impacted by the ACT Chief Health Officer's Public Health Direction about mandatory vaccination, were consulted prior to the direction being signed on 19 October 2021.

#### Key Information

- On 19 October 2021, the ACT Chief Health Officer (CHO) enacted the *Public Health (ACT School or Early Childhood Education and Care Workers COVID-19 Vaccination) Emergency Direction 2021* mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for workers in certain school and early childhood education and care settings. Following an initial extension until 12 February 2022, the Public Health Direction was extended for a further 90 days until 13 May 2022.

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- This Public Health Direction applies to all staff working across early childhood education and care services, primary schools, out of school hours care, and specialist and flexible education settings until 13 May 2022. This will also apply to all staff in preschool to year 10 schools where they share a campus with these younger age groups.
- In ACT Public Schools, this applies to permanent, temporary, casual, contracted or voluntary workers who work directly with children, or are in regular contact with children, which includes:
  - classroom teachers,
  - learning assistants,
  - school administrative staff, including building and general services staff,
  - cleaners,
  - allied health professionals, including psychologists, speech therapists etc., who regularly or permanently attend these identified settings,
  - students on placements, and
  - canteen workers.
- Staff identified in the Public Health Direction were required to provide proof of vaccination or an approved exemption to their employer and have their first dose by 1 November 2021, and a second dose by 29 November 2021. Exemptions to the mandatory vaccination for staff based on medical grounds will be approved by the Director-General.
- On 21 October 2021, the Education Directorate finalised the *Education and Care Workers Mandatory Covid-19 Vaccination Implementation Procedures* (Procedures) that sets out clear direction and guidance on the implementation of this requirement for all identified staff. All unions have confirmed their support of the Procedures and the Directorate's approach to implementation.
- On 22 October 2021, the procedures and reporting options were launched through an all staff communications from the Director-General. Principals have also sent letters/communications to their staff members to provide information on the reporting requirements.
- Education Directorate staff working in schools and early education centres were prioritised for COVID-19 Pfizer vaccinations at ACT Government COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics, and have been given priority access to COVID-19 vaccine boosters from January 2022.

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Portfolio/s: Education and Youth Affairs

## VACCINATION RATES

### Talking points

#### 5-11 year old students

- From 9 December 2021, children aged 5-11 became eligible to register for Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations.
- From 10 January 2022 children aged 5-11 became eligible to receive Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations at ACT Health Clinics, General Practitioners and Pharmacies.
- As at 21 February 2022 **77.5 per cent of 5-11 year old children have received their first dose of vaccine.** (<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/updates/act-covid-19-statistics>)

#### Specialist Settings Program

- An **in-reach vaccination program** has been provided for **5-11 year old** students in the two specialist primary settings:
  - Malkara School
  - Cranleigh School
- First doses for these students were administered at Malkara School and Cranleigh School in the period from 24-28 January 2022.
- A total of **32 students were vaccinated** in the **first dose clinics**.
- Second doses will be administered 21-24 March 2022.
- Currently there are a total of 32 bookings made for this in-reach program.
- An **in-reach program** was provided for **students aged 12 years and above** from specialist high school settings in 2021 with first doses administered in the period from 13 to 17 September 2021, and second doses administered in the period from 5 to 8 October 2021. These included students from:
  - Woden School
  - Black Mountain School
  - Malkara School
  - Cranleigh School
  - Galilee School
  - Flexible Education and CC Cares Cohorts
- A **total of 322 Pfizer COVID-19 vaccinations were administered via the program** for students from high school settings.

#### 12 Years Old and Above Students

- On the week of 13-20 September 2021 Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations became available to students aged 12 years and above at general practitioners, pharmacies and at the AIS vaccination centre.
- As at 21 February 2022, **98.6 per cent of 12 year old and above** children have received two doses of vaccine. (<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/updates/act-covid-19-statistics>)

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Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General  
Contact Officer name: Kate McMahon  
Lead Directorate: Education  
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## 16-17 year old students

- On 3 February 2022, following advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), the ACT Government announced that mass vaccination clinics are now providing 16-17 year olds with bookings for their booster shot.

## Year 12 Students

- In 2021, a total of 2,720 year 12 students made appointments via ACT Health to receive their Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination.
- Many other year 12 students received their COVID-19 vaccination via booking with primary health care providers or by making an appointment to receive the vaccine prior to the priority access being provided to them.

## School Student and Staff Vaccination Timeline – 2021-2022

Date	Milestone
21 March 2022	Specialist school Primary Schools in-reach vaccination program (2 <sup>nd</sup> dose).
3 February 2022	Mass vaccination clinics commence providing 16-17 year olds with bookings for their booster shot.
24 January 2022	Specialist school Primary Schools in-reach vaccination program (1 <sup>st</sup> dose).
17 January 2022	ACT Government announced that ACT teachers, education staff, early childhood education and care workers will be prioritised to receive a booster at the Canberra Airport vaccination clinic when it reopens on 24 January 2022.
10 January 2022	5-11 year olds were eligible to receive Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations at ACT Health Clinics, General Practitioners and Pharmacies.
9 December 2021	5-11 year olds were eligible to register for Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations.
19 October 2021	CHO issued <b>Health Direction mandating vaccination for all workers at ECECs and schools that cater for children under 12 years, specialist schools and flexible education programs</b> - first dose required by 1 November, second dose by 29 November 2021.
13 October 2021	CHO announced <b>intention to mandate vaccination for all workers</b> at ECECs and schools that cater for children under 12 years.
5-8 October 2021	Specialist school high school in-reach vaccination program (2 <sup>nd</sup> dose).
20 September 2021	12-15 year olds became eligible for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination at an ACT Government clinic. Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations also became available at selected pharmacies.
13-17 September 2021	Specialist school high school in-reach vaccination program (1 <sup>st</sup> dose).
13 September 2021	12-15 year olds became eligible for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination at general practitioners and pharmacies.
3 September 2021	Commencement of <b>priority vaccination</b> access for all ACT Year 12 students, AST supervisors, teachers, educators, and staff that have direct contact with children in their daily work at schools and early childhood centres.
1 September 2021	16 to 29 year olds became eligible for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination at an ACT Government clinic.
23 August 2021	16 to 29 year olds able to register for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination.

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## Key Information

- The vaccination program for staff and students was provided through a close collaboration between ACT Health and ACT Education.
- In late 2021, the prioritisation of staff and year 12 students was successful in ensuring access to vaccination appointments to enable a return to on campus learning.
- The Specialist settings in-reach programs have been well received by parents and students in these cohorts.
- Vaccination is underway for the 5–11 year-old cohort between ACT Education and ACT Health.

## Background Information

- According to the ACT Health COVID-19 Advice Page, ACT Vaccination rates for people 12+ have been leading the nation. As of 21 January 2022 over 99% had received at least one dose; 98.6% have received a second dose and 50.3% have received a third booster dose.
- Staff eligible for a priority booking for their initial vaccine have been contacted directly by their school, early childhood centre or out of school hours care service with booking information.
- Staff were provided with priority access at the new airport vaccination hub on its opening for booster doses.

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Portfolio/s: Education and Youth Affairs

## HEALTH ADVICE AND SAFETY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS

### Talking points

- The Education Directorate has developed COVID-19 safety plans and procedures for each school setting.
- **High levels of vaccination** combined with **public health measures** are the best protections against COVID-19.
- Schools are continuing to follow **health directions** including:
  - Use of CBR Check in app for staff and for students 16+ in public schools
  - Staying home when sick
  - Good hygiene (e.g., hand washing)
  - Mask wearing
    - For all staff, visitors and students in years 7-12 when indoors and outside in close contact with others, except when eating.
    - Primary students in years 3-6 are encouraged to wear a mask. This is at the discretion of their parents or carers.
    - Younger children should not wear masks (choke hazard).
  - Physical distancing including:
    - cohorts not mixing
    - increasing in-class distancing where possible
    - limiting gatherings and visitors on site.
  - Environmental cleaning of high touch surfaces.
  - Extracurricular activities, incursions, indoor sports, activities such as dance class, choir, band or orchestra on school sites for individuals, classes or cohort groups with COVID-19 Safety Plans in place.
  - For the commencement of the 2022 school year, only essential excursions and activities involving individual classes or year groups are allowed, where these form a core component of the curriculum.
  - Ventilation – including increasing fresh air flow and outdoor learning.
  - Rapid Antigen Testing of staff and students
- The ACT Government invested an **\$5.7 million** in schools and early childhood education and care services to support the safe return of students and staff to on campus learning.
  - **\$2.9 million to improve ventilation** in ACT public schools. This includes building works, CO2 monitoring, increased maintenance for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and **\$0.3 million** for anticipated increase in electricity bills.

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- **\$1.5 million for additional relief teaching hours** to support public schools to implement these COVID-safe measures, including covering staff absences and enabling staggered breaks.
  - **\$688,000 to buy additional masks and hand sanitiser** for public schools, early childhood education and care services and for low fee paying non-government schools.
  - **\$500,000 for additional shade structures** in ACT public schools. This will support schools to maximise use of outdoor learning spaces.
  - **Two additional senior psychologists** to provide online counselling and support for ACT public school students.
- In addition to this support, the ACT Government invested **\$2.9 million** in the continuation of school day cleaning to the end of Term 4 2021.
  - In **Term 1 and 2 of 2022** additional resourcing totalling **\$12.6 million** was allocated to continue to meet the costs managing COVID-19 in schools
  - **These investments** totaling **\$21.2 million** and has enabled schools to prioritise the health and safety of staff and young people including their wellbeing, while also allowing students to continue their learning .

## Key Information

- Work Health and Safety is at the core of the planning process. Resources have been developed to ensure consistency between schools while allowing them to adapt the ACT Chief Health Officer's *Health Guidelines for ACT Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care Services* (health guidelines) to their local context.
- The *Back-to-School* arrangements for *ACT Public Schools* for Term 1 2022 provide a consistent framework for translating the health guidelines across public school sites. The plan manages the safety of staff, children and young people .
- This plan, along with comprehensive FAQs are publicly available on the Education Directorate website.
- All three unions (AEU, CPSU, UWU) were consulted in the development of the COVID-19 planning for schools.

## Background Information

- The response to COVID-19 by ACT schools and early childhood education and care services has been informed by advice from the ACT Chief Health Officer. The advice has led to a sensible, measured approach to inform and educate school communities and service providers.
- This includes non-government schools affiliated with Catholic Education and the Association of Independent Schools.
- The Strategy ensures:
  - continuity of education to children and young people
  - Support for staff and student's health, safety and wellbeing
  - Minimised impacts of the pandemic on the ACT education and early childhood education and care sectors.



