

Part B

Organisational Overview
and Performance

Organisational Overview

The Education Directorate delivers its work across the following areas (Figure 1):

- ACT Public Schools
- School Improvement
- Service Design and Delivery
- Business Services
- System Policy and Reform
- Safe at School.

Our vision, mission and values

The Education Directorate is a leading learning organisation where people are valued and work together to deliver high quality early childhood education and public school education in accessible and inclusive environments. Empowering children and young people to learn has a life-long impact. By fostering student engagement and centring teaching and learning around students as individuals we enable educational growth for every child year on year.

The Directorate shares the ACT Public Service values of respect, integrity, collaboration, and innovation. These values shape behaviours and actions when supporting children and young people in schools.

Role, functions and services

The Directorate is dedicated to facilitating quality education services across the ACT through:

- the provision of government learning institutions in the form of public preschools, primary, secondary, colleges and specialist schools
- access to quality teaching, specialised learning programs and wellbeing supports for individual student needs
- enrolment and support of international students
- the regulation of non-government schools, home education and early childhood education and care services.

The Directorate supports the ACT Government and the Minister to meet their obligations under the following two portfolios:

Yvette Berry MLA

Minister for Education and Youth Affairs

Minister for Early Childhood Development.

As stewards of the ACT education system, the Directorate works actively with a range of partners and stakeholders including:

- the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
- the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies and the ACT Teacher Quality Institute
- the ACT Principals Association
- the ACT Business Managers Association
- the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
- the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
- the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Association
- the ACT Australian Education Union, the Community and Public Sector Union and the United Workers Union
- the University of Canberra and the Australian National University
- the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

Organisational structure

The Directorate's organisational structure and leadership underwent changes during the reporting period.

From the commencement of the reporting period, Ms Sam Seton was in the role of Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery until September 2022 after which time, Ms Kylie Scholten commenced in the position until December 2022.

From December 2022 until February 2023, Mr Mark Huxley was in the role of Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery, until Ms Angela Spence commenced in the position from February 2023 for the remainder of the reporting period.

Ms Judy Hamilton was in the role of Executive Group Manager, School Improvement from early January 2023 until Mr Mark Huxley returned to the position in February.

Ms Tej Kaur commenced in the position of Executive Branch Manager, Student Engagement in July 2022 and remained in the position for the duration of the reporting period.

Mr Mark Stirling commenced in the position of Executive Branch Manager, Digital Strategy and Services Transformation in December 2022 until Ms Kelly Bartlett returned to the position in April 2023.

Mr John Nakkam commenced in the position of Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure and Capital works in June 2022.

Mr Robert Gotts departed from the role of Executive Branch Manager, Analytics and Evaluation in September 2022 and the Directorate welcomed Mr Michael Crowther who commenced in the position from February 2022.

Organisation chart

Figure 1: Organisation Chart



Figure 2: Our schools

Where are our public schools?

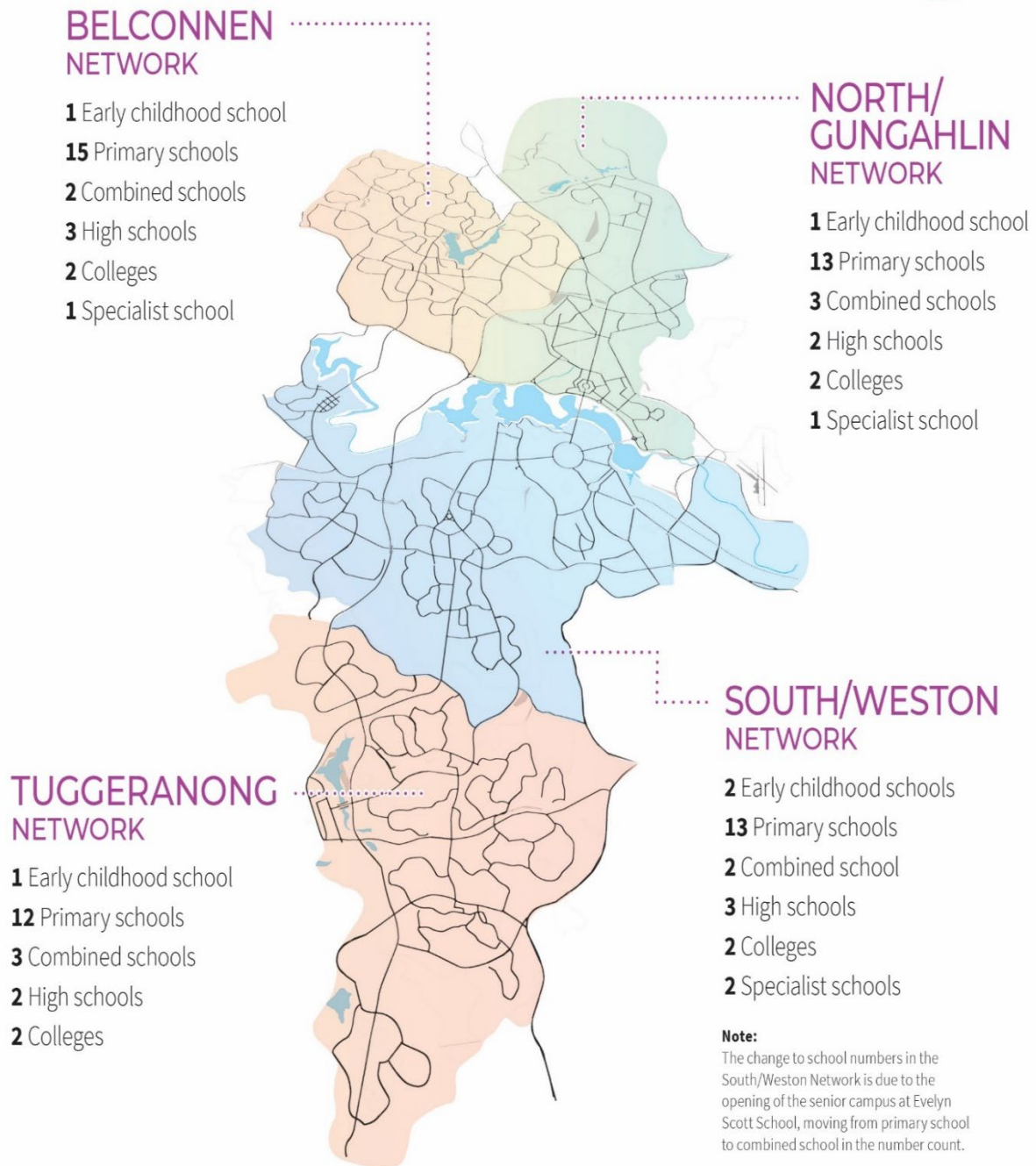
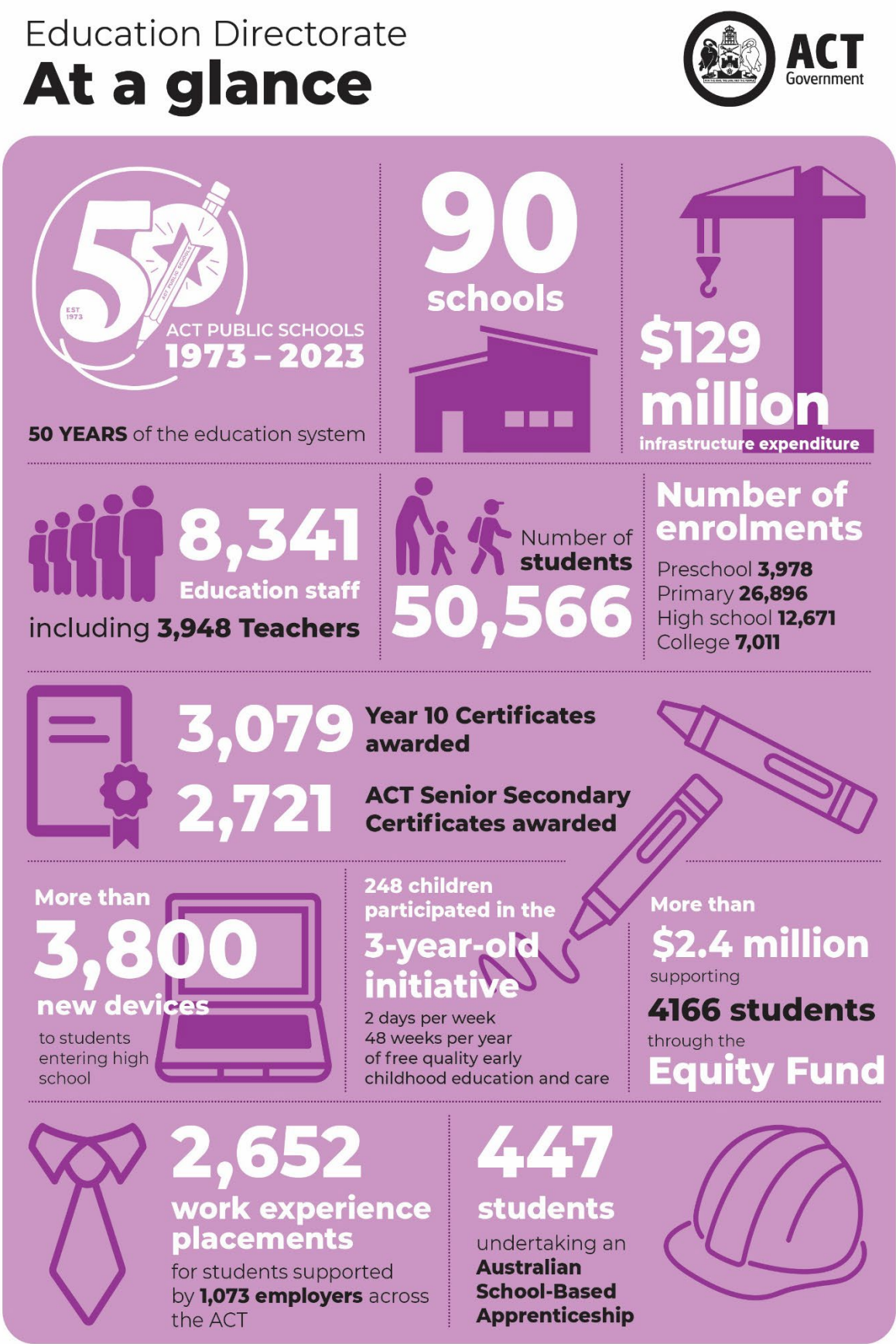


Figure 3: Education Directorate at a glance 2022-23



Our environment and planning

The *ACT Wellbeing Framework* guides the territory-wide approach to lift the quality of life of all Canberrans. Our educational mission closely contributes to this wellbeing framework by focusing on empowering children and young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to learn for life.

The Directorate delivers on 2 overarching ACT Government strategies with a shared focus on equity, access, inclusion and student agency. They are:

- *Future of Education – An ACT Education Strategy for the Next 10 Years*
- *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT.*

These strategies were developed in collaboration with the community to guide the delivery of excellent education for children and young people in the ACT and capture our educational reform objectives and actions to provide excellent, inclusive, and equitable education that maximises children and young people's wellbeing.

The Future of Education Strategy

Launched in 2018, the *Future of Education Strategy* sets out the ACT Government's 10-year vision for education. Its foundations are:

- **Students at the centre** – each student treads their own educational pathway and should be empowered to make informed decisions about how their learning environment operates.
- **Empowered learning professionals** – education professionals are experts, highly skilled at working with students to guide them through their learning journey.
- **Strong communities for learning** – a strong education system requires a strong community, with schools acting as hubs for education and support services.
- **Systems supporting learning** – the systems that support learning must acknowledge the importance of early intervention and promote equity of opportunity and excellent outcomes for all learners.

The *Future of Education Strategy* continued to guide the Directorate's strategic direction during the year, with the Phase 2 Implementation Plan, which spans years 3 to 5 of the strategy, having started in late-2021.

This plan renews the focus on the strategy's core principles of equity, agency, access and inclusion, together with strengthened attention on wellbeing, parent and community partnerships, and teaching excellence and workforce.

Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT

Launched in August 2020, *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* is the ACT Government's 10-year plan for early childhood education. Set out over 3 phases, it outlines the government's commitment to providing quality early childhood education for all

children, recognising that children’s early years set the groundwork for their lifetime learning.

Set up for Success is informed by overwhelming national and international evidence, as well as feedback from children, families, experts, and the early childhood sector, about the importance of quality early childhood education in giving children the best start in life.

Set up for Success is underpinned by the National Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework: Belonging, Being, and Becoming.

Its foundations are:

- **A fair start for every child** – ensuring access, equity and affordability of early childhood education.
- **Valuing educators, values children** – enhancing the workforce through education, qualification and skills development.
- **Every child has a story** – fostering seamless transitions and supporting children’s diverse needs.
- **Working together for children** – connecting systems and services to maximise benefits to children.

The Phase One Implementation Plan outlines the initiatives that will be delivered in the first phase of the strategy under each of the strategy’s foundations. It highlights how the initiatives link to research evidence, partnerships, and long-term outcomes.

The foundations of *Set up for Success* align with the foundations and principles of the *Future of Education Strategy*, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The alignment of *Future of Education* and *Set up for Success* strategies



The alignment of the 2 strategies recognises that genuine equity of opportunity is only delivered through consistent and sustained collaborative effort, including working with key partners from the earliest years of a child’s educational journey.

Strategic Plan 2022–2025

The *Strategic Plan 2022–2025* was finalised in 2022, setting the Directorate’s vision to ensure every child and young person receives an excellent education, delivered, and supported by highly skilled and valued professionals.

The plan provides guiding principles for how schools and the Education Support Office will work together to achieve a shared mission to lead and deliver excellent, inclusive and equitable education where all are safe, valued and able to flourish.

The *Strategic Plan 2022–2025* has 4 focus areas that align with, and support delivery of, the parallel foundations underpinning the *Future of Education* and *Set up for Success* strategies:

- children and young people
- our people
- community partnerships
- systems and supports.