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Portfolio/s: Education and Youth Affairs

## VENTILATION IN SCHOOLS

### Talking Points

- Improving air quality in ACT public schools is a priority to enable onsite learning and teaching in accordance with COVID-19 Health Advice.
- All learning spaces (about 3500) across the school network have been checked to ensure adequate ventilation.
- Every school has its own **Indoor Air Quality Plan** which lists actions undertaken by EDU (e.g. HVAC systems change) and actions for schools to undertake each day to improve air quality. The Indoor Air Quality Plans have been updated for the start of the 2022 year. Where required, the Plans provide information about actions undertaken over the summer break. The Plans can be found on each schools' website.
- Ventilation is one component of a multilayered approach that has been implemented to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in schools.
- In line with expert advice, ventilation is being maximised by opening windows in classrooms, adjusting HVAC systems and turning on exhaust fans in rooms that have them. The message to the community from schools is, *If you would like to make a contribution to your school, please speak with your principal about which types of donations would be most welcome.*
- Indoor Air Quality actions are being prioritised at preschools due to the potential vulnerability of this cohort.
- Supply chain delays and stock availability has delayed the commencement of works at some schools.
- UV-C light units have been installed in air conditioning systems at priority sites where mechanical ventilation does not introduce fresh air. UV-C lights installed in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning systems have been used extensively in health settings to inactivate viruses as they pass the light unit. Units are installed inside the casing of the air conditioning systems. Units that do not produce ozone have been selected to ensure the safety of students.
- Winter ventilation systems are currently being scoped for sites where ventilation is predominantly via opening of windows. Solutions include Heat and Energy Recovery Ventilation (ERV and HRV). These units allow fresh air to be provided while windows are closed. The units are a feature of all new schools. The first retrofit commenced at Macquarie Primary School in the week commencing 27 January 2022.
- The routine use of portable **HEPA filters** and portable carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors across all ACT schools is not supported at this time, as the evidence for the additional public health benefit of these units over other public health measures and maximising fresh air is currently limited.
- EDU will continue to be guided by ACT Health and AHPPC advice and the evolving evidence on the specific benefit of these devices in addition to other public health measures in a school setting.

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Contact Officer name: Andrew Parkinson  
Lead Directorate: Education  
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## Key Information

- An important part of ACT public schools' return to on campus learning is to ensure that there is proper ventilation in line with Health advice for managing COVID-19.
- It is important to note that ventilation is part of the broader suite of controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school settings including vaccination, physical distancing, good hygiene, cleaning and mask use, and should not be considered in isolation of other mitigation strategies.
- The CHO, AHPPC, World Health Organisation and Safe Work Australia recommend ensuring fresh air ventilation is optimised in all settings, including through adjusting mechanical systems to increase fresh (external) air supply and reduce air recirculation, and use of natural ventilation such as opening windows and doors.
- EDU has developed an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) framework to assess the IAQ of all public schools commencing with ACT public colleges.
- All public school learning areas have been assessed under the IAQ framework with immediate actions implemented to optimise fresh air flow. There are 3500 learning areas in ACT public schools (including approx. 3000 classrooms).
- Every school has had an IAQ Plan (see example at end of brief) completed under the framework for the return to on-campus learning – this includes a list of actions already undertaken by EDU (including increasing fresh air ventilation via HVAC systems) and actions for schools to undertake each day (including opening windows to promote natural ventilation and turning on exhaust fans). These school actions will be carried out by non-teaching staff like Building Services Officers.
- Site specific IAQ plans were provided to all ACT public colleges on 1 October 2021.
- Site specific IAQ plans were provided to all other ACT public schools on 22 October 2021.
- From this work, EDU is confident that fresh air flow can be increased in all public school classrooms to improve ventilation.
- IAQ Plans for all school sites have been updated to include actions undertaken in term 4 and over the summer break.
- Cooler classroom temperatures during cool weather and warmer classroom temperatures during hotter weather are expected to result from increasing fresh air to learning environments.
- Higher energy bills are anticipated to result from the increase in fresh air as a greater volume of air needs to be heated or cooled.
- EDU is investigating technologies to improve air quality in classrooms including modern ventilation systems for toilets and bathrooms and air purification systems and securing the supply of these where appropriate.
- EDU is monitoring air quality in learning spaces to further refine the strategy to provide the best ventilation for ACT public schools including pre-schools.

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- Where access to natural ventilation is limited and where mechanical ventilation can not be provided in the short term, germicidal UVC light units are being installed to existing air conditioners. These units are safe and are used to reduce transmission of viruses and bacteria in health settings. The units have been implemented predominantly in preschools.
- Heat Recovery Ventilation (HRV) systems have been purchased to provide a long term energy efficient solution to ventilation of learning environments. These arrived in January 2022. The units are specifically designed for classrooms and control fresh air automatically in response to CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

## Background Information

- To support schools to prepare for return to on campus learning following lockdown in 2021. The ACT Government allocated **\$5.7 million to support essential supplies** such as masks and hand sanitiser, improved ventilation and additional relief teacher hours. **\$2.9 million of this funding was allocated to improve ventilation** in ACT public schools. This includes building works, CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring, increased maintenance for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and an anticipated increase in electricity bills.
- ACT public schools are very well placed as there has been an extensive program of work underway to improve school ventilation since the 2019-2020 bushfires.
- In early 2020, **400 Dyson air purifiers** were distributed to all public schools (88 at the time) for use in classrooms and other spaces to provide relief from smoke effects. These Dyson air purifiers have a HEPA filter contained within the unit. Filters require active management and replacement to ensure they don't have unintended consequences such as spreading mould spores.
- EDU has been progressively upgrading building controls in 65 schools in order to have better control of the air intake sources for the Heating, Ventilation and Cooling (HVAC) systems.
- Many schools have building controls with CO<sub>2</sub> sensors which provides a proxy for ventilation in a room. CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring will be expanded across schools in 2022.
- In 2018, EDU commenced a program of installing CO<sub>2</sub> sensors in schools. To date, more than 326 CO<sub>2</sub> sensors with remote monitoring and management systems have been installed across 40 public schools. Additional CO<sub>2</sub> sensors are being installed at approximately 25 ACT public schools with suitable building control systems. This will mean 73 per cent (65 of 89) schools will soon have CO<sub>2</sub> sensors to the monitor and manage indoor air quality.
- Not all classrooms are connected to large HVAC systems with CO<sub>2</sub> sensors, however these rooms typically have external natural ventilation and split system air conditioning units so that fresh air can be introduced and air flow maintained.
- Longer term, EDU will look to introduce additional mechanical ventilation in spaces that require it. This may include installation of new building control/management systems with CO<sub>2</sub> sensors that can remotely monitor and control HVAC systems and windows as well as installing supplemental ventilation such as modern exhaust fans in bathrooms and toilets.

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Contact Officer name: Andrew Parkinson  
Lead Directorate: Education  
TRIM Ref: FILE2022/25

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

<b>Canberra High School Indoor Air Quality Plan</b>	
<b>Background:</b>	<p>As part of the return to on campus learning in Term 4 2021, ACT Health has advised that schools optimise fresh air circulation as one of the controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools.</p> <p>The risk of COVID-19 transmission is higher in crowded and poorly ventilated spaces where people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. Good ventilation is one part of a suite of controls to minimise transmission in schools, like vaccination, physical distancing, student cohorting, good hygiene, cleaning and mask use.</p> <p>This Plan identifies actions that have been undertaken at your school by the Education Directorate and provides additional measures for the school to undertake to optimise the fresh air ventilation in the school in Term 4.</p>
<b>Health Advice:</b>	<p>The Chief Health Officer, the <a href="#">Australian Health Protection Principal Committee</a>, <a href="#">World Health Organisation</a> and <a href="#">Safe Work Australia</a> all recommend good indoor air quality to reduce the chance of COVID-19 transmission.</p>
<b>Advice:</b>	<p>The ventilation systems at Canberra High School have now been assessed by the Directorate in accordance with the WHO guidance.</p> <p>Fresh air ventilation will be achieved through a mix of natural (opening windows and doors) and mechanical (cooling and ventilation systems).</p> <p>The settings for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning systems have been reset to achieve good fresh air supply and <u>should not be altered by the school</u>.</p> <p>Increasing the fresh air to classrooms may increase energy costs. Classrooms are also likely to experience lower room temperatures during cooler weather and higher room temperatures in warmer weather.</p> <p><b>Learning and teaching spaces with fresh air ventilation from either natural or mechanical systems meet the COVID-19 Health Advice. The school is to prioritise the use of these spaces for indoor teaching and learning along with outdoor spaces.</b></p>
<b>Daily actions to be undertaken by the school in Term 4:</b>	<p>Additional daily measures the school will undertake include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening windows and doors in teaching spaces and other shared spaces of the school to supplement fresh air. Windows above ground level are to be opened only where window restriction is in place to ensure student safety. In line with the National Construction Code, window opening is to be 125mm or less.</li> <li>• Improving air circulation through use of ceiling fans and split system air-conditioning units, only when windows are open.</li> <li>• Ensure bathroom, kitchen and any other exhaust fans are on and operating at full capacity while the school or program is operating and for some time before and after occupancy.</li> </ul>

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<p>Actions undertaken:</p>	<p>The following actions have been undertaken by the Directorate and its service providers to increase fresh air ventilation in the indoor teaching and learning spaces at the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• air handling units have been programmed to supply additional fresh air via the mechanical ventilation systems</li> <li>• evaporative cooling in the school will provide full fresh air when operating in either cooling or fan mode. When not in operation, fresh air is to be provided by opening windows</li> <li>• contractors will continue work to audit and enhance the operation of the ventilation systems.</li> </ul>
<p>Support or further advice:</p>	<p>For further advice, schools can contact their ICW Network Officer or email <a href="mailto:ACT.Education@act.gov.au">ACT.Education@act.gov.au</a></p>

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

Early Childhood Development

## FUNDING FOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

### Talking points:

- To support the return to campus in term 4, 2021 following lockdown the ACT Government allocated **\$5.7 million** to support essential supplies such as masks and hand sanitiser, improved ventilation, and additional relief teacher hours.
- In addition to this support, the ACT Government invested **\$2.9 million in the continuation of school day cleaning to the end of Term 4 2021.**
- In **Term 1 and 2 of 2022** additional resourcing totalling **\$12.6 million** was allocated to continue to meet the costs managing COVID-19 in schools
- **These investments** totaling **\$21.2 million** and has enabled schools to prioritise the health and safety of staff and young people including their wellbeing, while also allowing students to continue their learning .

### Key Information

- The support provided under the ACT Government's COVID Response fund includes the following elements
  - **Provision of face masks and sanitiser** to public and low fee-paying non-government school students from Year 7-12, staff in both public and low fee-paying non-government schools, and for staff at early childhood education and care services.
  - **Additional capacity for relief staff** in ACT public schools to assist with managing operational changes potentially requiring additional supervision, and staff absences associated with COVID-19.
  - **Improving ventilation in ACT public schools**, along with associated costs relating to **increased HVAC maintenance and increased electricity usage**
  - **Additional Telehealth resources to support students**, and to address the ability of staff (school psychologists) to move between schools.
  - **Additional shade structures at schools** to allow for more outdoor space to be utilised by classes
- The Education Directorate continues to work closely with Treasury in assessing resourcing needs to support the safe return to on campus teaching and learning for students and staff.