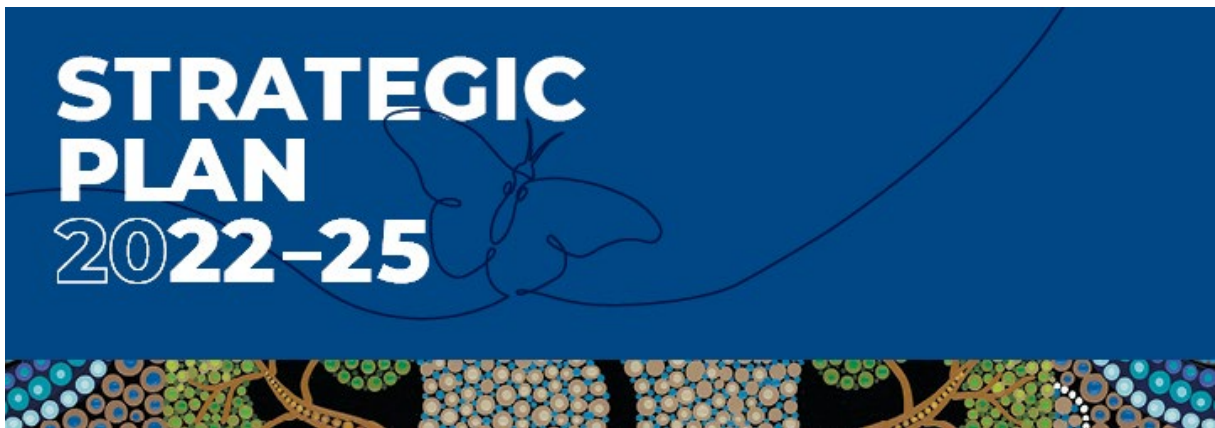


Figure 5: *Strategic Plan 2022–2025* tile

The strategic plan is designed to create a coherent system:

- that supports learning, aspiration and achievement
- where safety, wellbeing and cultural integrity are prioritised
- where families and communities are welcomed and included.

Summary of performance

The Education Directorate has celebrated many achievements and addressed significant local and global challenges during 2022–23.

Key highlights in **school education** for 2022–23 included:

- the opening of Evelyn Scott School Senior Campus in Term 1, 2023
- expanding disability education programs to all ACT public primary schools, high schools and colleges to ensure all eligible students could access smaller class sizes offered in a disability education program at their local school
- ensuring that ACT public schools remain safe and supportive environments for staff and students with the continued work of the Safe at School Taskforce
- continuing to strengthen inclusion in ACT public schools by working with young people with disability, their families, and the broader community to develop the *Inclusive Education Strategy*
- continuing the high performance of the ACT in the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) scoring significantly higher on average than other Australian jurisdictions
- continuing to deliver stable performance in NAPLAN where the ACT remains one of the highest performing jurisdictions
- continuing the ACT Government's commitment to address the national teacher shortage by utilising ongoing recruitment campaigns and actioning the recommendations in the from the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce Report* released in August 2022
- finalising the *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2023-2026*, delivering nation-leading pay for ACT public school teachers
- continuing the investment in professional development and learning
- partnering with the tertiary sector to support early career teachers and teaching excellence
- further developing and implementing the Gender Equality Initiative with the objective to deliver a whole-school approach to respectful relationships education, and prevent domestic and family violence by creating a culture of gender equality in schools
- continuing the Future of Education Equity Fund, ensuring that eligible students and families experiencing financial stress are able to apply for an annual grant to help cover the costs of education expenses
- continuing to provide all year 7 to 12 students with a Chromebook and access to internet, if required
- continuing the investment in school infrastructure, and the work on new and expanding schools including for 2022–23, projects involving 6 new schools (works in progress) and 3 school site upgrades.

Key highlights in **early childhood development** for 2022–23 included:

- partnering with early childhood education and care services to provide access to free quality early childhood education for hundreds of 3-year-old children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage
- continuing delivery of support for priority children and families accessing free quality early childhood education
- continuing to work with educators to build their knowledge, confidence and capacity to implement inclusive practices, enhance transitions, and provide continuity for children and families
- consulting with the early childhood education and care sector on key early childhood reforms, including strategies to support the early childhood education profession
- revising and expanding the Continuity and Transitioning Framework and Statement to support effective transition processes for children transitioning to 4-year-old preschool
- delivering the *School Community Playgroups – Guidelines for ACT Public Schools* to provide ACT public schools with knowledge and confidence to establish a playgroup
- delivering key commitments under the *Preschool Reform Agreement 2022–2025*
- launching the Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework and Koori Pre Curriculum, informed by a co-design process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the evolution of Koori Preschool to ensure it meets the community’s needs, now and into the future
- developing a health and education resource for parents and carers to support their child’s learning and development from birth to 5 years.

Key highlights in **legislation reform** for 2022–23 included:

- progressing the legislative reform agenda through the passage of the *Education Amendment Bill 2022*, relating to suspensions, transfers, expulsions and exclusions
- updating the registration process and requirements for 75, including the establishment of the Registration Standards Advisory Board
- finalising the policy position for the *Education (Early Childhood) Legislation Amendment Bill 2023* and developing a draft Bill that will recognise early childhood education in ACT law, including through professional recognition for early childhood teachers
- starting consultation on the proposed scope of the *Education Amendment Bill 2024*, which will focus on enrolments, participation, attendance and distance education, and seek to make the *Education Act 2004* more flexible to reflect a modern educational environment.

Outlook for 2023–24

The Education Directorate's priorities for 2023–24 are identified through:

- the *Future of Education* Phase 2 Implementation Plan
- the *Set up for Success* Phase One Implementation Plan.

The Directorate will implement the identified priorities of government as well as other key initiatives and whole of government strategies through its *Strategic Plan 2022–2025*.

The strategic plan is designed to create a coherent education system that supports learning, aspiration and achievement, where safety, wellbeing and cultural integrity are prioritised, and where families and communities are welcomed and included, with the ACT Wellbeing Framework as an overarching focus. The plan articulates how the Directorate implements *Set up for Success* and the *Future of Education*, capturing our educational reform objectives and actions to provide excellent, inclusive, and equitable education that maximises children and young people's wellbeing and learning from birth until they finish school.

In 2023–24, *Future of Education* phase 2 will continue to focus on inclusion, student agency, wellbeing, strengthening partnerships with school communities, and learning gain. These priorities continue to demonstrate the commitment of the ACT education system to take an evidence-based approach to ensure educational excellence for every child and young person. Phase 2 of *Set Up for Success* will be delivered from 2023 to 2025 with actions outlined in the phase 2 implementation plan to be released in the second half of 2023. The phase 2 implementation plan builds on the initiatives delivered throughout phase one.

Implementation of phase 2 and phase 3 will be informed by ongoing evaluation and monitoring of achievements and impact. This work does not happen in isolation and the Directorate continues to recognise and value the continuous partnerships and collaboration required across the early childhood education and care sector and the community.

Work is progressing to finalise an *Inclusive Education Strategy* and the First Action Plan under this strategy in 2023. As part of the *Future of Education*, this work will provide a clear and endorsed policy position for strengthening inclusion for students with disability in ACT public schools. The *Inclusive Education Strategy* will focus on these areas for action:

- culture
- relationships
- learning
- key transitions
- workforce
- resourcing
- infrastructure.

By focusing on these action areas, the strategy will embed system reform to improve outcomes for all students in ACT public schools. The strategy aims to build on strong inclusive practice occurring in many ACT public schools, which ensures the right systems and

supports are in place for all schools to meet the needs of every child and young person. Some of the **priorities** for the Directorate in 2023–24 include:

- completing the construction of the ACT's 91st public school, the Shirley Smith High School in Kenny for 800 students, with enrolments opening in 2023, ahead of the new school opening in 2024
- preparing for, and delivering the ACT Government's commitment to providing all three-year-old children with access to one day per week of free, quality early childhood education and care from 2024
- strengthening inclusive education for students with disability in ACT public schools, through the phased implementation of Inclusion Coaches and broader inclusion reforms
- supporting schools in preparation for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 in early 2024
- continuing the work of the Safe at School Taskforce to embed a safety culture within ACT public schools through an uplift in specialised work health and safety supports and improved systems of safety to support safe and productive learning and working environments
- implementing the recommendations from the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce Report* released in August 2022
- implementing the new *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2023-2026*; including supporting staff with workload changes to ensure that 'teachers teach' and 'leaders lead' and implementing and embedding further workload reduction measures to support our teaching staff
- commencing the work of the Sustainable Workload Management Committee, to focus on ensuring that the time of teachers and school leaders is maximised for teaching
- launching an ACT early childhood education and care workforce strategy for the profession, including educator professional standards initially for voluntary adoption, learning and development opportunities, and coaching and mentoring supports
- developing an ACT-wide approach to effective transitions centred around continuity for children, valuing their experiences across settings, and collaborative approaches between services and schools to place children at the centre
- continuing to provide 21st century learning environments for our children and young people by commencing the construction of our new schools in Gungahlin and Whitlam and continuing the design and delivery of the new school and early childhood education and care centre in Strathnairn
- continuing the extensive redevelopment and modernisation works at several ACT public schools that will deliver new learning areas and increase capacity for a growing Canberra, including modernisation at Telopea Park School, Garran Primary School, and Narrabundah College
- continuing to undertake school maintenance works, infrastructure upgrades, sustainability upgrades and hazardous material management works
- delivering relocatable learning units to support student demand across the ACT.

50th anniversary of the ACT public school system

History of ACT public education – the creation of the ACT Schools Authority



On 11 September 1973, then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, announced that a statutory body would be appointed to administer ACT schools from the beginning of 1974.

This announcement followed 7 years of determined advocacy from ACT parents, teachers, educators; and 4 significant reports from working parties and eminent academics.

The appointment of the Interim ACT Schools Authority Council members on 8 October 1973 led to the creation of a new public school system in the ACT, independent of the NSW Education Department. This new public system would be radically different in structure, governance, and curriculum to any other school system in Australia.

2023 - time to celebrate

During 2023, the Education Directorate celebrated the 50th anniversary of the creation of the unique ACT school system. As part of the celebrations during the year, the Directorate asked to hear from ACT public school staff, students, administrators, and community members to capture stories of ACT public schools.



50th Anniversary YourSay launch, Hawker College

A program of events and activities was held throughout the year to recognise the rich history of the ACT public education system, to celebrate successes and to look forward to what the ACT public education system strives to be over the next 50 years.

The 50th anniversary brought together former and existing staff and students and coincided with several ACT public schools commemorating significant birthdays. This included Canberra's oldest public school – Telopea Park School – celebrating its centennial anniversary, and Turner School, that celebrated its 70th year of operation.

The Instrumental Music Program (IMP) celebrated 50 years during 2023. Set up in 1973, the IMP continues to deliver excellent music education in over 60 primary schools and 7 secondary schools across ACT public schools. Many of the IMP groups perform regularly at community, local and national events including the annual Step into the Limelight Gala show. In June 2023, an extraordinary concert took place at Llewelyn Hall where Principal, Naida Blackley conducted more than 130 former staff and students, along with the current Senior Concert Band and Choir, to celebrate the 50-year milestone.

More than 2,000 students from all year levels will come together to showcase their multi-musical and performing talents and celebrate 50 years of the ACT public school system.

As a culmination of the 50th anniversary, a month-long public exhibition will be held at the newest ACT Government building in the city.

The exhibits will include an inspiring collection of artefacts, video recordings and photos that celebrate the rich history, innovation and achievements of the system and our people.



Internal accountability

Senior executives

Director-General

The Director-General leads the Education Directorate and the network of ACT public schools to implement the *Education Act 2004*. The Director-General is responsible for promoting high-quality education for ACT children and young people, overseeing the operation and governance of ACT public schools, and overseeing the registration of non-government schools and home education.

The Director-General also holds responsibility for the Directorate's strategic direction, including the *Future of Education* and *Set up for Success* strategies, and the implementation of whole of government strategies.

The Director-General has a role in the leadership of the ACT Public Service as a member of the ACT Public Service Strategic Board.

Deputy Director-General

The Deputy Director-General leads ACT public schools and holds responsibility for the delivery of high quality education services through student centred learning and teaching initiatives, digital strategy and direction, and the Safe at School Taskforce.

The Deputy Director-General holds accountability for school operations, teaching and learning practices and student outcomes, and the safety and wellbeing of students and staff at schools. Support services are provided in the areas of curriculum delivery, early childhood education and pedagogy, digital strategy, health, student inclusion and wellbeing, vocational education and training pathways and transitions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, international education, complex case management, and flexible education and held the responsibility of the COVID Controller for the Directorate.

The Deputy Director-General assists the Director-General to achieve an increase in learning gain at each school and a high level of student and family engagement.

The Deputy Director-General supports the Director-General to ensure the effective implementation of the *ACT Education Directorate Strategic Plan 2022-2025*.

Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Reform

The Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Reform leads the Strategic Policy, Enrolments and Planning, Analytics and Evaluation, and Education and Care Regulation and Support functions of the Directorate.

The Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Reform has responsibility for strategic reforms, including inclusive education, schools and early childhood reforms, as well as advising on national education reforms and associated bilateral agreements.

The role leads the coordination of the ACT's participation in national assessment programs and provides quality data and analytics to inform school and system improvement. This also includes strategic school capacity planning and enrolment policy and procedures.

The Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Reform is responsible for regulatory and registration functions, including:

- the regulation of the early childhood education and care sector through the ACT Regulatory Authority, the Children's Education and Care Assurance Unit
- the registration and regulation of non-government schools
- home education registration and support for children and families in home education
- the registration and compliance of all Territory schools for Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), as required under Commonwealth law.

Executive Group Manager, Business Services

The Executive Group Manager, Business Services is responsible for managing strategic risks and delivering a wide range of functions that support the ongoing delivery of high-quality education for all children and young people of the ACT.

The Executive Group Manager, Business Services leads the Infrastructure and Capital Works, Governance (including SERBIR and integrity matters), Communications, Engagement and Government Support, People and Performance, the School Cleaning Service, and the Strategic Finance and Procurement functions of the Directorate.

The role has responsibility for the Directorate's budget management, including schools funding, and the delivery of procurement advice and reforms in conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer. The Executive Group Manager leads the Directorate in workforce strategy and engagement, including negotiations, finalising and ongoing management and interface with multiple enterprise agreements. Through the People and Performance Branch, the role is responsible for the ongoing attraction, retention, and recruitment of teachers and leaders into the ACT public school system.

Through the Infrastructure and Capital Works Branch, the role is responsible for delivery of a growing school infrastructure budget, including construction and delivery of new schools and modernisation of older schools to provide ongoing public-school capacity for our growing city. The role is also responsible for the ongoing delivery of the School Cleaning Service, which has continued to be an important part of school facility services following the successful insourcing and subsequent growth into ACT Government office accommodation.

Executive Group Manager, School Improvement

The Executive Group Manager, School Improvement strategically leads and coordinates the improvement agenda for ACT public schools as well as overseeing the day-to-day operations of schools. The role leads improvement activities to ensure students are at the centre of school improvement. These include school leadership development and recruitment, school improvement planning and review, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of schools through the Directors of School Improvement.

The Executive Group Manager influences and shapes the broader work of the Education Support Office in delivering an integrated approach to the delivery of services, while also supporting schools to manage a range of operational processes, such as incident reporting.

Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery

The Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery has responsibility for service design and integration and ensures the provision of high-quality education services and associated policies to ACT public school students, schools, and the community.

The Executive Group Manager is responsible for:

- student engagement and wellbeing
- disability services and inclusion
- allied health services to support the wellbeing of students in all schools
- the Directorate's digital strategy, which supports learning and teaching across our schools
- VET support and opportunities
- careers and transitions coordinated services
- teaching and learning
- services to international students studying within public schools.

Executive Group Manager, Safe at School

The Executive Group Manager, Safe at School was temporarily appointed to lead the Safe at School Taskforce. The Taskforce was established to elevate the Directorate's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our staff and students in schools.

The Executive Group Manager, Safe at School is responsible for delivering a sustainable approach to safety in schools. The role is responsible for leading and managing the Directorate's comprehensive response to ongoing legislative compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, including:

- supporting schools to respond to WorkSafe ACT activity in schools
- developing a strategic approach to workplace and staff safety at a system level.

The Taskforce brought together the Restrictive Practice, Occupational Violence and Complex Case Management, Positive Behaviours for Learning, Work Health and Safety, and Early Intervention and Wellbeing teams to enhance the support service to schools.

Remuneration for senior executives

All executives employed by the Education Directorate were paid in accordance with the determinations of the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

The ACT Remuneration Tribunal is an independent statutory tribunal with responsibility for setting the remuneration, allowances, and entitlements for public officials in the ACT, including the ACT Government. Further information can be found at <https://www.remunerationtribunal.act.gov.au>.

Significant committees of the Directorate

Governance committees

Executive Governance Committee

The Executive Governance Committee (EGC) supports the Director-General as the responsible officer of the Education Directorate reporting to the Minister under Section 19 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

As the peak governance committee for the Directorate, the EGC provides leadership, direction, and guidance to the Directorate, and oversees the Directorate’s policy and strategy, governance, risk, safety, and compliance frameworks. Supporting the EGC are several subcommittees. EGC subcommittees are established or endorsed by the EGC to monitor, advise, and regularly report on matters to support the decision making of the EGC.

There were several changes made to the EGC subcommittees following a review of the EGC Terms of Reference in August 2022. The review of the subcommittee structure identified subcommittees as those with an ongoing purpose addressing core governance functions, and those that were time-limited and were formed to oversee programs or policy areas.

Other Directorate committees, governance groups, and advisory and consultative bodies, which are often operational in nature, may be required to provide updates to, and seek direction from, the EGC on matters relating to their function.

Table 1: Executive Governance Committee Subcommittees

| Executive Governance Committee | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Work Health and Safety Subcommittee | Security and Emergency Management Subcommittee | Digital Strategy Subcommittee | Education Workforce Subcommittee | Education Planning Subcommittee | Finance Subcommittee |

Work Health and Safety Subcommittee

The Work Health and Safety (WHS) Subcommittee was established and authorised by the Director-General to ensure as far as reasonably practicable, the Directorate is complying with its obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The subcommittee is responsible for ensuring due diligence is actively undertaken, and includes taking reasonable steps to:

- acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of work health and safety matters that affect employees collectively, or matters that are unable to be resolved at the WHS Consultative Committee level
- monitor implementation of the Safe at School program and provide an escalation point for any issues as they arise

- monitor WHS performance and compliance, and ensure the Directorate has effective WHS management systems and processes in place
- regularly review and assess strategic WHS risks, including identification and management of emerging risks
- commission and review regular WHS reports from business areas
- consider and/or endorse proposed actions to mitigate or respond to identified risks, noting that, where there are financial implications, proposed/recommended actions are progressed to the Finance Subcommittee for consideration.

The WHS Subcommittee is the consultative body responsible for the review of updated Directorate WHS policies and the WHS Management System.

The subcommittee also provides governance for, and oversees:

- the Directorate's WHS Consultative Committee
- the Safe at School Taskforce work program, including the Safe at School Taskforce Advisory Group.

Security and Emergency Management Subcommittee

The Security and Emergency Management Subcommittee acts as an advisory body to oversee the Directorate's security and emergency management policies, plans and practices. It was established to provide advice and guidance on the development and implementation of initiatives relating to security, emergency management, business continuity, and related risk management and compliance matters across the Directorate.

Digital Strategy Subcommittee

The Digital Strategy Subcommittee provides advice on the development and implementation of digital and ICT strategies, programs, and policies. It makes recommendations to the EGC about digital and ICT strategic directions, policies, risks, cyber threats, and proposals for system-wide ICT initiatives.

Education Workforce Subcommittee

The Workforce Subcommittee (EGC WSC) was established by the Director-General to oversee the implementation of the *Education Directorate Workforce Strategy 2021-2023* (the WFS) and respond to the identified strategic workforce risks including workforce supply and industrial matters.

The EGC WSC provides oversight of the delivery of strategic diversity and inclusion plans, such as Employment Action Plans, and industrial matters such as secure workforce conversion, enterprise bargaining, and enterprise agreement implementation.

The EGC WSC puts forward recommendations and/or proposed actions to address or respond to current and emerging strategic workforce risks across the Directorate, including recruitment and retention, workforce satisfaction and wellbeing and injury prevention.

Education Planning Subcommittee

The Education Planning Subcommittee is responsible for responding to enrolment growth in the Territory by:

- effectively administering ACT public schools with respect to capacity and enrolment demand
- identifying and preparing for future school infrastructure requirements and developing new infrastructure proposals for the Minister and the government's consideration
- overseeing progress on projects of strategic significance and being an escalation pathway through to EGC for issues
- delivering the government's agreed infrastructure measures as they relate to ensuring school capacity that meets enrolment demand.

Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee is responsible for providing advice and support around financial management and compliance to the EGC. Advice may include:

- branch and division forecasted positions based on annual budget allocations and ongoing impacts on branch or division allocation
- implementation of election commitments, including budget initiatives, funded and unfunded outcomes, and impacts on the Directorate's position
- operational program changes or innovation ideas prior to implementation
- policy consideration that may have financial impacts
- compliance-related matters, where this would affect the financial operations of the Directorate.

Consultative Committees

Directorate Consultative Committee

The Directorate Consultative Committee shares information across the Directorate. It also consults with and communicates processes to staff, senior managers, and unions on change management proposals in the workplace.

The membership of the committee includes 4 to 6 Directorate and school-based staff representatives, one or 2 union representatives from the Community and Public Sector Union, United Workers Union and the Australian Education Union, and other specialists upon invitation.

Work Health and Safety Consultative Committee

The WHS Consultative Committee was established and authorised by the Director-General as a subcommittee of the WHS Subcommittee (under EGC) to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the Directorate is complying with its health and safety workplace consultation obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The WHS Consultative Committee was re-established in Term 4, 2022 after an interruption related to COVID-19. The WHS Consultative Committee meets on a quarterly basis.

The WHS Consultative Committee provides advice on the ongoing development and implementation of the Directorate's WHS policies, procedures, and safety priorities; considers health safety and wellbeing performance, as well as specific injury prevention and injury management advice and initiatives.

The WHS Consultative Committee provides advice on high-level strategic initiatives to address injury data trends, reviews statistical data and identifies the Directorate's risk profile trends through reported hazards, incidents/accidents and injuries, or serious illness arising from the workplace undertaking.

Engagement and Advisory Committees

Principals' Advisory Group

The Principals' Advisory Group is a consultation and communication group representing all ACT public school principals. The group considers key strategic, policy and operational matters and provides advice to the Director-General, Senior Executive, and schools.

Education Evidence and Evaluation Advisory Group (previously Education Evaluation Subcommittee)

The Education Evidence and Evaluation Advisory Group ensures the ACT Government Evaluation Policy and Guidelines are implemented across the Directorate and oversees research occurring within, or on behalf of, the Directorate. It guides the development of evaluation capability and reports annually to the EGC.

Safe at School Taskforce Advisory Group

The Safe at School Taskforce Advisory Group was established in late-2022 to provide expertise and advice to the Safe at School Taskforce. The advisory group is chaired by the Deputy Director-General and includes members from:

- Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
- the Parents and Citizens Association
- ACT Policing
- ACT Principals Association
- ACT Education Union
- Community and Public Sector Union
- United Workers Union
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The advisory group is not a decision-making body, but considers and provides advice to the Directorate on:

- current and planned initiatives to improve health, safety and wellbeing in ACT public schools
- information relating to health, safety and wellbeing performance in ACT public schools
- opportunities to improve and evaluate the Directorate's health, safety and wellbeing performance
- communications, education and training materials for staff, students, and the broader community.

Disability Education Reference Group

The Disability Education Reference Group is a community consultative forum convened by the Director-General. The purpose of the reference group is to provide an opportunity for information sharing and for key community stakeholders to contribute to the formulation of policy and advice in relation to the education of students with a disability in ACT public schools.

ACT Minister's Student Congress

The ACT Minister's Student Congress provides an opportunity for ACT public school students to come together to discuss issues that matter to them and affect their education. It is a conduit for student voices from ACT public schools to the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and supports students to explore issues of significance for them and their education.

The congress further provides students with opportunities in leadership, advocacy, networking, and organisational skills.

Performance Analysis

Overview

Table 2: Performance analysis overview

| Strategic Objective | Strategic Indicator | Comment on 2022–23 Performance | More Information |
|--|--|---|---|
| Strategic Objective 1 – To promote greater equity in learning outcomes in and across ACT public schools | Strategic Indicator 1(a) Reduction in the equity gap between the most advantaged and less advantaged students in reading | The 2022 gap result was 58 NAPLAN points which is higher than the 2022 target of 48. This result, following a gradual narrowing of the equity gap since the 2018 baseline shows there is more to do. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 1(a), page 44 |
| | Strategic Indicator 1(b) Reduction in the equity gap between the most advantaged and less advantaged students in numeracy | The 2022 gap result was 52 NAPLAN points which is higher than the 2022 target of 38 points. This result, following a gradual narrowing of the equity gap since the 2018 baseline shows there is more to do. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 1(b), page 45 |
| Strategic Objective 2 – To facilitate high quality teaching in ACT public schools and strengthen educational outcomes | Strategic Indicator 2(a) ACT public schools gain for Years 3 to 5 in reading | Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for the 2020-22 gain cycle. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 2(a) page 47 |
| | Strategic Indicator 2(b) – ACT public schools gain for Years 3 to 5 in numeracy | Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for the 2020-22 gain cycle. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 2(b) page 47 |
| | Strategic Indicator 2(c) – ACT public schools gain for Years 7 to 9 in reading | Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for the 2020-22 gain cycle. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 2(c) page 47 |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| | Strategic Indicator 2(d) – ACT public schools gain for Years 7 to 9 in numeracy | Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for the 2020-22 gain cycle. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 2(d) page 48 |
| Strategic Objective 3 – To centre teaching and learning around students as individuals | Strongly Identified with their school by group, ACT public schools | Student School Identification peaked following the end of lockdown in 2020 at 66%, as students returned to school and placed higher value on the community experience. Since 2021, Student School Identification have returned to pre-COVID-19 trend levels. Staff School Identification have remained broadly consistent over time (2022 being slightly below target) whereas Parent/Carer School Identification levels exceeded the 2022 target. | Output Class 1 page 50 Strategic Objective 3 page 49 |

Strategic Objectives and Indicators

The Directorate's 3 strategic objectives outlined in the 2022–23 Budget were guided by the *Future of Education Strategy*.

Although this reporting period continued to be impacted by the ongoing pandemic, the Directorate retained ambitious targets. It is noted that in some cases improvements seen in previous reporting periods have not been maintained, demonstrating the cumulative effect of the pandemic.

Strategic Objective 1 – To promote greater equity in learning outcomes in and across ACT public schools

The ACT public education system is underpinned by the right of all children to access high quality education. It is recognised that not all children are able to access the same educational advantages when starting their education. Some children receive at-home and early childhood education, others first access education at the start of preschool. Children may also experience adversity at different stages of their education journey. The difference in access may be the result of socio-economic factors, physical or mental health or disability, cultural backgrounds, or familial circumstance.

The *Future of Education Strategy* recognises students as individuals and will emphasise the creation of learning environments with students at the centre.

This measure reaffirms the ACT Government's commitment to **equity in the public education system**. This measure shows that difference, expressed as the difference in average NAPLAN points across all four NAPLAN year levels.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) will implement a new measurement scale for NAPLAN 2023 and beyond. The Directorate will review the Equity targets once the ACARA work has been completed and a new scale in place.

As a result of the change, NAPLAN 2023 data will also not be comparable to previous NAPLAN years.

NAPLAN scores in reading represent the performance gap between less advantaged groups of students (those where highest level of parental education is less than university degree) and the most advantaged group of students (those with parents with a university qualification or above) for students in ACT public schools (see Table 3).

Table 3: Strategic Indicator 1(a) – Reduction in the equity gap between the most advantaged and less advantaged students in reading

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 ² | 2021 | 2022 Target | 2022 Actual |
|------------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| Equity Gap | 57 ¹ | 52 | N/A | 49 | 48 | 58 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ 2018 is the baseline year for this new measure. This aligns with the ACT's move to more precise assessment through NAPLAN online. Historical data from 2015 have been retrospectively calculated for reference and have limited comparative value.

² Due to COVID-19 the NAPLAN testing did not occur. As a result, no performance data is available to report for 2020.

Between 2018 and 2021, the equity gap in reading narrowed from 57 points in 2018 to 49 points in 2021. This was despite the challenges of the initial stages of the global pandemic.

Information shared by schools with the Education Support Office indicated that the extended impact of the pandemic was visible to different degrees on some individuals and some groups of students, particularly in the early years.