### Background Information

- The investments made by the ACT Government to support the safe return to school for students and staff were made in response to the ACT lockdown which commenced on 12 August 2021.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

- Students returned to on-campus learning in a phased approach in line with the relevant Health advice from the beginning of Term 4 2021.
- The return to on campus learning was predicated on the relevant health advice, including the required changes to school operations, supports and measures that need to be put in place for students and staff to recommence safely to on campus learning.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

Portfolio/s: Early Childhood Development

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE AND OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE SUPPORTS

### Talking points:

- The spread of COVID-19 and the necessary response have had a substantial impact on the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, including outside school hours care (OSHC).
- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the ACT Government has engaged with ECEC stakeholders to hear their concerns, including; educators safety and wellbeing; issues about viability of services; and the impact restrictions have had on children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.
- ECEC Services have undertaken risk assessments to ensure the safety of children and staff. Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) has provided a model policy to assist services in managing the risk of COVID19 transmission, and guidance on what to do in the event of an exposure and temporary closure
- Since mid-December 2021, CECA has been operating from 8am–8pm seven days a week to offer support and guidance to the sector on COVID–19 related issues.

### Omicron Wave

- Between **4 December 2021 and 26 January 2022, a total of 64 ECEC services had to close for one to five days.** Decisions to close were made on the basis of risk of COVID-19 transmission or inability to operate due to quarantining staff.
- **A further 93 services (ECEC, OSHC and FDC educators) partially closed (room or rooms but not whole service).**
- On 25 January 2022, CECA and ACT Health commenced a new process to manage COVID-19 risks in Education and Care services. Education and Care services are supported to undertake a risk assessment of high, moderate and low risk of exposure. The service then contacts staff and families to advise them of their risk status and provide ACT Health advice on testing and quarantine recommendations.
- The new risk settings have enabled services to isolate affected rooms and cohorts of children, but remain open for lower risk individuals.
- On 4 February 2022, ACT Health amended the risk settings for OSHC to align services with schools years K to 12.

### Delta Wave

- Between **12 August and 3 December 2021, a total of 33 ECEC services were directed to close.**
- **A further 62 services (ECEC, OSHC and FDC educators) closed for part or all of the lockdown time at provider discretion.** For many of these services, providers consolidated attending children to one site.



# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

- From **25 October 2021**, ECEC services in the ACT were able to return to full operation. OSHC had a **graduated return between 25 October 2021 and 1 November 2021**. This was based on ACT Health advice.

## Key Information

### Supporting the ECEC Sector

- The ACT Government welcomed financial support offered to the ECEC sector by Australian Government during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recent announcement of additional allowable absences (now unlimited), and the further grounds for services allowance to waive gap fee.
- Despite this viability remains a concern for many services due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and there continues to be a need for Commonwealth Government support for services required to temporarily close or provide a reduced service. Whilst ECEC services can choose to waive gap fees in these circumstances, gap fees make up an average of 60% of their income and CCS payments alone do not cover their operating costs.
- On 17 January 2022, the ACT Government announced prioritisation of the ECEC sector in the booster vaccine rollout. This followed the Chief Health Officer's mandate in October 2021, for COVID-19 vaccinations for staff working directly with children in ECEC and OSHC. This decision continues to be well received by the ECEC sector and the ACT community.
- On 31 January 2022, the ACT Government announced the provision of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to all ECEC staff, working directly directly with children. During the following week CECA worked with ACT Health and the ESA to supply ECEC services with RATs for staff members for a two week period. A further consignment is being being arranged.

### Children's Education and Care Assurance

- In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, CECA established work streams responsible for monitoring and supporting ACT ECEC services, and focus on the safety of children. The four streams are:

**Capacity** and recovery— Planning contingencies for the strategic delivery of ECEC during the response to COVID-19, and recovery from.

**Support** — Proactively providing advice and support where possible to education and care services who may be experiencing operational difficulties. Assisting with applications to enable ongoing operation of the service.

**Child Safety** — Upholding child safety in ECEC settings. Maintaining and strengthening communication and coordination with key child protection agencies in a context where face to face may not be possible.

**Communication** — Timely, regular and relevant communication with the sector through different platforms. A communication plan has been developed to ensure that there is consistent ongoing communication.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

- CECA has supported services in planning for their transition out of lockdown and children’s return to education and care settings, including re-visiting their COVID-19 Risk Assessments.
- On 3 September 2021, Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA announced that the ACT Government was prioritising the ECEC workforce in the vaccination rollout. This commitment recognises the critical service early childhood educators provide children and families in the ACT.
- On 20 October 2021, the Chief Health Officer announced mandated COVID-19 vaccinations for staff working directly with children in early childhood education and care and outside school hours care through the *ACT Government Public Health (ACT Schools or Early Childhood Education and Care Workers COVID-19 Vaccination) Emergency Direction 2021*.
- The Health Direction applies to teachers, educators, pre-service teachers on placement, administrative staff, allied health professionals (including psychologists, speech therapists etc.) and cleaners.
- CECA has also completed an audit of 33 providers on the processes they have in place to comply with the Chief Health Officer’s direction.
- An audit was completed in November 2021 of emergency contact numbers for 50 selected providers. This process includes offering support and advice on the process required if services are subject to a COVID-19 exposure identified by ACT Health.

## Communication with the sector

- Comprehensive communications tailored to the sector’s needs during this time will be ongoing to keep providers, service leaders and educators well informed.
- A snapshot of CECA’s communications and engagements reach to providers, services, and educators from 12 August 2021 to 25 January 2022 is below:

Communication Channel	Reach	Target Audience
Targeted emails, alerts, updates, and notifications	63 emails in total distributed to targeted and sector wide email contacts. Reach ranges between 155 -1,000 per each distribution.	Education and care providers, service leaders and educators
Tailored phone calls	36 calls to services directed to close on ACT Health advice or voluntarily closed due to health concerns	Education and care services leaders and providers
Support calls	All non-government services will receive a wellbeing call to provide target support. Approximately 241 calls to services and providers have been made so far.	Education and care services leaders and providers
Education and care COVID-19 webpage	Overall page views 6,482	Education and care providers, services leaders, educators, families, and wider Canberra community.

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 Lead Directorate: Education  
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Communication Channel	Reach	Target Audience
Online forums and meetings	Three have been held since 12 August 2021. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 September 2021 Sector forum with Minister Berry <b>Attendance:</b> approximately 150.</li> <li>6 October 2021 Supporting children and families experiencing vulnerability forum. <b>Attendance:</b> approximately 150 <b>Recorded video:</b> reach 56 views</li> <li>14 January 2022 Sector COVID-19 management forum with ACT Health. <b>Attendance:</b> approximately 230 <b>Recorded video:</b> reach 57 views</li> </ul>	Education and care providers, service leaders, peakbodies and educators.
Surveys	Three surveys delivered to gauge sector viability, child attendance and staffing levels.	Education and care providers and services leaders
Facebook	Approximately 201 COVID-19 related posts distributed since 12 August 2021 <b>Overall page reach</b> since 12 August 2021 6,329  <b>Overall post reach</b> since 12 August 2021 62,965 <b>Overall page engagement</b> 5,669 since 12 August 2021	Existing audience of 1,199 individual education and care providers, service leaders and educators. Page and content reach is beyond this audience.

## Sector viability and support payments

- Australian Government ECEC Viability Support Package provided support for services in the ACT between August and October 2021. This package provided payments of either 25% or 40% (depending on service type) of pre-lockdown revenue to support services who met the package's eligibility criteria.
- During this period, the Australian Government also provided additional allowable absences for children, and allowed services to waive gap fees for children who were not attending ECEC (meaning that families did not need to pay while they were not accessing the service).
- On 9 November 2021, the Australian Government announce an additional 10 allowable absences for children in the 2020-2021 financial year and changes to the law that would allow service to waive gap fees for children who cannot attend

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

because they, or a member of their household, is required to isolate, or when the service or room at the service is closed.

- On 27 January 2022, the Australian Government extended the support for the early childhood sector by:
  - Providing allowable absences throughout January and February 2022, in response to the Omicron wave;
  - Increasing the reasons a service can waive gap fees for families to also allow children at higher risk of severe disease for COVID-19; a service or room closure, including on the guidance of state or territory government agency or because the child ratios cannot be safely met as educators must isolate; and
  - Allowing payment of CCS for absences at the start or end of an enrolment backdated to the 1 December 2021 until 30 June 2022.
- Throughout the pandemic the ACT Government has taken feedback from the ECEC sector through surveys. The responses show that viability is consistently a concern as services return to full operation, particularly for circumstances where services are required to temporarily close or children are unable to attend due to exposure to COVID-19.
- The ECEC sector surveys also highlighted concern for educator wellbeing, and for families experiencing vulnerability at this time. The ACT Government is providing support to services to help address these issues.
- The ACT Government continues to monitor this issue and is working collaboratively with the Australian Government to ensure the needs of the ACT sector are met.
- Eligible providers (ACT Property Group tenants) have the option to access rent relief through the extension of the Rental Relief Initiative. This initiative provided a waiver of rents for 1 September 2021 to 30 September 2021 (inclusive).

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## STAFF WELLBEING

### Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to supporting employees in a challenging, changing environment particularly since the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown in the ACT in 2021 and the subsequent return to schools in 2022 with the high prevalence of the COVID-19 Omicron variant in the ACT.
- To support this effort, the Education Directorate are ensuring the wellbeing of the workforce is a priority.
- The Directorate is continuing to promote existing universal and foundational staff wellbeing supports, with ongoing reactive supports, and identifying new and proactive wellbeing initiatives through a diversity of channels and methods.
- Some examples of these supports include:
  - **Information sessions** for all schools identified as exposure sites with wellbeing supports and contacts provided;
  - **Wellbeing education and check in sessions** for leaders, managers and identified staff groups to share information, strategies, and answer questions;
  - Availability of **dedicated and trained wellbeing officers** via the People and Performance Branch, to provide support and guidance to staff. Contact can be made via a hotline and inbox for direct support, and referrals can be made to request for support on behalf of a staff member.
  - A **direct hotline and inbox** for all staff to submit enquiries relating to how their work is affected by COVID and the recent lockdown. Enquiries include but are not limited to: casual employee eligibility for payment, flexible working arrangements, restrictions in the ACT to date, leave options, essential worker advice and the vaccination roll out for eligible staff. A response is provided within 24 hours and is managed by members of the People and Performance Branch.
  - **Regular communications** and all staff alerts from the Director General and other leaders to staff to remind them of the supports, resources and contacts available.

### Key Information

- The People and Performance HR Business Partner hotline and inbox is the direct COVID-19 enquiry hub. Advice provided includes, but is not limited to, enquiries related to mandatory vaccination information, leave entitlements and general COVID related advice. There is a commitment to answer all enquiries within 24 hours.
- From 20 January 2021 to 22 December 2021, a total of 955 wellbeing check-in's were conducted for non-occupational violence related incidents and 3943 were conducted for occupational violence related incidents. A further 618 ongoing wellbeing check-ins were conducted for staff who required increased support. A breakdown of activity across the year is presented in the table below:

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Contact Officer name: Daniel Ackland  
Lead Directorate: Education  
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Month	Non-OV Related	Occupational Violence Related	Ongoing wellbeing checks	Total checks by Term
January	7	0	0	1,509
February	117	499	33	
March	138	637	78	
April	38	175	84	1,654
May	115	570	45	
June	96	487	44	
July	68	407	48	896
August	52	133	50	
September	29	59	50	
October	33	116	23	1,457
November	105	573	87	
December	157	287	76	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>3943</b>	<b>618</b>	

## Background Information

- The Education Directorate is committed to supporting employees in a challenging, changing environment. Staff wellbeing initiatives are driven by the *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, with particular regard to ‘Empowering teachers and other professionals to strengthen learning for all’.
- This plan is premised on the first phase of implementation of the *Future of Education Strategy*, specifically priority one; safety and confidence and three; best start in a career of learning, thriving in a career of learning and supporting leaders in a career of learning.
- The Directorate is committed to providing ongoing reactive and proactive wellbeing support to all Directorate employees and will continue to deliver this service offering through available means and methods.

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# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS – REMOTE LEARNING

### Talking points

- **Public health experts** from ACT Health introduced a **set of guidelines for all school sectors to minimise any transmission of COVID-19 and transition students safely back to school**. Schools are currently implementing processes to reflect those changes.
- **ACT public schools will continue to support students** who have a medical vulnerability which requires them to learn from home. Students will receive a modified learning program that will be developed with their school.
- **Chromebooks and internet support has been provided to ACT public school students and staff as required during the lockdown period**. This support will continue to be available as students have returned to on-campus learning.

### Background Information

#### During lockdown

- The ACT lockdown commenced at 5pm on 12 August 2021.
- ACT public school students began remote teacher-led learning on 20 August 2021, following five pupil-free days to allow schools to transition to remote teacher-led learning. The vast majority of students undertook remote learning from home.
- All **ACT public schools** remained open for vulnerable children, children of parents who couldn't work from home, and children of parents who were required to work from home but couldn't reasonably provide adequate supervision at the same time. Those students attended their usual public school and accessed the same remote learning program as their peers while at school, delivered by their usual classroom teacher/s.
- **Out of school hours care** and **early childhood education and care services** remained open during the lockdown for vulnerable children, children of parents who couldn't work from home, and children of parents who were required to work from home but couldn't reasonably provide care at the same time.
- Teachers continued with their usual learning program and adapted this to help students have the best possible experience learning online, ensuring that remote learning was as normal as possible for students.
- Primary and high school teachers checked in with their students every day, to guide learning and to monitor wellbeing.
- Wellbeing supports provided to schools included a school psychologist lead telehealth service.
- The Education Directorate continued to provide information for public schools, students, and families through a dedicated webpage, which was regularly updated.
- Home learning resources by year level were available on the Education Directorate's website for students and families who wished to undertake self-directed learning during the lockdown.

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- ACT public school secondary students were well positioned for remote teacher-led learning as they already had access to a **Chromebook** device through the Digital Access and Equity Program, previously known as the Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) Program. Over **300 secondary students can access free internet** support since the 2020 lockdown response to enable their learning.
- **22,000 Chromebooks** are currently in use by ACT public school secondary students, of which over 3,600 were distributed in early 2021 to secondary students in year 7 and new students who have joined years 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12.
- Primary schools were able to move to remote learning as students in Years 3 – 6 were provided with Chromebooks. This was possible because of the refresh of **2,332** Chromebook devices in August 2021, with **13,500** devices already available to primary students.
- During home learning and the remote learning period in August 2021, the ACT Government **loaned a further 2,110 devices to primary schools for year 3 to year 6 students to support their learning over this period**. These devices remained with students until week 9 of term 4, to support students if they were required to isolate or quarantine during term 4. These devices were returned to schools following the return to on-campus learning.
- All Chromebook devices and charging cables were thoroughly cleaned, and cords tested and tagged, prior to distribution to primary schools.
- The Education Directorate provided **Internet support to 989 students and teachers as required** in August 2021, student devices were returned to school prior Term 4 2021 ending.
- To support students in Term 1 2022, principals have approved internet support for **785** students, helping students to continue their learning journey when they are at home due to COVID-19.
- Depending upon the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the Education Directorate will collect the services and return to the ongoing Internet support for 300 secondary students.

## Post-lockdown

- The timing of the staged return to school was in line with the ACT's COVID-19 Pathway Forward.
- Year 12 students started returning to on campus learning from 5 October 2021 (week 1, term 4).
- Year 11 students returned to school from 18 October 2021 (week 3, term 4).
- Students in years 1, 2, 6, 9, 10 and preschool and kindergarten returned from 25 October 2021 (week 4, term 4).
- Students in years 3, 4, 5, and 8 returned on 1 November 2021 (week 5, term 4).
- A phased return to school was required, to minimise the movement of people around the ACT, as advised by the ACT Chief Health Officer.



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## Engagement Data

- In week 9 Term 3 there were **4 775 303** student interactions with the Education Directorate's online learning platform.
- The attendance at schools on Monday of Week 1 Term 4 was **2067 students (4.06%)**, not including college students; with **733 teaching staff** on-site. A small number of teaching staff continued to work on-site to support student learning face-to-face as well as online.<sup>1</sup>
- Our **Year 6 cohort** had the highest daily interactions for primary years; our **Year 7 cohort** had the highest daily interactions for high school years; and our **Year 11 cohort** had the highest daily interactions for senior secondary.
- At 12 October 2021, approximately 2521 students were registered to attend their school onsite, with approximately **326 of those being students** with support programs. This number changed on a daily basis.
- From August - November 2021 there were 111,391 unique page views on the Education Directorate's Home Learning website, supporting students during the lockdown period, and following the return to on campus learning.

## Return to School 2022

- Students returned to school from the 31 January 2022. Schools implemented a range of measures to minimise transmission of COVID-19 and transition students safely back to school. The measures used by schools included:
  - Cohorting of classes or year groups to minimise the impact of any COVID-19 positive cases on whole school communities and assist contact tracing efforts
  - Improved ventilation measures including the provision of Indoor Air Quality Plans for all public schools
  - Mandatory vaccination for all staff working in education settings which included students under 12 years of age.
  - being encouraged to remain seated during class
  - staggering the use of common social spaces including playgrounds, canteens, and school libraries
  - using outdoor learning spaces where possible
- Students in Preschool to Year 3 who are unable to return to campus will receive additional support through Education Directorate lessons in English, Mathematics, and one other learning area for each day of the week via the Home Learning Website.
- Students in the upper years of primary school and high school who do not return to school will continue accessing their usual work via the Google Classroom. This will be a modified learning program. Extra resources for self-directed learning is available for this age group on the Education Directorate's website.

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<sup>1</sup> This data is from the daily staff attendance form complete daily at each school site. Student attendance data is from the School Administration System and is reliant on accurate roll marking.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

## Supporting Schools

- During lockdown, the Education Directorate supported teachers to provide online learning through a range of activities including through Professional Learning Webinars and a range of supports including coaching, teaching resources and guidance.
- **1967 educators** participated in Teacher Professional Learning webinars during lockdown.
- The online resources for our Educators in the **Teacher Resource Centre had over 19,800 hits** since the start of the lockdown, the materials included guidance and best practice examples for teaching practices, learning materials, wellbeing supports, adjusting for differentiation and assessment and reporting guidance.
- Wellbeing resources were made available for schools to provide to their school communities including family activities, wellbeing booklets, gratitude journals, videos, and factsheets.
- In addition, to support teachers who may be experiencing disruption to their classes due to COVID-19, a range of teaching resources for P-10 (100 plus lessons) has also been created. Teachers can download and edit these resources to suit their needs. These resources are available through the Service Portal.

## Telehealth

- School psychologists continued to provide support for students and their families. During the 2021 lockdown, this support took the form of a Telehealth Service (free online counselling sessions).
- This service provision continued all through Term 4 2021. Online sessions on anxiety were developed for parents, by the psychology service to assist them in preparing their children to return to school for face-to-face learning.
- At 17 December 2021, 198 referrals were received by the telehealth service. 57 per cent of total referrals came from primary school families, 29 per cent high school and 14 per cent college. The central telehealth service continues in 2022 and it has received 6 referrals since the start of Term 1. 4 referrals are from primary school and 1 from a college setting.
- School psychologists were also able to help link families with other services, including community organisations, that were still operating during the lockdown period. External supports available include ReachOut, Headspace, Lifeline. Information and links for these supports is available on the Directorate's website

## Students with a Disability

- Students with disability and/or additional learning needs received individualised supports during remote learning. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants worked with families and students to ensure they were supported to engage in remote learning.
- Every school has a Disability Education Coordinator to support teachers to respond to inclusive practice. They have a range of different resources and families can contact them by email or phoning the school.
- Teachers developed learning based on the individual learning plan of each student. Many of these individual goals that are specially designed for a school context may have been

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Contact Officer name: Kate McMahon  
Lead Directorate: Education  
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placed on hold or rewritten to have a more practical application during the remote learning period.

- Families were encouraged to check in with their child’s teacher for advice and support, as they may have advice and strategies to share.
- Learning Support Assistants continued to work with our schools, and each school used them differently – supporting students directly with their tasks or producing additional resources for the classroom teacher.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

Early Childhood Development

## PATHWAY OUT OF LOCKDOWN

### Talking points

- The health and safety of children, young people, and staff is the first priority in developing the pathway out of lockdown for schools and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, followed by wellbeing and continuity of learning.
- On **27 September 2021 the Government released the details** of how all school students will return to campus learning in term 4, this included early childhood education and care and out of hours care services.
- The ACT Government approached the pathway out of lockdown with careful planning, drawing on national and local health advice, in response to the current and emerging needs of staff, students and families.

5 October 2021 (Week 1)	Year 12 students could return with a focus on practical classes, and essential exams and assessments. Year 11 students can return from 5 October for essential exams and assessments only when they cannot be deferred to week 3.
18 October 2021 (Week 3)	Year 11 and 12 classes could commence return to onsite learning.
25 October 2021 (Week 4)	Preschool, kindergarten, years 1, 2, 6, 9, and 10 could return to on campus learning. These year groups are also now able to attend their usual out of school hours care programs. Early childhood education and care services (ECECs) could return to full operation from 25 October 2021.
1 November 2021 (Week 5)	Years 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 could return to on campus learning. All students will be able to attend their usual out of school hours care programs.