The 2022 reading equity gap of 58 points confirms that the sustained (3 year) duration of the pandemic has had a more significant impact on the literacy learning of less advantaged students in the ACT. The response of our schools has been to increase efforts to personalise learning to meet the needs of these students.

This system level outcome requires a system level response, and the Directorate has been putting procedures in place to support teachers to provide the right supports to students who are performing at all levels in their classrooms.

Schools use data from system-wide assessments, along with classroom assessments to inform next steps in supporting students to progress their learning and inform decisions about teaching and learning strategies.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are the key mechanism used. PLCs are collaborative groups of teachers and school leaders who come together to enhance their professional knowledge, improve practice, and engage in activities that assist to inform decisions about priorities for student learning in schools. It is informed by a structured framework for engagement and collaboration, focus on learning, shared responsibility and focus on continuous improvement for students.

While teachers currently use student learning data to inform their work, we are giving better access to data to principals and teachers, with access to school and system data along with professional learning to increase data literacy.

In the second half of 2023, principals will have access to a Leadership Dashboard that brings a range of system and student data together in way that will enable them to better determine the learning needs of students and what support and assistance they need in their learning. Informed and supported by the Education Support Office, schools will have enhanced support in their prioritising of the learning needs for students in their schools.

NAPLAN scores in numeracy represent the performance gap between less advantaged groups of students based on parental education (those where highest level of parental education is less than a university degree) and the most advantaged group of students (those with parents with a university qualification or above) for students in ACT public schools (see Table 4).

Table 4: Strategic Indicator 1(b) – Reduction in the equity gap between the most advantaged and less advantaged students in numeracy

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 ² | 2021 | 2022 Target | 2022 Actual |
|------------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| Equity Gap | 45 ¹ | 44 | N/A | 39 | 38 | 52 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ 2018 is the baseline year for this new measure. This aligns with the ACT's move to more precise assessment through NAPLAN online. Historical data from 2015 have been retrospectively calculated for reference and have limited comparative value.

² Due to COVID-19 the NAPLAN testing did not occur. As a result, no performance data is available to report for 2020.

Between 2018 and 2021, the equity gap in numeracy narrowed from 45 points in 2018 to 39 points in 2021. This was despite the challenges of the initial stages of the global pandemic. Information shared by schools with the Education Support Office indicated that the extended impact of the pandemic was visible to different degrees on some individuals and some groups of students, particularly in the early years. The 2022 numeracy equity of 53 points confirms that the sustained (3 year) duration of the pandemic has had a more significant impact on the numeracy learning of less advantaged students in the ACT. The response of our schools has been to increase efforts to personalise learning to meet the needs of these students. Information provided for reading, above, equally applies for numeracy.

Additionally, ACARA has indicated at the national level that numeracy results seem to have been more significantly impacted by the pandemic than other domains. This appears to have amplified the numeracy equity gap in ACT public schools in 2022.

Strategic Objective 2 – To facilitate high quality teaching in ACT public schools and strengthen educational outcomes

The *Future of Education Strategy* sets the objective for the Directorate of ensuring students succeed 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 and developing cohesive relationships between schools, communities and whole of government.

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.

To measure the growth in student outcomes over time, the Directorate compares the NAPLAN mean reading scores of children in year 3 (or year 7) with the NAPLAN mean reading scores of the same children when they have reached year 5 (or year 9).

Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for 2018–2020, or the 2020–2022 gain cycles.

Students generally experience a higher gain in their early years of schooling as they develop a foundational understanding of new concepts in numeracy and literacy. This is reflected in the national NAPLAN scale, which reflects double the gain between years 3 and 5 students compared with gain between years 7 and 9 students.

The variation in gain over time in the ACT reflects the national pattern. 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, causing insignificant variation in the gain results. ACT public schools have achieved similar gain relative to the national gain data.

Reporting of gain data will be in abeyance until after the release of NAPLAN 2025 data. At the time of writing this report, NAPLAN 2023 data is in the process of being put onto a new scale and the 2023 data will not be comparable to previous NAPLAN data, resulting in a time series disruption.

ACARA has indicated that reporting of student gain will not be possible until 2025, 2 years after the time series is restarted, for instance, after students completing NAPLAN on the new scale in 2023 receive their next NAPLAN results in 2025.

Table 5: Strategic Indicator 2(a) – ACT public schools gain for years 3 to 5 in reading

| | 2016–18 Actual | 2017–19 Actual | 2018–20 ¹ Actual | 2019–21 Actual | 2020–22 Target | 2020–22 ¹ Actual |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Year 3 | 440 | 446 | N/A | 441 | 442 | N/A |
| Year 5 | 522 | 520 | N/A | 518 | 522 | N/A |
| Gain | 82 | 74 | N/A | 77 | 80 | N/A |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for 2018–20, nor 2020–22 gain cycles.

Table 6: Strategic Indicator 2(b) – ACT public schools gain for years 3 to 5 in numeracy

| | 2016–18 Actual | 2017–19 Actual | 2018–20 ¹ Actual | 2019–21 Actual | 2020–22 Target | 2020–22 ¹ Actual |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Year 3 | 412 | 421 | N/A | 414 | 416 | N/A |
| Year 5 | 497 | 499 | N/A | 494 | 500 | N/A |
| Gain | 85 | 78 | N/A | 80 | 84 | N/A |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for 2018–20, nor 2020–22 gain cycles.

Table 7: Strategic Indicator 2(c) – ACT public schools gain for years 7 to 9 in reading

| | 2016–18 Actual | 2017–19 Actual | 2018–20 ¹ Actual | 2019–21 Actual | 2020–22 Target | 2020–22 ¹ Actual |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Year 7 | 558 | 563 | N/A | 555 | 557 | N/A |
| Year 9 | 599 | 592 | N/A | 587 | 592 | N/A |
| Gain | 41 | 29 | N/A | 32 | 35 | N/A |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for 2018–20, nor 2020–22 gain cycles.

Table 8: Strategic Indicator 2(d) – ACT public schools gain for years 7 to 9 in numeracy

| | 2016–18 | 2017–19 | 2018–20 ¹ | 2019–21 | 2020–22 | 2020–22 ¹ |
|--------|---------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| | Actual | Actual | Actual | Actual | Target | Actual |
| Year 7 | 556 | 561 | N/A | 561 | 561 | N/A |
| Year 9 | 600 | 594 | N/A | 592 | 597 | N/A |
| Gain | 44 | 33 | N/A | 31 | 36 | N/A |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ Due to COVID-19 disruption, the NAPLAN 2020 testing did not occur. As a result, no data are available to report for 2018–20, nor 2020–22 gain cycles.

Strategic Objective 3 – To centre teaching and learning around students as individuals

The *Future of Education Strategy* recognises the importance of developing students as individuals and creating a learning environment adapted to their needs. Children enter the education sector with a diverse range of strengths and needs, and schools respond and adapt the teaching approaches to increase student outcomes.

Student education outcomes are affected by the surrounding school environment. The level of students' school identification informs student attitudes to, and interaction with, the physical, emotional, and relational environment of the school.

The ACT Government recognises that quality peer relationships, and a sense of school belonging, positively impacts the outcomes of students and school staff. This strategic indicator draws information from students, staff, and parents. This indicator will show the change over time in the strength of identification with the schools of students, staff, and parents/carers.

Student school identification peaked following the end of lockdown in 2020 at 66%, as students returned to school and placed higher value on the community experience. Since 2021, student school identification has returned to pre-COVID-19 trend levels. Staff school identification has remained broadly consistent over time, with 2022 being slightly below target, whereas parent/carer school identification levels exceeded the 2022 target.

Between 2019 and 2020, large increases in school identification resulted from the resolution of the first COVID-19 lockdown. Students, staff and parents and carers valued and identified more strongly with their school communities after the experience of not being permitted to engage in the community for an extended time. In 2021 and beyond, school identification levels returned to pre-COVID-19 trend levels. In this case, one of the 3 targets was exceeded, and the other 2 targets were not met by a small margin.

Table 9: Strategic Indicator 3 – Strongly identified with their school by group, ACT public schools

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 Target | 2022 Actual |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Student | 60 | 66 | 62 | 63 | 60 |
| Staff | 89 | 92 | 88 | 90 | 89 |
| Parent/Carer ¹ | 73 | 82 | 79 | 80 | 84 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, unpublished data

¹ Due to changes in the calculation the assessments of school identification for parent/carer, 2018 and 2019 are not directly comparable.

Output classes

Output class 1: Public school education

February 2023 census

The February 2023 census of ACT schools recorded 82,280 students enrolled in ACT public and non-government schools from preschool to year 12, representing an increase of 105 students (0.1%) since February 2022. From February 2019 to February 2023, enrolments increased by 3,528 students (4.5%). Public schools accounted for 61.4% of the total student population.

Annual enrolment increases in ACT schools have been broadly consistent with changes in the annual rate of growth in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated resident population (ERP) for school aged (3 to 17 years) children since 2016.

There were 50,556 students enrolled in ACT public schools (preschool to year 12), representing a decrease of 532 students (-1.0%) since February 2022. This reduction was due to the fall in overall preschool numbers for the last 2 years. Preschool enrolments in 2023 fell by 196 students (3.5%) from 2022 following a decrease of 490 students between 2021 and 2022.

The reduction in preschool numbers is strongly related to a reduction in the number of eligible children, rather than significant changes in participation in the optional preschool year. The ACT recorded lower births in 2018 and 2019, the years that most current preschool students were born. The ERP of 3-year-old children in the ACT in June 2021 was 376 less than the estimated number of 3-year-old children in June 2020, and 43 less from June 2021 to June 2022, which is impacting the number of children in preschool in 2022 and 2023, also flowing into kindergarten enrolments in 2023.

At the February 2023 census, there were 2,855 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in ACT schools, an increase of 55 students (1.9%) compared with 2022. There were 2,187 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in ACT public schools, representing 77% of all enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in ACT schools.

Cross-border enrolments in ACT public schools

At the February 2023 census, there were 1,347 cross-border enrolments in ACT public schools. Since 2019, cross-border enrolments have decreased by 233 students. As a proportion of total ACT public school enrolments, this represents a decrease from 3.2% in 2019, to 2.7% in 2022 and 2023.

Student attendance

The student attendance rate is the number of actual full-time equivalent student days attended by full-time students in years one to 10, as a percentage of the total number of possible student days over the period.

The ACT public school student attendance rate in Semester 1, 2022 was 85%; 6 percentage points lower than in 2021. The decline in the attendance rate was observed nationally (86% in 2022, down 5 percentage points from 91% in 2021), and highly consistent with other jurisdictions, described by ACARA as 'student attendance [being] significantly impacted by COVID-19, high influenza flu outbreaks and floods in some regions.'

Targeted support is available to schools to support the engagement and wellbeing of students, including case management support for student attendance and circumstances that allow for exemptions. The Targeted Support team within the Directorate is comprised of educators and health professionals who assist schools with complex student presentations needing multi-agency involvement.

One of the key targeted functions of the team is to work with families, schools and relevant external agencies to support the attendance of disengaged students of compulsory school age, once all in-school attendance procedures have been followed and offers of support have been exhausted. The team also performs a compliance and monitoring function relating to enrolment and attendance.

Figure 6: Attendance rate of public school students years 1 to 10, 2018 to 2022



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, School Participation

¹ ACT Government school data for 2018 and 2019 were derived from a school administration system in the process of implementation. Care should be taken when comparing the data for years before 2018.

Student retention

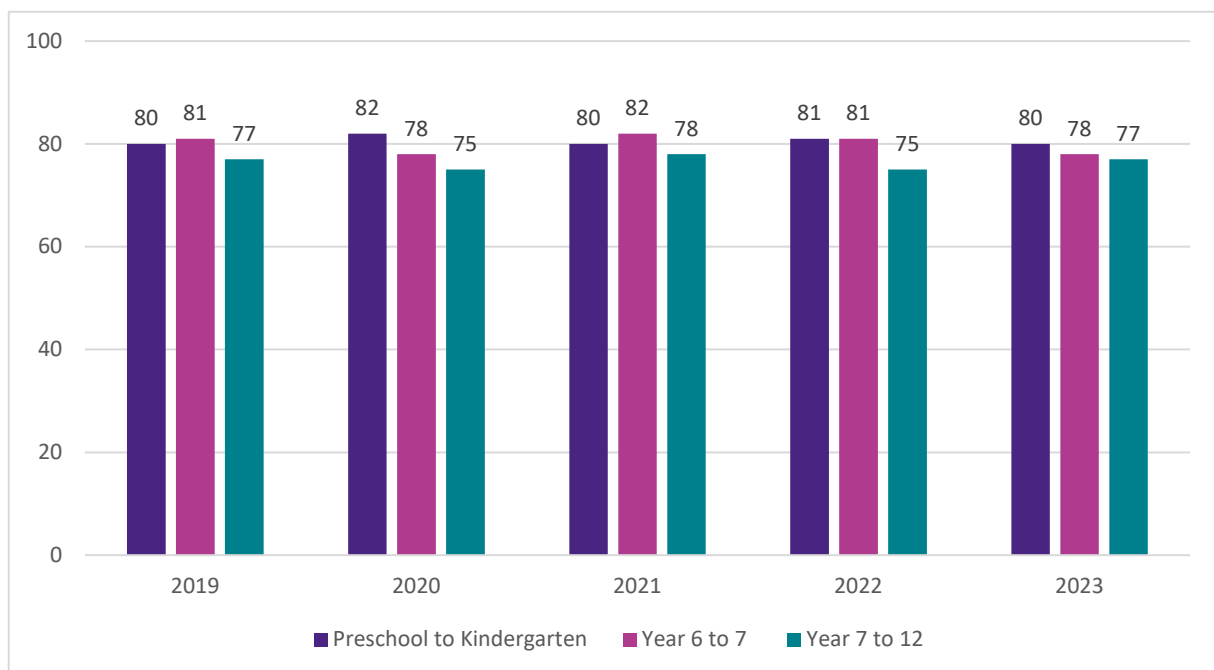
Real retention rates track the ongoing enrolment of the same students across school years. For example, the retention rate between year 7 and year 12 reflects the proportion of year 7 students still enrolled in the public education system in year 12.