- Schools and ECECs are required to adhere to the ACT Chief Health Officer's *Health Guidelines for ACT Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care Services* (guidelines), which are informed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee's (AHPPC) advice on minimising the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools.
- The AHPPC advised that physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, regular cleaning and disinfection of the environment, and staying home if unwell, continue to be effective measures for responding to new variants of COVID-19.
- The guidelines also required schools to implement a range of measures to minimise mixing between student and staff cohorts, ensure all staff and students in years 7-12 wear masks on school sites, and monitor staff vaccination rates.
- The *Term 4 Plan for ACT Public Schools* outlined the implementation of health and safety requirements outlined in the Chief Health Officer's guidelines. Detailed implementation plans were developed for each public school to identify how these requirements will be implemented at the local level.

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# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

- To align school activities with broader easing of community restrictions, updated *Health Guidelines for ACT Schools and ECECs* and new *End of Year School Events Guidelines* were released on 27 October 2021.
- From 29 October 2021, changes were implemented to allow for community use of school facilities, P&C run contactless fundraisers, resumption of indoor sports, dance classes, singing and playing of wind instruments, essential excursions, and onsite transitions visits.
- From 12 November 2021 parents were allowed onsite for scheduled appointments and events, and schools could hold end of year graduations, formals, assemblies, and performances. Extracurricular activities also resumed.

## New funding for a safe return to school

- The ACT Government is **investing an additional \$18.3 million** to support safety and wellbeing measures for on campus learning in term 4, 2021 and terms 1 and 2, 2022, which is part of the of the **Government's \$50 million COVID-19 Response fund**.
- This support provided under the ACT Government's COVID-19 Response fund includes:
  - **Provision of face masks and sanitiser** to both public and low fee-paying non-government school students from Year 7-12, staff, and for staff at early childhood education and care services.
  - Additional capacity for **relief staff in ACT public schools** to assist with managing operational changes potentially requiring additional supervision, and staff absences associated with COVID-19.
  - **Improving ventilation in ACT public schools**, along with associated costs relating to increased HVAC maintenance and increased electricity usage
  - **Additional Telehealth resources** to support students, and to address the ability of staff (school psychologists) to move between schools.
  - **Additional shade structures** at schools to allow for more outdoor space to be utilised for learning.

## Background Information

- The ACT entered a snap lockdown on 12 August 2021. From 13 August 2021 schools and early childhood education and care (ECEC) services (including out of school hours care services) were open only for children of parents and carers who cannot reasonably provide care from home, including vulnerable children. Most students have been learning remotely from home.
- The return to on campus learning has been decided by the ACT Chief Health Officer as part of the broader easing of restrictions across the ACT. ACT schools and ECECs will implement the return in accordance with health directives and will be guided by the Australian Health Protection Principals Committee (AHPPC) advice for minimising COVID-19 transmission in schools.



# COVID-19 Planning for staff shortages

January 2022



ACT  
Government

Education

MBP1

Increasing staff absences, increasing disruption to daily operations

Level 1: Slightly reduced staffing

Level 2: Moderately reduced staffing

Level 3: Severely reduced staffing which prevents normal face-to-face learning continuing.

Level 4: Insufficient staff to maintain modified learning resulting in school closure

The following staffing threshold levels are indicative only. In assessing risk and mitigation strategies each school will need to consider the size of their school, the number and needs of students in attendance and impact for each school context. Staff to student ratios will also need to take into consideration Face to Face Teaching Loads in accordance with clause P6 of the [ACT Public Sector Education Directorate \(Teaching Staff\) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022](#) and comply with the [Class Size Policy](#) wherever possible noting the exceptional circumstances described below.

Description	Continuity of the learning program can be maintained through school-based management.	Continuity of the learning program may be compromised, however can be maintained if additional strategies identified in level 2 are successful. What this is likely to look like at this stage is strategies in level 1 are exhausted meaning you will likely see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widespread collapsing and/or combining of classes.</li> <li>All available staff (including Leadership Team) covering classes.</li> <li>Your own in-built relief and casual staff can no longer cover to a sufficient level.</li> <li>Cancellation of all non-essential activities and professional learning.</li> </ul>	Continuity of the learning program cannot be maintained. What this is likely to look like at this stage is a heavily reduced learning program as strategies in both level 1 and 2 are exhausted. This will mean you will likely see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A need for immediate and priority daily access to the central teacher relief pool.</li> <li>Widespread collapsing of classes resulting in the inability to maintain cohorting and delivery of individual class lessons.</li> <li>Limited staff availability to guide available relief teachers to deliver normal teaching program.</li> </ul>	Continuity of modified face-to-face program cannot be maintained.
Response	Support from Education Support Office surge team available as required.	Notify School Operations. Principal in conjunction with Education Support Office surge team to identify appropriate additional mitigation strategies to those exhausted in level one and seek relevant approval.	Notify School Operations. Principal in conjunction with Education Support Office surge team to identify appropriate additional mitigation strategies and seek relevant approval.	Notify School Operations. Principal in conjunction with Education Support Office surge team seeks Director General approval to close school.
Delegation	Principal	Director School Improvement / Executive Group Manager School Improvement	Deputy Director General	Director General and/or under direction from the Chief Health Officer
Strategies for consideration at this level	<a href="#">Emergency-Response-ACTPS-Employee-Entitlements-During-COVID-19-002.pdf</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to central Teacher relief pool.</li> <li>Consider expanding cohorting arrangements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority access to central Teacher relief pool.</li> <li>Amalgamation of resources across local and similar settings (e.g. primary to primary, within</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary transition to remote learning – whole school.</li> </ul>

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MBR1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilising casual relief staff.</li> <li>Utilisation of specialist teachers, Executive staff and inbuilt relief for coverage.</li> <li>Combining classes</li> <li>Consider postponement of school based meetings and non-essential professional learning.</li> <li>Utilisation of ESO produced learning materials to support delivery of curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affected high needs students transition to remote learning when they cannot be safely supported at school in line with OVRA and PBSP.</li> </ul>	<p>network/local geographical area where possible).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary transition to remote learning – part school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff consolidated to support prioritisation of on site learning for vulnerable cohort groups.</li> </ul>
<p>Duration and ongoing monitoring of impact</p>	<p>May be sustained for an extended period but should be monitored and impact of staff and students regularly reviewed and reassessed.</p>	<p>Subject to daily review and reassessment, ensuring health and wellbeing impacts on both staff and students is carefully considered.</p>	<p>Subject to daily review and reassessment ensuring health and wellbeing impacts on both staff and students is carefully considered.</p> <p>Where there are either no additional strategies that can mitigate moving to level 4 or no current absent staff returning in the immediate future, prepare for closure.</p>	<p>Minimum five days and until such time as staffing levels support a return to Level 1.</p>
<p>Preparation for closure</p>			<p>A decision to temporarily close all of the school will be made in consultation with the Education Support Office surge team and with the approval of the Director-General on the day prior ensuring communication to all families before Close of Business. Without appropriate notice for families, switching to supervision only, whilst preparing for closure - <b>no greater than 1 day.</b></p>	

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

## Portfolio/s: Education and Youth Affairs

### SCHOOL FUNDING

#### Talking points

- The Education Directorate managed its operations within budget in 2020-21 including additional appropriation provided through a Treasurer's Advance for unbudgeted cost pressures primarily associated with management of the COVID-19 pandemic and enrolment growth.

#### Key Information

##### Education Directorate Funding (Output Class 1 and 2)

- The Education Directorate's total expenditure in 2020-21 was **\$965.3 million** against a budget of **\$959.6 million**. While total expenditure was \$5.9 million (less than 1 per cent) overspent against the original budget, the Education Directorate was provided with additional appropriation in 2020-21 through a Treasurer's Advance for unfunded costs pressures primarily associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21 and enrolment growth.
- The 2020-21 total expenditure for the Education Directorate of **\$965.3 million** was an increase of \$51.5 million (almost 6 per cent) on the prior year. The increase was primarily due to staff wage and salary increases, increased staff numbers to meet enrolment growth and student need, new initiatives and expenditure associated with the Education Directorate's response to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Education Directorate also spent **\$126.7 million** on capital works in 2020-21 representing a very large program for the Education Directorate. Expenditure was 87 per cent of the original budget of **\$144.970 million**. The underspend was primarily associated with re-profiling of works mainly associated with the Franklin Primary School Expansion and expansion works in Gungahlin. The 2020-21 expenditure was \$35.6 million higher than the 2019-20 capital expenditure of **\$91.054 million**.

##### Territorial Funding (Grants to Non-Government Schools)

- The Education Directorate provided grant payments to non-government schools of **\$319.4 million** in 2020-21 which included \$67.6 million in grants from the ACT Government and \$251.8 million from the Commonwealth Government.
- Total grant payments of **\$319.4 million** in 2020-21 represents a decrease of \$20.9 million (6 per cent) on 2019-20 and is due to the ACT and Commonwealth Government transitioning non-government schools to the Schooling Resource Standard in line with the Commonwealth Education Act and Bilateral Agreements.



# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## COMMONWEALTH SCHOOLING RESOURCING STANDARD

### Talking points

- **ACT Government funding** to all public and non-government schools is **at or above** the minimum required levels of **80 per cent and 20 per cent** of the schooling resource standard (SRS) respectively.
- **The Commonwealth** is transitioning funding to **ACT public schools up to 20 per cent** of the SRS by **2023**.
- **Commonwealth funding to non-government** schools currently funded **below** 80 per cent of the SRS will transition **up to 80 per cent** by **2023**.
- **Commonwealth funding to non-government** schools currently funded **above** 80 per cent of the SRS will transition **down to 80 per cent** by **2029**.

### Key Information

#### Public Schools

- Commonwealth funding to ACT public schools is currently below the minimum required amount of 20 per cent of the SRS. The **Commonwealth Government** will transition funding to ACT public schools up to 20 per cent of the SRS by 2023. In 2021 funding was provided at **18.7 percent** of the SRS and in 2022, funding is estimated to increase to **19.3 percent** of the SRS.
- **ACT Government** funding to public schools is currently above the minimum required level of 80 per cent of the SRS. For **2020**, the most recent available data, ACT funding to public schools was **89.90 per cent** of the SRS.

#### Non-Government schools

- The Commonwealth is transitioning non-government schools that are funded below 80 percent of the SRS up to 80 percent by 2023. For non-government schools funded above 80 percent of the SRS, the Commonwealth will transition these schools down to 80 percent of the SRS by 2029.
- The ACT Government is transitioning all non-government schools to 20 per cent of the Commonwealth Schooling Resource Standard by 2023.
- The table below provides detail on the amount of ACT funding provided to the non-government sector between 2017 and 2020.

School	2017	2020	Funding Growth
Catholic Systemic Schools	\$33,529,633	\$38,958,454	16.19%
Independent Schools	\$24,328,042	\$25,303,231	4.01%

- The amount of ACT funding provided to the non-government sector beyond 2020 is dependent on school enrolments and demographics.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

## All Schools

- This transition path for both sectors aligns with the *Commonwealth Education Act 2013* and the Bilateral Agreement between the ACT and Commonwealth Governments' signed in December 2018.
- ACT Government contributions to public and non-government schools is reviewed each year through the Section 22A compliance report.