Real retention rates in public schools between 2022 and 2023 were consistent with previous results. Student retention of preschool students to kindergarten increased slightly, while for year 6 to year 7, and year 7 to year 12, retention decreased slightly.

Real retention is affected by several factors including, but not limited, to:

- migration out of the ACT
- inter-sector (affiliation) transfer
- children of diplomats and short-term international exchange students returning to their place of origin
- students who undertake year level acceleration or repetition.

Figure 7: Real retention rates in public schools from preschool to kindergarten, year 6 to year 7 and year 7 to year 12, 2019 to 2023



Source: Census of enrolments in ACT schools, 2019 to 2023

Output 1.1: Public primary school education

Public primary school education spans from preschool to year 6. Learning opportunities in the primary years are designed to allow each student success and achieve high-quality learning outcomes.

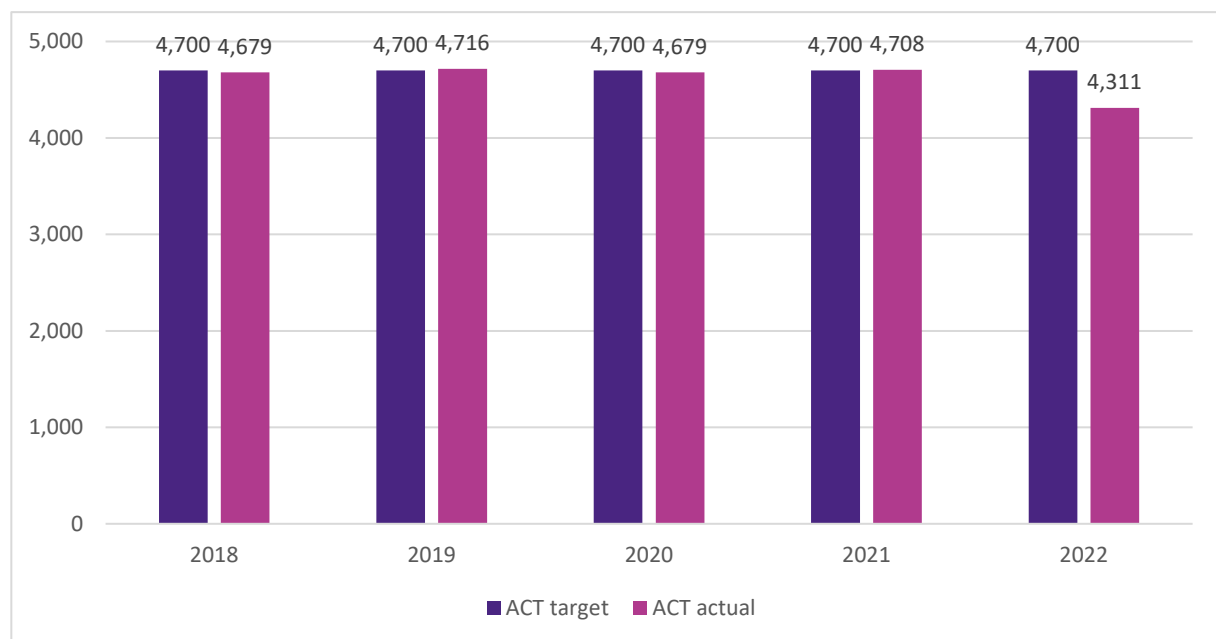
Each school maximises opportunities for students to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and values through implementing curriculum, assessment and reporting using the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework. Schools partner with parents, carers, and the community to enhance student outcomes.

The Directorate is responsible for the regulation of early childhood education and care services. Assessment and monitoring of early childhood education and care services contributes to ensuring quality education and care is provided to children who access these services. Early childhood education and care services include ACT public preschools, independent preschools, family day care, long day care, and school age care programs.

Preschool enrolments

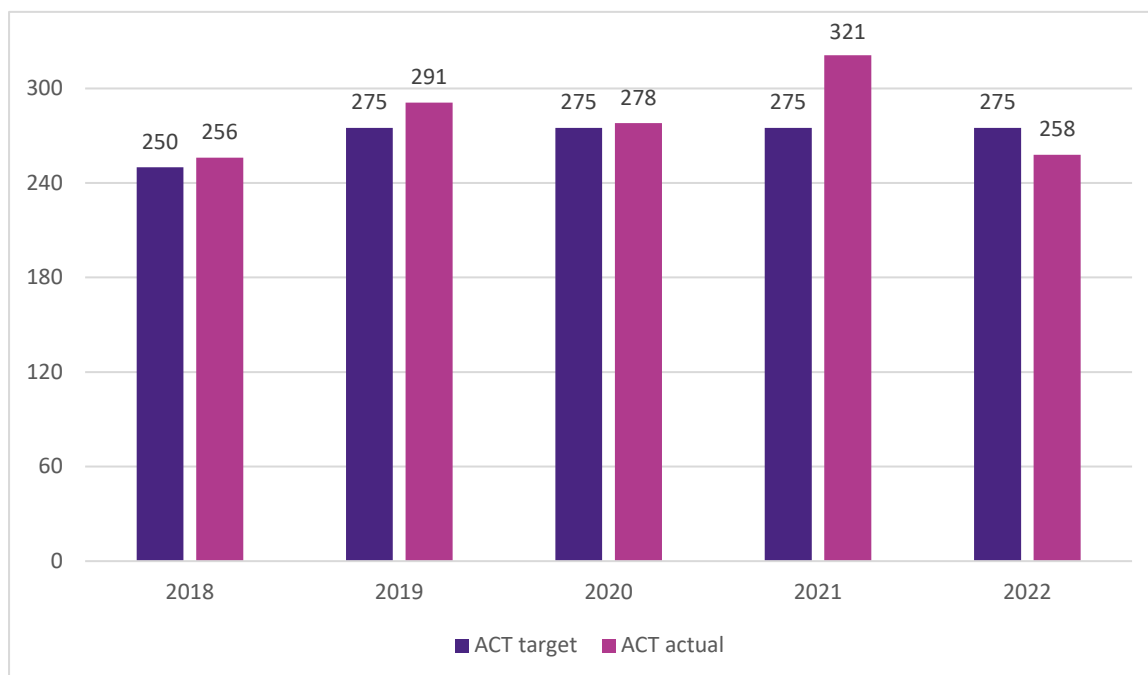
Preschool enrolments are dependent on the number of preschool-age residents during a year (including the number of births 4 years prior) and influenced by non-government sector capacity.

Figure 8: Number of enrolments in preschool in public schools, 2018 to 2022



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Early Childhood Education (a)

Figure 9: Number of enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in preschool in public schools, 2018 to 2022



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Early Childhood Education (b)

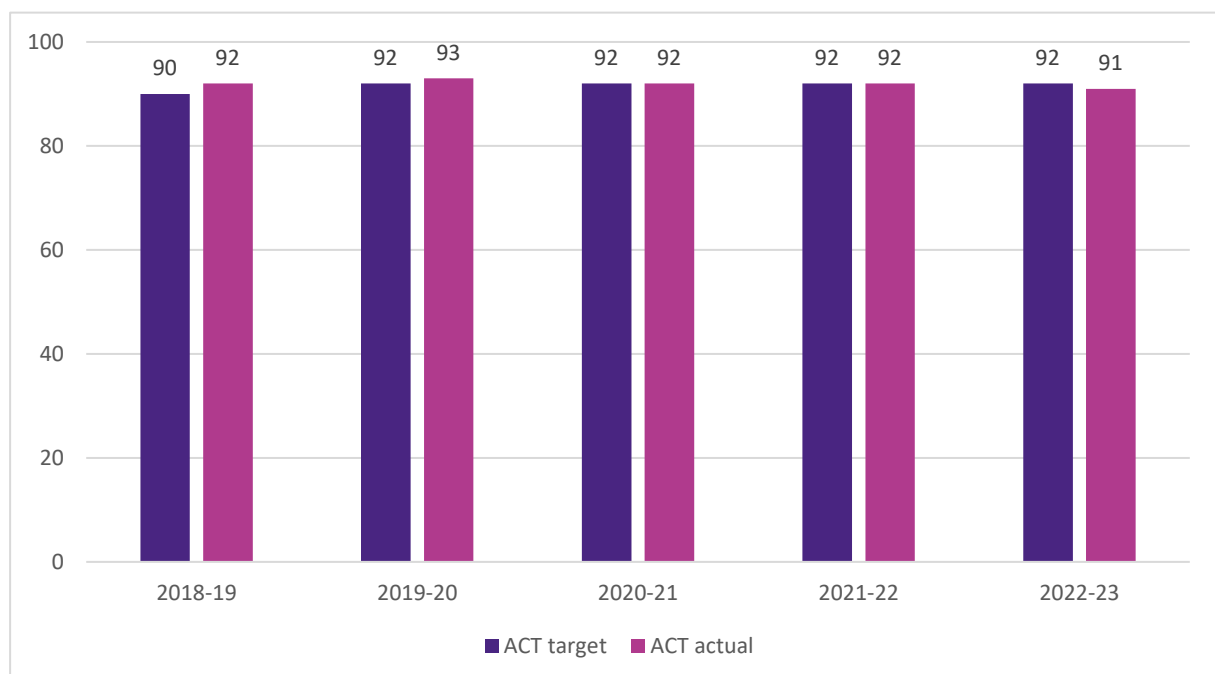
The reduction in preschool numbers is strongly related to a reduction in the number of eligible children rather than significant changes in participation in the optional preschool year. As noted for Output Class 1, the estimated resident population of 3-year-old children in the ACT in June 2021 was 376 less than the estimated number of 3-year-old children in June 2020, and 43 less from June 2021 to June 2022.

Output 1.2: Public high school education

Public high school education covers years 7 to 10. Each school organises its curriculum to maximise opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and values articulated in the Australian Curriculum.

ACT public high schools offer a comprehensive education across all key learning areas. The focus is on providing challenging and engaging learning, building relationships based on mutual trust and respect, and connecting students to the outside world. School programs develop students' critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal and teamwork skills, to empower students to contribute positively to their community. Schools partner with parents, carers, and the community to enhance student outcomes.

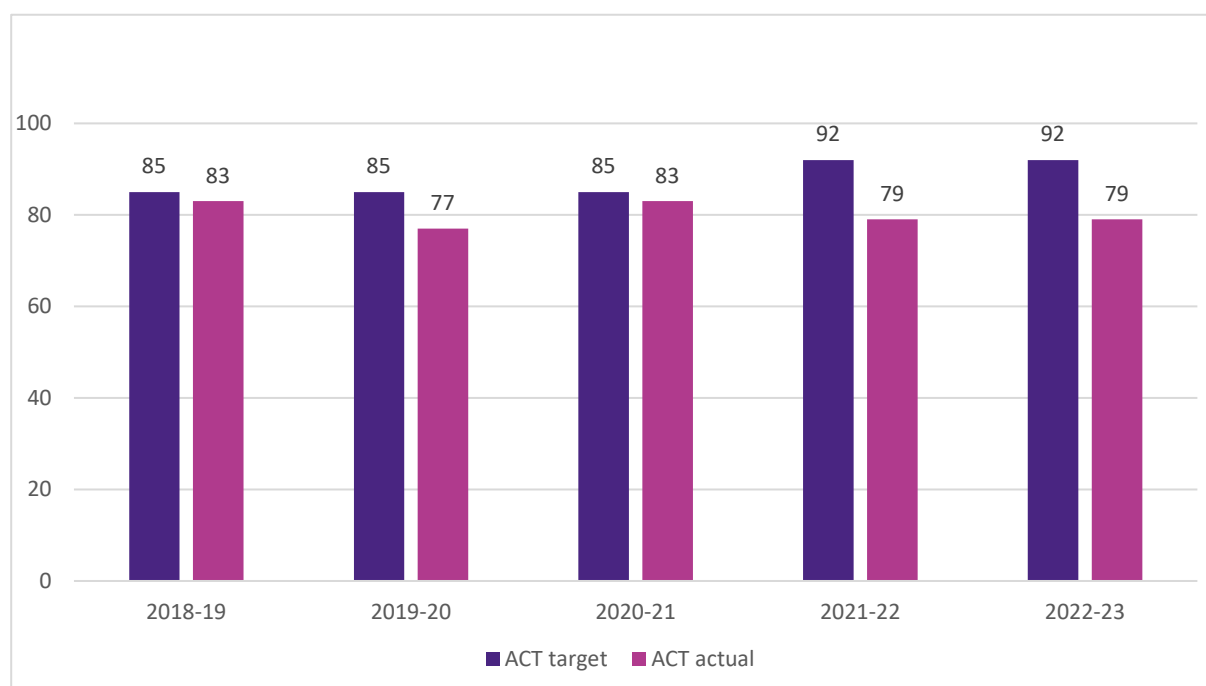
Figure 10: Percentage of year 10 students who proceed to public secondary college education, 2018–19 to 2022–23



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Senior Secondary Education (a)

These indicators provide a measure of improving secondary education in ACT schools in support of the National Youth Attainment Targets for successful student transitions from year 10 to 12.

Figure 11: Percentage of year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who proceed to public secondary college education, 2018–19 to 2022–23



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Senior Secondary Education (b)

For the 2021–22 Budget, the target in Figure 11 (SSE b) was increased significantly to ensure alignment with the all-student target. The policy intent is to achieve parity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student retention.

Of the 133 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in year 10 in 2022, 105 (79%) proceeded to public secondary college education in 2023. The small number of students in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort can result in large percentage variances between years.

Output 1.3: Public secondary college education

Public secondary college education covers years 11 and 12. ACT public secondary colleges offer courses catering to a broad range of student needs and interests. Courses are accredited by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies. Students can obtain an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (ACTSSC) on successful completion of their senior secondary studies.

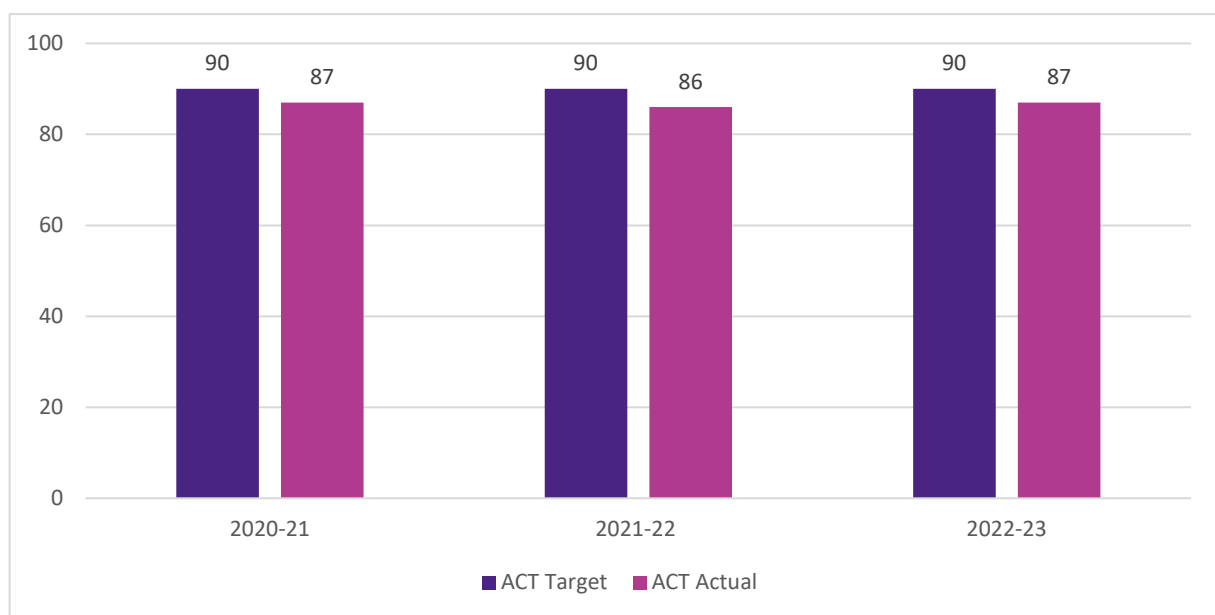
Students can also choose to obtain an ACT Tertiary Entrance Statement which includes an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank. Students may also achieve recognised vocational competencies or qualifications.

Year 12 certification outcomes

The Directorate commenced 2 new accountability indicators in the 2020–21 Budget to measure year 12 outcomes in the attainment of an ACTSSC.

Figure 12 and Figure 13 show the 2022–23 results and targets.

Figure 12: Percentage of year 12 students in public schools who received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Senior Secondary Education (e)

For the 2021–22 Budget, the target (Senior Secondary Education f) in Figure 13 was increased significantly to ensure alignment with the all-student target. The policy intent is to achieve parity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

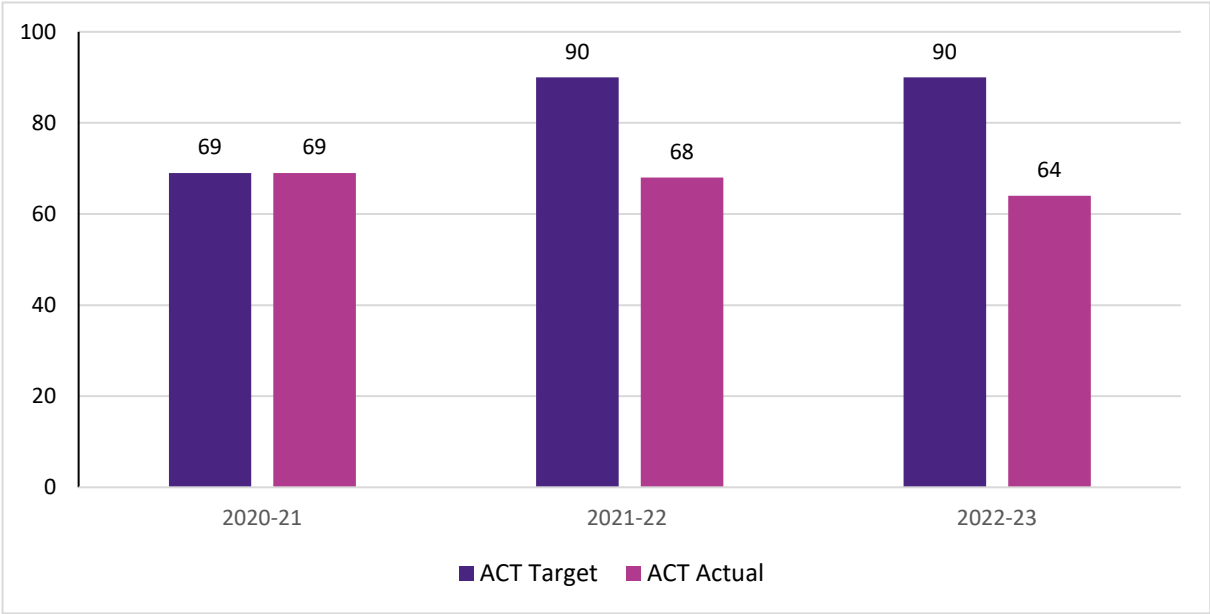
A total of 138 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in year 12 at the February 2022 census (including Older O and O2)¹, and 89 students receiving their ACTSSC, leading to the 64% completion rate. The small number of students in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort can result in large percentage variances between years.

The Directorate has a number of targeted and universal supports to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These include:

- the Student Aspirations Program
- secondary scholarships and the Mura Awards
- targeted VET supports and programs.

Individual schools and colleges also have school-based supports to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete their schooling.

Figure 13: Percentage of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in public schools who received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited- Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Senior Secondary Education (f)

1. O refers to students completing an abridged package in one year. O2 refers to students completing an abridged package over two years who are in their final year of study (these students are referred to as O1 prior to their final year). Students whose age cohort have already graduated are eligible to study an abridged package.

Output 1.4: Disability education in ACT public schools

A range of programs are available in ACT public schools for students with a disability. These include:

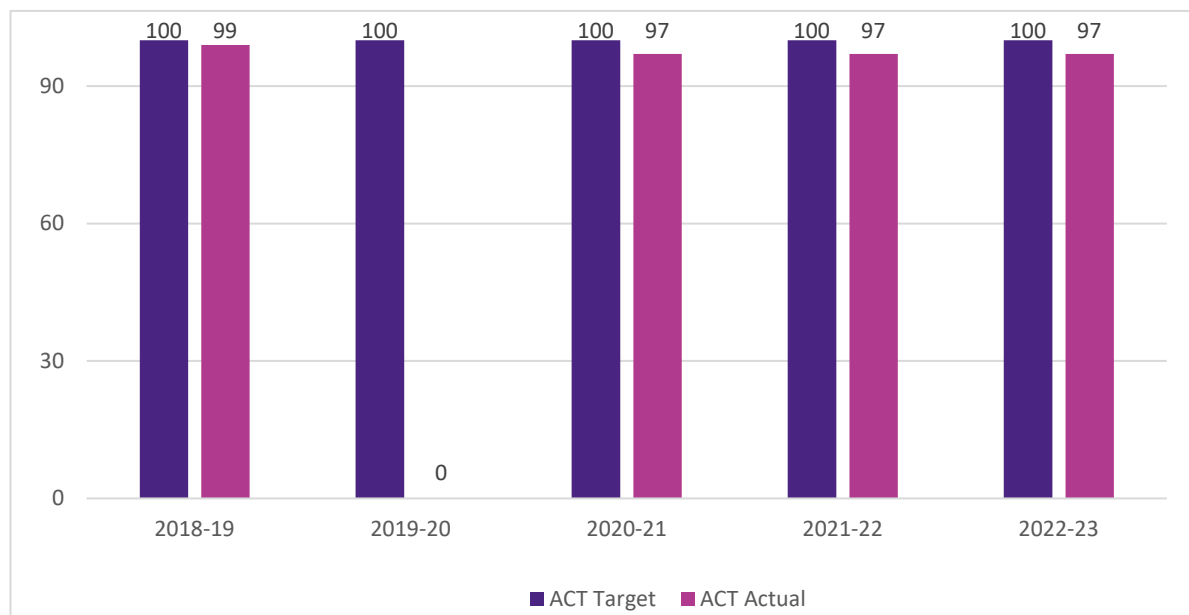
- the Inclusion Support Program, which resources reasonable adjustments in inclusive classrooms
- disability education programs, which offer smaller class sizes and space for regulation
- access to specialist schools.

Students accessing a disability program have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). ILPs are developed in partnership between the school, the family, the student, and other involved professionals.

Parents or carers and schools work together in developing and reviewing each student's ILP, which identifies educational goals and adjustments. Student progress against the ILP is reviewed annually or more frequently as required.

The Directorate provides personal care support in ACT public schools, as an in-kind contribution to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Figure 14: Percentage of Individual Learning Plans completed for students in special and mainstream schools who access special education services



Source: ACT Education Directorate, audited Accountability Indicators Output Class 1: Public School Education, Disability Education (a)

The shift to remote learning in 2020 occurred at the time when the annual ILP Audit would have usually occurred. The focus during this time was on immediate learning and wellbeing of students. ILPs continued to be used, however reporting did not occur for this year.

Output Class 2: Non-government education

The Education Directorate contributes to the maintenance of standards in non-government schools and home education through compliance and registration, and the accreditation and certification of senior secondary courses through the Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

The Directorate is also responsible for the registration of children, young people, and their parents for home education. The Directorate undertakes the administration and payment of the Commonwealth and ACT Government grants to registered ACT non-government schools.

Non-government school education

The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and the Registrar of Non-Government Schools have statutory responsibility for regulating non-government schools under Chapter 4 of the *Education Act 2004*. The *Education Act 2004* also establishes a Registration Standards Advisory Board (RSAB). The RSAB advises the Minister in her regulatory capacity and the Registrar.

Of the 47 non-government schools registered in the ACT, 29 are Catholic systemic schools and 18 are independent schools.

Non-government school applications

During the reporting period, the proprietor of Taqwa School – Canberra Muslim Youth Inc – applied for a registration amendment.

The proprietor proposed to provide new levels of education for years 7 and 8 at Taqwa School. The school currently provides education from kindergarten to year 6.

The additional levels of education are proposed to commence on 29 January 2024.

In her regulatory capacity, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs referred the application to RSAB. The Registrar gave public notice for the application on 19 May 2023. The application can be found on the Directorate's website.

Further detail about non-government school regulation and RSAB can be found in the Non-Government School Regulation section of this report.

Home education

Home education is available to parents as an alternative to school education in the ACT and across Australia. In the ACT, parents can also register their child for part-time home education in conjunction with the child also attending school.

Home education can be utilised for short or longer durations depending on the circumstances and needs of the family.

At the February 2023 census of ACT schools, there were 465 ACT resident children and young people registered for home education.

Table 10 Home education registrations as at annual February census

| Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of registered children | 305 | 322 | 395 | 413 | 465 |
| Annual % growth | 1 | 5.5 | 22.7 | 4.6 | 14 |
| As a % of total enrolled students in all schools | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.56 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, Censuses of ACT schools, February 2019 to 2023

During the reporting period, there were 234 applications for new registrations and 151 applications for registration renewal for home education. All applications were approved.

All parents applying for home education were notified of the outcome within 28 days of their completed application. No home education registrations were cancelled during the reporting period.

Education Directorate staff authorised to register children and young people for home education also conducted a range of activities to support parents. Directorate staff met with parents of 224 registered children and young people in a range of different formats (either face to face, teleconferencing or online instructional webinar). These meetings and events provided:

- information to new and existing home educating parents about their obligations under the legislation
- support for parents in the tailoring of home education activities to the educational and social–emotional needs of individual children and young people
- the pre-learner licence course for young people aged 15 and over
- NAPLAN testing
- a career planning workshop to explore career options and hear presentations from the National Careers Institute and the Directorate’s Careers and Vocational Pathways team.

Future of Education

The *Future of Education Strategy* sets out the ACT Government's long-term vision for education for 10 years (2018–2028) and aims to ensure all ACT schools are equitable, accessible, inclusive and enable student agency.

The strategy has 4 foundations:

- **Students at the centre** – each student treads their own educational pathway and should be empowered to make informed decisions about how their learning environment operates.
- **Empowered learning professionals** – education professionals are experts, highly skilled at working with students to guide them through their learning journey.
- **Strong communities for learning** – a strong education system requires a strong community, with schools acting as hubs for education and support services.
- **Systems supporting learning** – the systems that support learning must acknowledge the importance of early intervention and promote equity of opportunity and excellent outcomes for all learners.

This section of the report describes key activities and achievements against these foundations.

Students at the centre

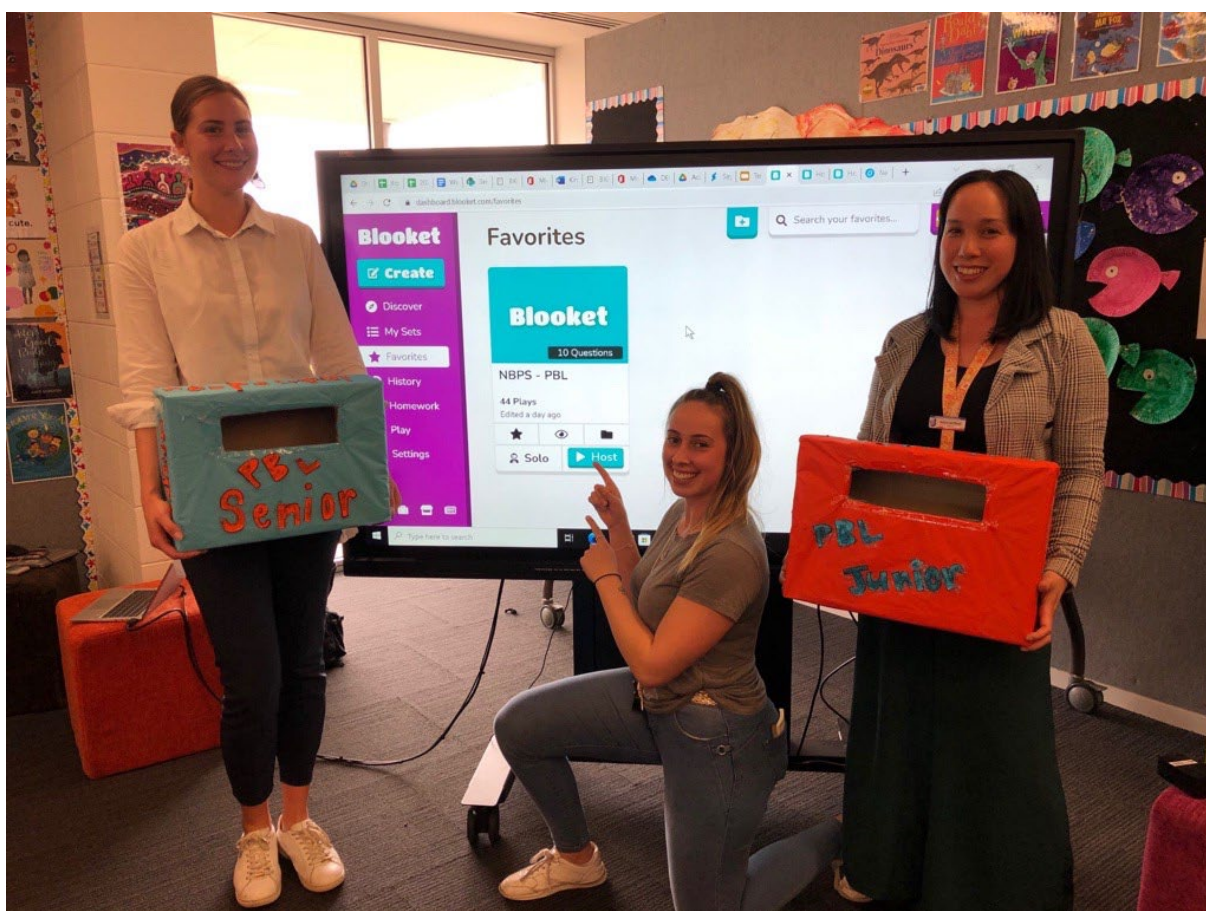
Each student treads their own education pathway and should be empowered to make informed decisions about how their learning environment operates.