## Background Information

- In December 2018 the ACT Government signed a bilateral agreement around schools funding and reform principles with the Commonwealth.
- The bilateral agreement makes a commitment to transition government schools to their share of Commonwealth funding under the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2023 with non-government schools transitioned by 2029. This provides long term certainty for schools surrounding Commonwealth and Territory funding arrangements.
- The Commonwealth's funding to ACT public schools is currently lower than 20 per cent of the SRS baseline. However, as they are a minor funding provider to this sector, the anticipated annual increases to this sector are relatively small.
- The Commonwealth's funding for most ACT non-government schools is currently higher than 80 per cent of the SRS baseline for most schools. This position is due to historical funding arrangements and the removal of special arrangements for the calculation of some ACT non-government schools, capacity, most notably the ACT Catholic Systemic Schools.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

### Talking points

- ACT public schools receive voluntary financial contributions from parents every year. While these contributions are greatly appreciated by schools, they are a very small proportion of the amount of a schools available resources, in the context of the overall investment by the ACT Government on public education.
- These contributions are used to help schools improve education experiences. Financial and non-financial contributions to ACT public schools by parents and the wider community strengthen the outcomes for our students.
- The school, in conjunction with the school board, can determine how these contributions will be best utilised.
- The timing of voluntary financial contributions sought varies from school to school. Some schools may request once at the start of the year or twice, once each semester. The timing is determined by school boards.
- The Education Directorate is consistently communicating the process of collection of financial contributions through training provided to schools on financial management along with updates via emails and School Bulletins.

### Key Information

- On average, the **voluntary financial contributions** requested across the system may **range between \$90-\$200 per family per year**. The voluntary financial contributions requested from families generally do not vary significantly from year to year but does vary between sectors.
- A summary of voluntary and subject contributions received by schools from families from 2017-2020 is provided in the table below. The 2021 data is still being finalised and therefore not yet available to include in the table.

Voluntary Financial Contributions	2017 (\$'m)	2018 (\$'m)	2019 (\$'m)	2020 (\$'m)
Other Contributions	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6
Subject Contributions	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>

- There was a **marginal increase in voluntary financial contributions** in 2018 and 2019, however, experienced a **decrease in contributions in 2020**.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

## Background Information

- Section 27(1) of the *Education Act 2004* provides for the school board of a government school to request the parents of a child enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a voluntary financial contribution to the school.
- The following principles apply in relation to financial contributions:
  - each contribution is to be voluntary;
  - a student at the school is not to be refused benefits or services because the student's parents do not make a contribution;
  - a student is not to be approached or harassed for contributions; and
  - any record of contributions is confidential.
- The School Board will determine the level of voluntary contribution requested.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES

### Talking points:

- The Community Use of School Facilities Policy and Procedure (the Policy) supports the positive obligation on school Principals to ensure ACT public school facilities are made available for community use when the facilities are not in use by the school.
- The ACT Education Directorate recognises schools as important resources for the community and maintains appropriate policies that enable community use of public school facilities.
- The Directorate has approved *Community Use Rates* to be applied when hiring out school facilities.
- The most recent data indicates that are currently around 550 arrangements for community use (hirers) currently in ACT public school facilities with approximately 220 community groups.
- These hirers range from regular (e.g. weekly) to occasional (e.g. seasonal), and use the facilities outside of school hours during evenings and weekends. Some examples of the types of hirers are playgroups, music and arts, sport, religious groups, language schools and out of hours school care.
- The Policy indicates that Hirers are to hold current Public Liability insurance of at least \$10,000,000 limit of indemnity. The requirement to provide proof of public liability insurance may be waived by principals for low risk activities (e.g language class).
- The Education Support Office provides a channel for schools to receive support in engaging with agreements with hirers and adhering to the requirements of the Policy.
- The Directorate has seen an increased demand for access to school facilities which cannot be met by school facilities alone.

### Key Information

- There are benefits for schools as well as community organisations from the use of facilities in public schools by community organisations and other organisations. The Policy supports the Future of Education foundation of building strong communities for learning.
- A core principle of the Policy is that the provision of school facilities for community use should not adversely affect the operation and management of the school's core business.
- There are a range of facilities available for community use which includes meeting rooms, sporting facilities and outdoor areas.

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Contact Officer name: Thao Le  
Lead Directorate: Education  
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- Additional special facilities in ACT public schools include hydrotherapy pools, performing arts theatres and synthetic sporting facilities ranging from playing fields, cricket pitches, basketball courts and tennis courts.
- Arrangements are made for access with the community for schools that have security fencing for outside school hours access. The community use aspect for after school access will outweigh security concerns unless there is a real and apparent security issue.
- The Policy indicates that all arrangements for Hire must be documented in an Agreement. The Directorate provides Facility Hire Agreement and Licence Agreement templates for Schools to use for this purpose.
- The Directorate provides a schedule of Community Use rates which is reviewed at least annually. Individual school principals have discretion to waive and/or reduce hire rates.

FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2021-22

Program: Government Schooling

Agency: Education Directorate

	WEEKDAYS	SATURDAYS	SUNDAYS
Description of Charge	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)
<b>Hire of School Buildings</b> (per hour unless otherwise specified)			
<b>Gymnasium</b>			
Commercial Use	\$116.50	\$116.50	\$129.50
Training	\$75.90	\$75.90	\$129.50
<b>Secondary School, Assembly Hall, Cafeteria, Open Area, Drama Unit.</b>			
Commercial Use - Category A (concerts, plays, exhibitions, special functions etc)	\$116.50	\$116.50	\$126.90
Rehearsal/ Set Up	\$62.10	\$66.60	\$126.90
Commercial Use - Category B (majority of the participants are school age)	\$75.90	\$75.90	\$126.90
Commercial Use - Category C (admission/other revenue collection to cover costs)	\$75.90	\$75.90	\$126.90
Commercial Use - Category D (without admission or other charge - church groups, public meetings, major participants - school age)	\$59.90	\$64.60	\$126.90

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Initials

## FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2021-22

Program: Government Schooling

Agency: Education Directorate

	WEEKDAYS	SATURDAYS	SUNDAYS
Description of Charge	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)
<b>Hire of School Buildings</b> (per hour unless otherwise specified)			
Primary School, Assembly Hall			
Category A	\$84.60	\$84.60	\$91.50
Category B	\$62.10	\$62.10	\$91.50
Category C	\$59.90	\$59.90	\$91.50
Category D	\$29.80	\$29.80	\$91.50
Individual School Rooms			
Category A	\$45.20	\$45.20	\$48.90
Category B	\$29.80	\$29.80	\$48.90
Category C	\$29.80	\$29.80	\$48.90
Category D	\$20.70	\$20.70	\$48.90
Secondary College Theatre Base Rate	\$136.50	\$136.50	\$136.50
Hire of projection, sound or lighting facilities, negotiated with individual schools. Charges range from \$40-\$80 per hour			

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Initials



FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2021-22

Program: Government Schooling  
Agency: Education Directorate

Description of Charge	WEEKDAYS	WEEKENDS
	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)
Hire of School Buildings (per hour unless otherwise specified)		
Therapy Pools		
per 3hr sessions - children	\$102.60	\$102.60
per 1hr session - adult	\$116.50	\$116.50
Children's Language Classes		
per 3hr session (per 3 rooms)	\$29.70	\$29.70
After School Care		
Hall (per 3hr session)	\$36.60	N/A
Rooms (per 3hr session)	\$18.30	N/A
Holiday Program		
per room per day	\$75.90	N/A

.....  
Initials

## FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW 2021-22

Program: Government Schooling

Agency: Education Directorate

Description of Charge	Approved 2021-22 Rate (GST Inc)
<b>Leasing Space in School Buildings</b>	
Commercial Rate annually (per square metre)	\$242.60
<b>Non Commercial:</b>	
40% subsidy	\$145.40
60% subsidy	\$96.90
80% subsidy	\$48.20
(Level of subsidy applied should be based on capacity to pay, relationship to the education system and degree of community benefit/service)	

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Initials

Table 1: Proposed Community Use Schedule of Fees

Venue Type	Average Size of Venue (SqM)	Proposed Daily Rate	Proposed Hourly Rate	Current Average* Rate (Category C)	Variance (proposed and current rate)
Classroom	50	\$ 186.01	\$ 23.25	\$ 29.30	-21%
Community Room (including spaces like libraries)	110	\$ 212.05	\$ 26.51	\$ 29.30	-10%
Hall/Gym (single court)	600	\$ 411.06	\$ 51.38	\$ 58.90	-13%
Gym (double court) or theatre	1200	\$ 822.12	\$ 102.76	\$ 114.50	-10%
Therapy Pool	300	\$ 392.76	\$ 49.09	\$ 74.00	-34%
Ovals (maintained or synthetic)	5000	\$ 247.08	\$ 30.88	New Rate	N/A
Canteen/ Kitchen	20	\$ 170.85	\$ 21.36	New Rate	N/A
Canteen (school canteen provider)	20	\$200**		New Rate	N/A

\*There are multiple rates per venue type under the current Schedule of Fees (Attachment A). The current average rate is calculated using the average of all weekday rates listed per venue type under Category C.

\*\* \$200 annually per number of days of the week operational (eg canteen operating Mon - Wed would pay \$600 pa. Mon - Fri would pay \$1000 pa)

Table 2: Exclusive hirer rate

	Education Directorate	ACT Property Group	Increase %
2020-21 Rate (\$/m2)	\$ 142.90	\$ 152.66	6%

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## POPULATION GROWTH IN THE ACT

### Talking points:

- Canberra has experienced strong population growth in the decade to 2020 resulting in a significantly higher demand for public schooling.
- The ACT's resident population **increased 19 per cent from 362,000 in 2010 to 431,000 in 2020**, at an average **annual growth rate of 1.8 per cent**. By contrast Australia's population increased 17 per cent during 2010-20, at an average annual rate of 1.6 per cent.
- ACT's resident population growth during the first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic was greatly impacted by the closure of the international as well as State & Territory borders. The ACT grew in total by **0.24%** over 2020-21 (June) to **432,300** residents.
- During the same period ACT **public school enrolments increased 31 per cent and grew at a faster average annual growth rate of 2.8 per cent** (refer [4.02 Public School Enrolment Growth](#)).

### Expected changes to population projections

- The ongoing global COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted Australia's population growth forecasts.
- The ACT Government Official Population Projection is being updated by CMTEDD and is likely to be revised downwards.
  - The current pre-pandemic population forecast for the ACT in 2030 is 512,000. A more recent projection from the Federal Government's Centre for Population is 467,000 in 2031.

### Impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic and migration

- The pandemic has not currently impacted on the ongoing trend of increasing enrolments.
- The Commonwealth Budget for 2021-22 indicates that overseas migration is forecast to return beyond 2023, noting there is still some uncertainty at this stage on the future impact of the pandemic.