Positive Behaviour for Learning

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is a multi-tiered framework that schools use to enable students, staff, families, and the school community to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Schools create clear expectations and rules that use positive language. These expectations are used in all areas across the school and for all people involved in the school community. Students and families are involved in deciding behavioural expectations at the school. Each school community decides how they will implement acknowledgement systems based on the school, the age of the students and what the school community has agreed.

School communities also work together to decide on what happens when things do not go according to plan. PBL uses an educative approach so there is the opportunity for students to get back on track.



Neville Bonner Primary School Positive Behaviour for Learning Acknowledgement Team delivering an information session to the whole school staff.

Schools implementing PBL ensure all students are explicitly taught the expected behaviours and establish clear and consistent boundaries. Staff take a proactive and preventative approach to ensure all students receive the appropriate level of support to help them to be successful at school (Tier 1 Universal). Student incident data is evaluated so that students can receive additional support when needed (Tier 2 Selected), and a minority of students can access intensive support to enable them to engage successfully at school (Tier 3 Targeted).

The Directorate continues to develop and deliver professional learning and provide access to experts to ensure schools are supported and capable of implementing PBL including:

- providing tailored PBL Tier 1 Universal Systems of Support training and engaging schools to undertake Tier 1 Classroom Systems training
- developing Tier 2 training modules, including Small Group Intervention 'Understanding Behaviour', 'Check In – Check Out' and 'Social and Academic Intervention Groups'

The Directorate has developed and refined systems to support schools including:

- a data dashboard enabling all PBL schools to monitor and use incident data to make evidence-based decisions about behavioural trends within their school
- an online version of the training program 'Essential Features of Classroom Practices' for teachers to improve skills in classroom management
- a 'Prevention of Bullying' training module

- improved tools for regular evaluation surveys and an annual reporting process
- networking opportunities to share practice and build opportunities for collaboration, and regular attendance of the Directorate's PBL coaches at team meetings in schools.

Eighty-four per cent of ACT public schools have commenced PBL implementation. During the reporting period, schools have been focused on meeting the needs of their local school communities, while managing the ongoing impact of staff shortages and COVID-19. This has slowed the capacity for remaining schools to prioritise PBL implementation. The Directorate is working with the remaining schools to support them in commencing or resuming implementation in their schools.

Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative



The Directorate continues to support the Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative (SAIS) delivered by Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT. The initiative supports schools to create and maintain safe and inclusive environments for all students regardless of their gender presentation/identity, intersex status, or sexual orientation.

The initiative focuses on strengthening the values of social responsibility, respectful relationships, and inclusion of diversity.

Over the reporting period, 168 individuals participated in the Teacher Quality Institute accredited SAIS Core Training. A new SAIS extension professional learning program was also developed and accredited in late-2022 and became available in 2023 with a focus on supporting gender diverse and intersex students at school, supporting student leadership activities, and embedding inclusion in the curriculum.

Disability and inclusive education

Every ACT public school is committed to meeting the needs of students with disability, and all students are encouraged and welcomed to attend their local school.

In 2022–23, the capacity to offer disability education programs was expanded to all primary schools, high schools, and colleges. This meant all eligible students wanting to access the smaller class size offered in a disability education program could enrol at their local ACT public school alongside their siblings and neighbours. ACT public schools offer a range of disability programs, including:

- resourcing to preschools to support children with developmental delay or disability
- the Inclusion Support Program, where children with disability are educated and receive reasonable adjustments in inclusive classrooms with peers of the same age
- hearing and vision support, which builds teacher capacity and provides specialist support for students from preschool to year 12, including Auslan interpretation where required

- disability education programs with smaller class sizes and dedicated spaces for students to engage in their learning or to support students' self-regulation and manage social situations
- access to specialist schools for students with a moderate, severe, or profound intellectual disability.



Image of resources from the Everyone Everyday pilot at Torrens Preschool. Everyone Everyday is a disability awareness program that focuses on the concept of inclusion. It aims to equip children with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enhance the inclusion of people with disability, especially children, in everyday life.

In practice, many students move between small groups and inclusive classes during the school day. Students accessing disability programs have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) developed in partnership between the school, family, student, and other professionals. ILPs identify educational goals and are regularly reviewed. In 2022–23, 97% of students accessing disability programs had an ILP in place.

A range of professional learning opportunities were made available for educators to upskill in best practice in inclusive education in 2022–23. These included:

- professional learning networks to provide opportunities for educators to share information at regular meetings
- online training courses including the disability standards for education, understanding and supporting behaviour, autism spectrum disorder, speech, language and communication needs, understanding hearing loss, and dyslexia and significant reading difficulties

- face-to-face training for educators on a range of other topics, including team teach training, the Everyone Everyday Program, universal design for learning, and evidence-based pedagogical practices
- a new Learning Support Assistant (LSA) Professional Learning package was developed and implemented from May 2023 covering a range of subjects
- Additional targeted support to schools was made available when required, such as access to inclusion coaches, the School Psychology Service, and the Allied Health Service.

In 2022-23, work continued to develop the *Inclusive Education Strategy*. The Strategy is designed to ensure that children and young people with disability are welcomed, valued, and can access education on the same basis as their peers. The Directorate has undertaken extensive engagement with key stakeholders including the education workforce, the broader ACT community including children and young people with disability and their families. The Directorate continues progress to finalise the *Inclusive Education Strategy* and the First Action Plan under this strategy in 2023.

Minister's Student Congress

Minister's Student Congress is an opportunity for public school students to meet and discuss issues of importance with the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs. It supports students to explore issues of significance for them and their education.

The congress was held on 21 October 2022 for more than 130 students with a theme of 'Hearing Student Voices'. It was led by students with support from Directorate staff. In addition to being a forum for discussion, it provided an opportunity for leadership, networking, and public speaking skills for students.

Three 60-minute workshops were held via an interactive online platform, with each targeting a different group:

- primary students located in the south of Canberra
- primary students located in the north of Canberra
- high school students.

The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs attended the workshops alongside teachers, Directorate Senior Executives, members of the Minister's Youth Advisory Council and staff from the Community Services Directorate.

Students built on their understanding of the theme and their personal experiences of student voice, and provided valuable insight into what they see as the best mechanism to get their voices heard. Students identified that a strengthened student voice model would be beneficial and a student working group would be an effective way to develop this.

National Student Voice Council

National Student Voice Student Council is a new national initiative supported by the Directorate. The initiative empowers students by placing their perspectives on the national education policy agenda to inform the work of Education Ministers.

The council is represented by 32 students from public, Catholic, and independent school systems from all states and territories across Australia. In 2022–23, 2 ACT public school representatives for the inaugural council were selected following an expression of interest process.

Legal Services in Colleges

The Directorate partners with Legal Aid ACT to deliver on the ACT Government's commitment to the 'provision of legal support for students experiencing vulnerability.' The Legal Services in Colleges program provides legal supports in ACT public colleges to ensure students and their families have access to confidential legal advice and referrals to legal and other services as required.

During 2022–23, Legal Liaison Officers (LLOs) provided legal services to 251 individuals across 9 colleges. Students have sought advice on a range of legal matters, including family and sexual violence, disputes with family members, personal protection orders, criminal matters, image-based abuse, employment rights and responsibilities, and Centrelink matters. LLOs facilitated referrals to community agencies to further support students.

LLOs also conduct community legal education sessions. LLOs consult with teachers to design presentations for delivery in legal studies classes, pastoral care groups, assemblies, and various Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) classes. Information sessions are also provided to staff on the role of the LLO, referral processes, and young people and the law.

Instrumental Music Program

The Instrumental Music Program (IMP) provided music and arts education in 63 ACT public schools during 2022–23. This included 107 primary school band classes, 6 high school band classes, 7 primary school ukulele classes and 2 primary school string classes. The program delivered instrumental music tuition to 2,892 students, with Throsby School joining the program in 2023.

The IMP also operated 8 extension ensembles for students from ACT public schools chosen by audition for music extension. This included one percussion ensemble, 2 choirs, one jazz band and 3 concert bands for students in years 4 to 12. A new string ensemble was formed in 2023.

IMP is responsible for additional arts programs across public schools for both students and teachers. This includes Arts Up Front, an annual professional day conference for arts educators that was held in February 2023 at Dickson College.

The conference featured 19 practical workshops for 111 attendees, including professional and community artists and educators as workshop leaders.



Instrumental Music Program performance for Wattle Day at Government House 31 August 2022

Performances by IMP for the Canberra community during 2022–23 included Canberra Raiders home games, Wattle Day at Government House, Floriade, Canberra Nara Candle Festival, Reconciliation Day, and Australian Parliament House 35th birthday event.

The IMP is celebrating 50 years of music education delivery in 2023 with a concert and band reunion. Two new works by Canberran composers have been commissioned for the event.

Step into the Limelight 2022

Step into the Limelight is the major annual creative and performing arts display event for ACT public schools and has been held in July each year since 2007.

In 2022, 34 schools participated in the Limelight art exhibition, with more than 278 artworks on display by more than 300 students. The Limelight art exhibition engaged with 3,000 community visitors over the exhibition season. In 2022, the Limelight program was updated to include 5 accredited teacher professional learning workshops.



Image of student artwork from Limelight Art Exhibition 2022 at M16 Gallery

Gender Equality Initiative

The Gender Equality Initiative commenced in 2021–22. The initiative includes funding for a team of coaches to deliver professional learning, develop teaching and learning resources, and support schools to build inclusive and equitable learning environments. The team, including one Director, and 2 Gender Coaches, has now been recruited.

The objective of the initiative is to support schools to deliver a whole-school approach to Respectful Relationships Education and prevent domestic and family violence by creating a culture of gender equality in schools. Through building the capacity of school staff, children and young children will learn and develop the attitudes, behaviours, and skills to engage in respectful relationships free from violence.

In 2022–23 scoping and development of a whole-school approach to Respectful Relationships Education commenced. The Initiative’s approach has been strongly influenced by the work of *Our Watch*, national leaders in primary prevention of gender-based violence.

During 2022–23, a teacher focus group was also established to inform the development of the Initiative’s approach and provide advice on resources and professional learning to ensure they met the needs of teachers and school staff.

On 8 March 2023, the Gender Equality Initiative supported schools to celebrate International Women’s Day. Professional learning, teacher resources and student-led whole-school activities were made available through the Gender Equality and Respectful Relationships Service Portal. Some examples included supports to deliver gender equality within curriculum and pedagogy, information on safety for teaching about gender equality, what a gender lens is, explaining intersectionality, and the impact of gender inequality on boys and young men.

Wear it Purple Day and International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination

Twelve schools received grants through SAIS to run a student-led, staff-supported activity for Wear It Purple Day on 26 August 2022. Activities included library book displays, murals, badge making, purple food stalls, purple fashion parade, documentary screenings and school discos.

On 17 May 2023, the Directorate acknowledged International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination. The Directorate facilitated an information session for Education Support Office staff on the importance of developing inclusive policies.

Student Equity Fund

In the 2021–22 Budget, the ACT Government committed to establishing a \$11.46 million Future of Education Equity Fund to provide a one-off, annual payment to low-income families living in the ACT. The Equity Fund enables ACT families of students from preschool to year 12 who are experiencing financial stress and who meet the eligibility criteria, to apply for annual grants to help cover the costs of education expenses such as school uniforms, school excursions, sport equipment and activities, and music lessons.

The 2023 Equity Fund round opened on 20 February 2023. During 2022–23, 2,052 applications supporting to 4,166 students were approved for payment with \$2,485,100 of funding committed. 1,997 ACT families experiencing financial hardship accessed the fund in the reporting period.

Meals in School pilot

On 27 March 2023, the Directorate announced the Meals in School pilot at 5 ACT public schools. The pilot will provide students with access to free breakfast and lunch for up to 120 days (3 days per week throughout the school year) until the end of 2024.

The 5 schools participating in the pilot are:

- Narrabundah Early Childhood School
- Richardson Primary School
- Gilmore Primary School
- Gold Creek School (High School only)
- Melba Copland Secondary School (senior secondary campus only – years 10, 11 and 12).

The approach to each school's delivery of the Meals in School pilot will vary and will be informed by consultation between the Directorate and students, school staff, and the school community to ensure that the meal service meets the needs of each school's unique context.

Chief Minister's Reading Challenge

The annual ACT Chief Minister's Reading Challenge is part of the Australia-wide Premier's Reading Challenge program. To complete the challenge, students from preschool to year 12 must read a minimum of 30 books in primary school, or 15 books in secondary school between February and August.

Challenge Ambassadors included local Canberra authors Tania McCartney, Harry Laing, Emma Grey, Stephanie Owen-Reader, Jack Heath, and Emma Batchelor, who visited schools, shared their experience as authors and read to students.