# ANNUAL REPORT HEARING BRIEF

## Portfolio/s: Education and Youth Affairs

### PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLMENT GROWTH

#### Talking points

- Canberra has experienced strong population growth in the decade to 2020 resulting in a significantly higher demand for public schooling.
- The ACT's resident population **increased 19 per cent from 362,000 in 2010 to 431,000 in 2020**, at an average **annual growth rate of 1.8 per cent**. By contrast Australia's population increased 17 per cent during 2010-20, at an average annual rate of 1.6 per cent.
- ACT's resident population growth during the first full year of the Covid-19 pandemic was greatly impacted by the closure of the international as well as State & Territory borders. The ACT grew in total by **0.24%** over 2020-21 (June) to **432,300** residents (refer [4.01 Population Growth in the ACT](#))
- In **2003, there were 40,757 students** in ACT public schools across preschool to Year 12. ACT did not have this many students enrolled in its schools for **another ten years**.
- ACT public school enrolments (Kindergarten to Year 12) **increased by 11,000 students, or 31%, from 2010 to 2020**. This represents an average annual **growth rate of 2.8%**, which is much higher than the ACT resident population equivalent.
- While the main 'driver' of enrolments were births, growth has also been driven by an increasing preference for public education with enrolments growing faster than independent and catholic system schools.
- The public school share **increased from 57 per cent in 2010 (34,800 students of a 60,800 total) to 62.1 per cent in 2021 (45,700 students of 74,300 total)**.

#### Future Growth

- Public school enrolments are forecast to continue growing over the next decade. Growth will be likely be at a slightly lower rate than in recent years.
- The public school system is expected to see Kindergarten to year 12 enrolments **increase by around 8,000 students or a 17 per cent increase between 2021 and 2031** based on the current population projections.
- One of the reasons we are confident about the number of additional school children expected over the coming decade is because they have already been born.
- Forecast enrolment growth is not evenly distributed and is concentrated in areas of greatest development (Gungahlin, Molonglo, West and Central Belconnen).
  - Molonglo and Gungahlin account for the largest share of this forecast growth with around 5,000 additional students.
  - The Belconnen region are expected to have around 1,400 additional students.

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## Five year enrolment projections for ACT regions

- Public schools in **Belconnen** will have **more than 600 additional students** in the next five years. Almost half of this increase will take place at the college level as a result of a strong growth in high school enrolments within Belconnen in recent years.
- Schools in **Gungahlin** will experience the **largest increase** in enrolments, with **more than 2,000 additional students** in the next five years. Unlike Belconnen, half of enrolment growth in Gungahlin will take place at the high school level, resulting from greenfield developments in the late 2010s and early 2020s.
- Schools in **Molonglo** are expected to experience the **fastest enrolment growth**, with the annual growth rate of **18 per cent during 2022-26**. Primary schools enrolments will be double in the next five years, with more than 1,000 students by 2026.
- Enrolments in **Weston Creek and Woden Valley** together will **increase by 550 students** in the next five years, for a **growth rate of 1.3 per cent per annum**. More than half of this increase will take place at the primary school level.
- Enrolments in the **Inner North** and **Inner South** are expected to continue to grow. This is subject to change according to the anticipated new Official ACT Population projection.
- There will be a slight increase in enrolments at the high school and college levels in **Tuggeranong** schools. Together, high schools and colleges in Tuggeranong will have an **increase of 200 students**. Primary enrolments in the region are expected to be stable.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## FORECAST ENROLMENT DEMAND

### Talking points

- Public school enrolments are forecast to continue growing in the coming years.
- Forecasting indicates growth is expected to be between around **1.8 per cent to 2.9 per cent, per year**.
- ACT public schools are expected to have around **8,000 additional K-12 students by 2031**.
- There will be an increase in public school enrolments across all ACT regions, including Tuggeranong.
- Most enrolment growth will take place in greenfield areas in Gungahlin, Molonglo and Belconnen.
- The **public school enrolment market share** is projected to continue increasing from 61 per cent in 2021 **to over 64 per cent in 2031**.
- Births are still the main source of enrolment growth in the future.
- The Education Directorate forecasts ten years in advance however five year projections are considered more robust.
- The current demand forecast has partly taken into account the impact of COVID-19 by adjusting assumptions on migration. The forecast will be updated when more data and information become available.

### Expected changes to population projections and forecast enrolments

- The ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Australia's population growth forecasts.
- Public school enrolment forecasts will be updated when the official ACT Population Projection is revised early in 2022.
- Short to medium term public school enrolment forecasts are not expected to fundamentally alter as the greater portion of anticipated demand will be children born prior to 2021 or already within the school system.
- Longer term forecasts may be adjusted to be lower.

### Impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic and migration

- The pandemic has not currently impacted on the ongoing trend of increasing enrolments.
- This has been confirmed through modelling conducted with ANU in 2020-21 to consider whether public schools would experience a positive enrolment impact due to potential economic impacts of the pandemic, for example higher unemployment

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associated with the recessionary impact of a global pandemic or household financial decisions regarding fee paying schooling.

- The majority of ACT households and the ACT economy appear to have endured the pandemic well and there has been no change to enrolment trends observed in 2020 and 2021 compared to pre-pandemic expectations.
- Economic impacts may influence an increase in public school affiliation if school fees becomes a financial consideration for affected families.
- Migrant households also only account for a small portion of overall enrolments (net enrolments of 307 in 2019) which has meant that border closures have not had any notable impact.
- Border closures have **reduced international student enrolments** in public schools by 145 students compared to 2020, but this is likely temporary.
- There will be a longer term impact on the forecast school demand beyond 2027-28 if migration remains at the current pandemic driven levels.
- Ongoing monitoring will assess and predict any impact of the pandemic on forecast enrolment demand.



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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## ENROLMENT POLICY DEMAND MANAGEMENT

### Talking points

- Enrolment policy provides an important lever to manage enrolment demand before infrastructure investment is considered.
- Recent enhancements to enrolment policy demand management includes **non-infrastructure solutions** such as limiting out of area enrolment in capacity constrained schools (through Category A and B status), NSW Pathway Schools and changes to Priority Enrolment Areas.
- Enrolment policy ensures every ACT child is guaranteed enrolment at their local public school, in accordance with the *Education Act 2004*.

### Priority Enrolment Areas (PEAs)

- Each school has a Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) composed of suburbs, in-part or whole, and students resident within them have guaranteed enrolment. Each school PEA is defined on the ACT Education Directorate website.
- PEAs are reviewed annually, with changes made to accommodate new schools or variations in enrolment demand.
- Where possible, changes are notified prior to upcoming annual enrolment cycles to provide a level of certainty for families about enrolment options and to support transitions between school levels.
- PEA development and review considers logical geographic boundaries as well as travel patterns for families gravitating towards city centres.

### Enrolment criteria at K-12 schools

#### Category A and B schools

- Enrolment policy settings have been refined in recent years as an important mechanism for demand management. Schools are categorised as either Category A or Category B according to their capacity to enrol out of area students.
- Category A schools are generally not able to accept out of area applications, while Category B schools have some ability to accept out of area enrolments. Different out of area criteria apply to each category of school. Categories are reviewed each year ahead of the opening of the enrolments period.
- Since the introduction of school categorisations in the 2019 school year, there has been an increase in schools designated Category A each year to 2022. For the 2021 school year one third of ACT public schools are classified as Category A for enrolment purposes (**45% of primary schools and 32% of high schools**). Only one college (Gungahlin College) is **classified as Category A**).

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## Category A Schools

- These schools will only consider applications from out of area students against the following criteria, in the order of priority indicated:
  1. If there are legal considerations, where a Court Order identifies that a student needs to attend a specific school.
  2. If there are exceptional circumstances, based on student wellbeing, that mean that a child cannot attend their local school and must attend the school they have applied for.
  3. Subject to capacity, the school will enrol a child if they have an ACT-resident sibling attending that school. This includes step/half and cultural siblings (recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationships).

## Category B Schools

- In addition to 1-3 above, Category B schools will also consider applications from out of area students against the criteria below, in the order of priority indicated and subject to capacity.
  1. Student is an ACT resident seeking to access a curriculum choice(s) not available at their PEA school (High School and College only. High School curriculum choice for languages only)
  2. Student is an ACT resident from a designated high-demand PEA. In 2022, this applies to all Gungahlin-region resident students (Note that Gungahlin resident students are all guaranteed a place in their local school if that is their school of choice.)
  3. Student is an ACT resident seeking to continue on to Year 7 or Year 11 with the majority cohort from their current ACT public school.
  4. Student is an ACT resident who had a sibling who formerly attended the school.
  5. Student lives in NSW and has a sibling concurrently attending the school. For 2022 enrolments, the sibling must still be attending the school in 2022.

## Enrolment Criteria for Preschools

- Regardless of where they attend preschool, all students are guaranteed a kindergarten place at their PEA school. Students attending preschool outside their Priority Enrolment Area need to submit a new enrolment application for kindergarten in the following year.
- Applications are prioritised in the following order of priority:
  1. Exceptional circumstances based on student wellbeing.
  2. ACT-resident siblings of students concurrently enrolled in the primary school.
  3. Children living within the Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) of the primary school, up to the limits of available places.
  4. Where there are not enough places for all children living in the PEA of the primary school, applications will be ranked by 'proximity', that is the distance a child lives from the preschool. The distance is measured 'as the crow flies'.
  5. The Directorate will find a place for all other children at a preschool, considering where the child lives and the number of remaining places.

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## High Demand Preschools

- In 2022 a number of preschools experiencing high demand for places from local families have been designated as ‘high demand’ preschools. Applicants to these preschools who do not meet the prioritisation criteria will be allocated to:
  1. the preschool of the primary school in their Priority Enrolment Area where capacity exists, or
  2. the closest preschool to their home with capacity.

## Early Childhood Schools

- Enrolment applications for Preschool to Year 2 at Early Childhood Schools are assessed against the following criteria, in the order of priority indicated:
  1. exceptional circumstances, based on student wellbeing
  2. child lives in the ACT and has a sibling attending the school
  3. child lives in the ACT and attends the long daycare program at the school
  4. child lives in the suburb where the school is located
  5. child lives elsewhere in the ACT

## Other schools eg specialist schools, language schools

- There are a small number of schools with special curricula that are open to all Canberra students. Instead of a Priority Enrolment Area, these schools assess enrolment applications against specific criteria and capacity.

## Specialist language settings

- Mawson Primary School (Kindergarten-year 6 - Mandarin): This school will accept out of area enrolments for the bilingual program up to a cap, but for all other purposes, will be a Category A school.
- Telopea Park School (Kindergarten-Year 6-French). This school operates a bilingual French program with funding provided by the Australian and French governments. It can accept enrolments from applicants who live in the ACT and meet the program criteria to a high standard, up to a capacity.
- Telopea Park School (Year 7-10 – French). This school can accept out of area enrolments from ACT residents for the bilingual program who meet the program criteria (up to available capacity).
- Telopea Park School (Year 7-10 non-bilingual) is a Category A school.
- Yarralumla Primary School (Kindergarten-year 6 - Italian): This school will accept out of area enrolments for the bilingual program up to a cap, but for all other purposes, will be a Category A school.
- Students with disability who apply to a specialist school are assessed for eligibility on application.

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## NSW Enrolment Pathway Policy

- In 2019 the 'NSW Enrolment Pathway' policy was introduced to provide greater enrolment certainty for students from the ACT and cross-border NSW localities. The ACT has historically supported public school enrolment opportunities for cross-border NSW residents, however sustained population growth within the Capital Region required better targeting of schools with available capacity.
- NSW families residing in identified NSW cross-border communities that wish to enrol within an ACT public school now have a clear and guaranteed K-12 'pathway' of schooling through selected Belconnen and Tuggeranong schools with available capacity.

## PEA Assurance Measures Pilot

- A pilot was conducted at Lyneham High School and Telopea Park Senior School to respond to 2022 enrolments from applicants who may not genuinely reside within the PEA.
  - Both schools saw a reduction in applications to the same point in time as the previous year (4% fewer to TPS and 9% fewer to LHS).
- Enrolments from applicants who do not genuinely reside within the PEA creates undue capacity pressure and the Directorate is working with applicants to take additional steps to confirm their PEA residence and ensure capacity is available for people who genuinely reside within a PEA.
- Changes to the *Compulsory Education (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy* and the *Enrolment in ACT Public Schools (Preschool to Year 12) Procedure* will strengthen confidence in genuine PEA enrolments and provide clarity to schools and the community on documentation requirements for 2023 enrolments.
- Applicants will be required to provide 100 points proof of residence before an enrolment application can be confirmed.
- Revised proof of residence requirements and closer scrutiny of documentation will minimise disingenuous enrolments from applicants considering misrepresenting their place of residence for perceived benefit.
- We recognise particular circumstances may exist where applicants are unable to meet proof of residence requirements and policy and procedure changes recognise unique circumstances and ensure no child will be denied enrolment at an ACT public school or otherwise disadvantaged in these circumstances.

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**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs

## PLANNING RESPONSES TO MEET GROWTH

Refer to **Brief 04.07 – New and Expanded Schools**

### Talking points

- The ACT Government is **continuing to plan for anticipated growth in public school enrolments** in the coming decade and beyond, to anticipate enrolment growth and deliver new or expanded public school facilities when and where they are needed.
- Responses to demand consider **short term/long term growth and need**. They include enhancements to enrolment policy as well as planning for and investing in new and expanded school infrastructure.
- Enrolment demand forecasting, analysis, feasibility and planning work is underway on an ongoing basis to plan for and deliver timely new and expanded school capacity that responds to enrolment growth in growing regions. This work is not always visible to the community when it is in the planning and development stages. (Refer **4.04. Enrolment Policy Demand Management**)
- Planning to respond to growth includes taking into account long term multi decade demographic lifecycle of a catchment area. Many parts of Canberra are experiencing this demographic lifecycle however this is unique to each region and area, and a range of factors influence this.

### Regional Planning Approach

- A regional approach to planning allows consideration of the unique needs, growth, capacity and assets of each region and each school.
- It supports design and testing of demand responses that appropriately cater to the growth and circumstances of existing school infrastructure and demographic factors.
- The size, growth rate and composition of a suburb's resident population changes over time and each region requires different responses.
- The resident populations of new 'greenfield' suburbs typically have a higher proportion of children that can place pressure upon local schools during their peak. Established suburbs typically have older and more stable demographics.

### Demographic lifecycle

- Schools associated with new suburbs typically experience a rapid rise and peak in enrolments followed by a gradual decrease then 'fall-away' towards a lower level of enrolments.
- The demographic lifecycle is impacting areas such as Tuggeranong which is now seeing growth emerging as new families move into the area who enter and move through the school system.
- Gungahlin has a relatively young demographic profile with a high number of families which means public school enrolments will continue to grow over the coming decade.

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- This demographic pattern is now also being experienced in the Molonglo region.

## Capacity Planning

- Where schools are forecast to reach a utilisation rate of around 85% and where this is expected to continue for prolonged periods, planning for longer term solutions is necessary.
- This is considered best practice as it provides the flexibility to offer a full curriculum as well as make reasonable adjustments to meet student needs as they arise.
- Some schools are able to operate comfortably at higher levels of utilisation, for example high schools and colleges due to the range of specialist facilities available in addition to general learning areas, although this is unique for each school.
- Utilisation planning also takes into account the Government's Class Size Policy, which recognises the contribution class sizes make to learning outcomes. This is a significant variable in determining the effective usable capacity of a school and consequently the need for investment.

## Planning Responses

- In the first instance, **non-infrastructure demand management through enrolment policy** as a cost effective demand response. This includes changes to limit out of area enrolments in capacity constrained schools (Category B to Category A schools), NSW Pathway Schools and changes to Priority Enrolment Areas. (Refer **4.04. Enrolment Policy Demand Management**)
- **Modular learning centres** (transportable classrooms) provide an important source of flexibility for schools experiencing temporary growth. (Refer **5.6 Transportable Classrooms**)
- They also provide time to plan for and deliver permanent investment in capacity where it is needed for the long term.
- Whilst modular Learning Centres are often used on a temporary basis, this can change according to the needs of a school.
- Many schools choose to retain transportables as additional learning spaces when growth forecast as temporary is sustained for a longer period.
- Modular Learning Centres are a normal part of planning for growth as well as an important source of flexibility for established schools experiencing transient growth. They are part of the schools planning response for every State and Territory in Australia.
- **Permanent expansions** for existing schools are considered where significant and sustained enrolment growth is forecast into the future.
- In new suburbs as well as established suburbs experiencing permanent school-age residential population growth, **new schools** are considered where projections demonstrate ongoing, sustained population growth which will in turn sustain the viability of the school over the long term.

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- School planning response considerations include the need to provide adequate open spaces and playing fields, transport connectivity and consideration of commuter travel paths including access via safe and efficient roads, active travel linkages through cycle and pedestrian paths, and other facilities for the broader community to access.

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Community engagement is an important element of the planning process, through regular engagement with stakeholders including Principals, School Boards, Parents & Citizens Committees as well as the Catholic Education Office Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and the Association of Independent Schools ACT.
- The ACT Government is mindful of the challenges associated with expanding enrolment capacity within established suburbs, including availability of vacant/buildable land combined with the importance of a community's sense of 'place' and expectations regarding existing land use.

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs**2022 ENROLMENTS AND APPEALS****Talking points**

- Final enrolments for this calendar year will be **confirmed through the 2022 Census** which was conducted on Friday 18 February 2022 and the data cleansing is underway.
- **Assessment of 2022 applications is ongoing** with offers continuing to be made for all 2022 applications as they are received by schools.
- Families can seek a **Review of an enrolment decision directly through the school** where they are not satisfied with an enrolment decision.
- Where they are not satisfied with a Review outcome, families can also ask for an **Enrolment Appeal through** the Education Directorate's **Education Support Office**.

**Key Information****2022 Preschool enrolment allocations**

- **3682** 2022 Preschool enrolment applications were centrally allocated to schools by Education Support Office according to the preschool allocation criteria.
- From 2022 some preschools were designated as 'high demand', these schools are not able to accept enrolments from applicants for whom it will not also be their PEA school. (Refer [4.04. Enrolment Policy Demand Management](#))
- **91%** of applications were allocated to their preferred school. The remaining were allocated to their non-preferred PEA school or the closest school with capacity
- Preschool applications received after 4 June 2021 are being processed by schools.

**Enrolment Reviews as at 4 February 2022**

- Total Reviews = **417**
- Affirmed (do not offer a place) = **265**
- Overturned (Offered a place if capacity) = **152**
- **Top 3 criteria selected by applicant** in initial application
  - The applicant has claimed exceptional circumstances, based on student wellbeing, that mean that the child cannot attend their local school and must attend the school they have applied for (all schools).
  - The applicant is seeking to access a curriculum choice(s) not available at their PEA school.
  - The applicant is seeking to continue on to Year 7 or Year 11 with the majority cohort from their current ACT public school (Cat B schools only).



## Enrolment Appeals

- As of 4 February 2022 the Education Directorate received **26 Inclusive Education Program Placement enrolment Appeals** for the 2022 school year. All have been completed.
  - **21 Appeals** were upheld and students referred back to their PEA school,
  - **1 Appeal** was overturned and students offered first choice school,
  - **4 Appeals** were withdrawn by the family.
- As of 4 February 2022 the Education Directorate has received **42 mainstream enrolment Appeals** for the 2022 school year. All have been completed.
  - **33 Appeals** were upheld and students referred back to their PEA school,
  - **1 Appeal** was overturned and students offered first choice school,
  - **8 Appeals** were upheld with students offered enrolment at an alternative ACT public school.

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**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## NEW AND EXPANDED SCHOOLS

Refer to [Brief 04.05 Planning Responses to Meet Growth](#)

### Talking points

- New investment is provided through the 2021-22 ACT Budget to continue investing in new and expanding schools to meet public school enrolment growth in the ACT.
- This includes **\$12.5 million** for feasibility studies, master planning and forward design works for new and expanded schools in the Inner South, the Inner North, Molonglo and Central Belconnen regions and for specialist school services in the north of Canberra.
- This continues the Government's commitment to meeting public school enrolment growth in schools across Canberra and builds on 2019-20 Budget funding to plan for Canberra's future school needs
- New and expanded infrastructure will deliver fit for purpose, contemporary learning spaces in growth areas of the ACT and provide a timely response to growth in enrolments and public school affiliation choices from families.
- The Education Directorate has delivered significant projects across the public school network with over **\$97 million expended in the 2020-21** financial year.
- Projects were delivered to modernise facilities, provide new schools, and better meet the learning needs of communities.

### Key Information

#### Future Planning for New and Expanded Schools

Future Planning	Education and life-long learning				
	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital	6,285	2,715	0	0	<b>9,000</b>
Expenses	850	870	900	920	<b>3,540</b>

- The Government will invest **\$12.5 million** towards **feasibility studies, master planning and forward design works for new and expanded school capacities in the Inner South, the Inner North, Molonglo, and Central Belconnen** regions and for **specialist school services in the north of Canberra**.
- This continues the Government's commitment to meeting public school enrolment growth in schools across Canberra and builds on 2019-20 Budget funding to plan for Canberra's future school needs.
- **\$9 million** over the next two years for feasibility studies, masterplanning and forward design works for new and expanded schools including:
  - feasibility and planning for new primary school and high school capacity in the **Inner North** and the **Inner South**;
  - Early planning for future capacity in **Molonglo** for primary schools and the college system to meet the needs of families in the region;
  - Feasibility and design funding for the new Early Childhood to year 6 school in **Whitlam, Molonglo**;

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