In 2022–23, 31,759 students from 81 ACT schools participated in the 2023 challenge.

ACT Children's Week

ACT Children's Week was celebrated from 22 to 30 October 2022. It is a national celebration of children's rights, talents, and citizenship, and focuses the attention of the wider community on children and what is important to them.

Each year, the ACT Children's Week Committee offer small seed grants of up to \$200 to schools, early childhood education and care centres, community organisations, families, carers, and volunteers to host events for Children's Week. In 2022–23, the Directorate contributed \$10,000 to this grant program.

ACT Children's Week seed grants supported 118 activities which involved approximately 13,000 children and 3,000 adults.

Clinical practice – psychology and allied health services in ACT public schools

All ACT public schools have access to school psychologists and allied health professionals to support the learning and participation of students. These professionals work with the school wellbeing or student service teams to identify student need and deliver multidisciplinary holistic supports which include a focus on early intervention activities and strategies to support schools to respond to emerging student needs, as well as whole-school preventative strategies.

School Psychology Service

The School Psychology Service offers group programs to secondary school students and their families. Programs that ran in 2022–23 included:

- Flexible Minds – a 7-week program for students in years 7 to 12 to help strengthen their skills in managing their emotions and achieving their goals
- ACT with HeART – a 5-week program for students in years 7 to 12 to help increase their ability to live in line with their values using creative art
- Overcoming Anxious School Refusal – an 8-week program for parents of students in years 6 to 12 to help increase their child’s ability to cope with anxiety and decrease anxious school avoidance
- Boundaries Without Conflict parenting program – an 8-week program for parents of students in years 7 to 12 to help address their child’s aggressive and challenging behaviours
- Chilled Skills – a 7-week program for students in years 7 to 12 to help regulate emotions, maintain relationships, and increase coping strategies, including 5 skills-based modules for students and 2 information sessions for their parents.

Allied Health Service

The Allied Health Service offers supports to students, families, and schools through a tiered approach. The service also offers group programs. In 2022–23 these included:

- RAGE – a 6-week program for young people aged 11–18 who have difficulty controlling their emotions, to help students identify feelings of anger, along with triggers, and explore strategies for coping with frustration
- Seasons for Growth – this program helps children and young people aged 5–18 build the knowledge and skills necessary to strengthen social and emotional wellbeing following significant loss
- Fine Motor Group – this provides exposure to a range of fine motor activities targeting the ‘building blocks’ of fine motor development, including hand and finger strength, letter formation and scissors skills, and can be adapted to offer to all year levels
- Zones of Regulation – promotes the development of regulation skills for students with the Zones of Regulation curriculum, including identifying and managing emotions, and can be adapted to offer to all year levels.

Social and Youth Workers

Recruitment of additional social and youth workers continued in 2022–23 as part of the ACT Government’s 4-year \$7.4 million commitment to provide early intervention and support for students and their families.



Alex Conroy, Education Directorate Senior Social Worker

The Directorate has employed 9.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during this reporting period, comprising:

- 1.0 FTE youth work lead
- 4.0 FTE senior youth work
- 1.0 FTE social work lead
- 2.8 FTE social work
- 1.0 FTE program director.

These staff are driving the design and trial delivery of a new service model for both social workers and youth workers. Social workers are now located in 6 schools. In Term 2 2023, senior youth workers worked with 65 schools.

The new service delivery model for social workers focuses on strengthening the partnership with school staff through the provision of professional advice and stronger collaboration with teachers to plan supports for students and their families. Lead youth workers have been established to provide guidance to existing school-based youth workers and to strengthen the consistency and quality of practice. Another key focus of their work is to provide professional learning and enhance stakeholder engagement with the community sector.

Flexible Education

Flexible Education provides a range of alternative settings and services designed to offer safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments for students requiring complex and intensive support.

Within these settings we design academic, wellbeing and transition goals in partnership with students to personalise their learning with a focus on creating strong opportunities to build sustainable future pathways.

Muliyan

The Muliyan off-campus flexible learning program supports public high school students who, at a point in time, require additional support. The aim of the program is to engage and positively connect students with their learning and wellbeing. Fifty-five students accessed the program in 2022–23.

This program provides personalised education programs to students with a strong focus on transitions, ensuring students are supported to return to their local school or move into further education, training, or employment opportunities.

This flexible education model encourages students to co-construct personalised learning plans, which include both academic and wellbeing goals using trauma-informed practices. This model aids the promotion of inclusivity and identifies connections to a multidisciplinary team that is appropriate to student needs.

Waruga Yardhura: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Engagement Program

During 2022-23, the Waruga Yardhura program continued to provide case management for up to 30 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in year 1 to year 10 who have not been attending or engaging in school.

The Waruga Yardhura team, comprising 2 youth workers and a school leader, works directly with students, families, school, and community to support strong case management and develop clear personalised learning and transition plans.

A Community Reference Group comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partners provides ongoing review and feedback for the program.

The Waruga Yardhura program received the Excellence in Cultural Integrity award at the 2022 ACT Public Education Awards.

Details about initiatives designed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can be found in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reporting section of this report.

Distance Education

The Distance Education program is provided through a partnership with the NSW Finigan School of Distance Education (FSDE). Students undertake a full online curriculum program, delivered by FSDE, that is appropriate to their year level.

Students are required to attend online classes, learning is provided through an online platform that provides resources, activities, and discussion forums.

The program supports children and young people who meet one of the following criteria with supporting evidence:

- student with a medical condition that prevents their attendance at a regular school or other local provision (supporting documentation from a paediatrician)
- student with elite participation in sport at a nationally recognised level (supporting documentation from the sporting body)
- students with additional learning and support needs that cannot be met in an ACT public school and all avenues of support are exhausted (supporting documentation from a psychiatrist/psychologist).

In 2022-23, 59 students from the ACT accessed distance education, supported by the Directorate.

Hospital School

The Hospital School is in the Adolescent Ward of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. Students at the Hospital School can be from government and non-government schools, can be home-schooled and do not have to be residents of the ACT.

The aim of the Hospital School is to keep children and young people connected to or re-engage with their learning.

The program is tailored to each student based on their age, health needs and the length of admission. Where students have a longer admission period, the teachers connect with their enrolled school to ensure they can support the student to keep connected to their learning and support transitions back to their home school.

A significant part of the role of the teachers is to liaise with the students enrolled school. This could include, but is not limited to:

- letting them know the student is in hospital
- supporting the student to stay connected to their teacher and classmates
- finding out the learning program the student is currently completing at school
- supporting the student to transition back to school
- linking the school to appropriate resources or organisations to support students with a chronic/critical illness who are unable to attend school.

Murrumbidgee School

Murrumbidgee School is located within Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and provides educational and training programs to all young people in custody in the ACT.

Murrumbidgee School provides a range of programs including year 7 to 9 Australian Curriculum engagement, year 10 and year 12 Certificate (in partnership with the student's enrolled school), CIT courses and other recognised certification and training.

A significant part of the role of Murrumbidgee School staff is to work with multidisciplinary Declared Care Teams to support young people with their transition back into the community. Transition plans can encompass re-engagement with education, training, work experience and paid employment, and often include involvement with external support agencies and community organisations.

Where a young person is enrolled at a school, Murrumbidgee School staff liaise with the student's enrolled school to ensure the student can continue their learning while in custody.

The Cottage

The Cottage is operated by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and is a day program for young people who have moderate to severe mental health issues which impact their ability to attend school.

The program aims to support young people make functional gains, to build their confidence, and capacity to return to school or vocational programs.

The Education Directorate works in partnership with the Health Directorate to provide a classroom teacher to deliver the learning program as part of the Cottage program.

The teacher works as part of the multidisciplinary team to develop an Individual Learning Plan for students, and support transitions back into their education settings.

Empowered learning professionals

Education professionals are experts, highly skilled at working with students to guide them through their learning journey.

Leadership development

Launched in 2018, the Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan was developed and delivered as a key foundation of the government's strategy arising from the *Future of Education* consultation. The strategic vision is built on previous reforms and committed to long-term reform to empower teachers, school leaders and other professionals to meet the learning needs of all students.

The Aspiring Senior Leaders Development Program was launched in February 2023 and is one of 3 programs designed to uplift leaders at all stages of their careers. The Principal Coach Mentors Program and Principal Induction Program have already commenced and are the other 2 programs that form part of this suite of work.

Aspiring Senior Leadership Program

The Aspiring Senior Leadership Program which commenced in 2023, is a 12-month program for substantive deputy principals who have demonstrated a positive impact in their current context and would like to develop their leadership capabilities, including but not limited to, those aspiring to principalship. It provides formal and targeted support to develop senior leadership capabilities.

The program was developed in partnership with Dr Kylie Lipscombe from the University of Wollongong and is a key part of the Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan which aligns with the *Future of Education Strategy* and the *Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership Principal Standards*. Education leadership development modules in NSW and Victoria were also used to underpin the course delivery.

The program is designed to develop a strong and collaborative network of future school principals who are equipped and ready for a sustained period of strong educational leadership across ACT public schools. The program recognises the importance of school leader wellbeing and supports this by building aspiring leaders' knowledge, capability, and confidence to assist them as they undertake their diverse roles.

Initially envisaged to be offered to 20 to 25 participants, the program was expanded to include approximately 40 substantive deputy principals in response to the higher number of strong applications received for the inaugural program.



Attendees at the Aspiring Leadership program 2-day event

To successfully complete the program, participants will:

- complete a 360 degree survey including analysis and feedback
- engage in professional learning workshops over 12 months
- actively collaborate with a small group of colleagues in regular professional learning community meetings, led by experienced Principal Coach Mentors
- complete a leadership inquiry or action research project
- develop a portfolio of evidence based on their learning and leadership impact.

The program began in February with 2 full days of professional learning. The first day comprised 2 workshops with Emeritus Professor Viviane Robinson. The second day started with a walk on country at Birrigai. The Birrigai Outdoor School Principal and staff led the walk and talked about connection to country. Dr Ben Wilson delivered 2 workshops on 'Thinking Differently about Cultural Integrity' and 'Country as a Teacher'.

All participants were engaged in professional learning across the year as well as engaging with their professional learning community with educational research relating to their selected project.

Principal Induction

The Principal Induction program connects all new principals with the Early Career Principal Collaborate and Connect series, Principal Coaching and Mentoring, differentiated New Principal Induction program, and the Enterprise Skills information session series.

During 2022–23, the Principal Induction program was further strengthened with the development of an intensive immersion for principals new to the Directorate. This intensive induction was provided to 3 of the 11 principals appointed during 2022–23. Of the principals appointed, 5 newly appointed early career principals also received targeted induction.

The Principal Induction program provides regular and targeted support provided by the relevant Director of School Improvement, with 30-, 60- and 90-day formal check-ins and sign-off on competencies and achievements over the program.

Principal Coach Mentors program

The Principal Coach Mentor program continued with 21 coaches providing coaching and mentoring across the system. In 2022–23, the program provided coaching to 34 principals in their first year, principals in acting positions for one term or more, and principals who requested personalised coaching for a variety of reasons, including transition between settings or complex school management.

The program develops a highly capable workforce of leaders who are well supported at every stage of their career. The program matches the expertise of experienced and effective principals with early career principals or principals requiring personalised coaching to build capability and strengthen the system from within. Program design values the important role of feedback in leadership development and aligns the outcomes of the *Future of Education Strategy*, the Directorate’s strategic plan and the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

All first-year principals and acting principals appointed for a term or more were supported with a coach/mentor. In addition, 5 experienced principals received up to 10 sessions of personalised coaching during Semester 2, 2022 and Semester 1, 2023.

The coaches/mentors were also engaged as part of the Aspiring Senior Leadership Program to provide personalised coaching to build capability by providing feedback to aspiring leaders.

Enabling Pedagogies

The Enabling Pedagogies resource supports ACT public schools to implement and embed evidence-based, high-impact teaching strategies which result in improved student outcomes and articulate pedagogical approaches. These 6 strategies are detailed in Table 11.

Table 11: Teaching Strategies

| Strategy | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Evidence based decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spirals of inquiry (multiple sources of evidence) Professional learning communities |
| Student centred learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency and co-construction Collaborative learning Inquiry based learning |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Personalised learning |
| Targeted explicit and scaffolded instruction | Differentiation Explicit instruction Response to need Structuring lessons |
| High expectations | Goal setting Teacher expectations |
| Safe, supported, connected and inclusive learning environment | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Learning environments Social emotional learning |
| Assessment | Feedback Formative assessment Learning intentions and success criteria Questioning |

Pedagogy coaches from the Directorate provide professional learning and guidance to teachers and school leaders to improve student learning outcomes and pedagogical improvement.

Enabling Pedagogies provides resources on the intranet which are routinely updated in line with best practice. In 2022–23, the Directorate delivered Teacher Quality Institute accredited online professional learning modules, with 142 teachers participating.

The Directorate provided targeted advice and support to 11 ACT public school principals to assist them in developing school pedagogical frameworks and improvement towards each schools' strategic priority areas. Two schools were supported to improve their capacity to implement high-impact teaching strategies.

Feedback showed educators who had engaged with the Directorate for pedagogical support gained useful knowledge and understanding. Teachers reported an increased confidence in their capacity to implement high-impact strategies in their practice.

Literacy, Numeracy and STEM

10 Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy

All ACT public primary schools use a systematic, evidence-based approach to literacy instruction called the 10 Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy (EIPs). These practices draw from a broad base of research to inform literacy instruction and include explicit teaching of phonological awareness and systematic phonics instruction, and other components of reading such as fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as well as writing. These are outlined in Table 12.

Table 12: 10 Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy preschool to year 6

| | Preschool | Kindergarten to Year 3 | Year 4 to Year 6 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intentional use of literacy artefacts in dramatic play and throughout the classroom | Deliberate efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons | Deliberate efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons |
| 2 | Read aloud with reference to print | Read aloud of age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital | Intentional, research-informed instruction using increasingly complex texts and tasks that build comprehension, knowledge, and strategic reading activity |
| 3 | Interactive read aloud with a comprehension and vocabulary focus | Small group instruction, using a variety of grouping strategies, most often with flexible groups formed and instruction targeted to students' observed and assessed needs in specific aspects of literacy development | Small group instruction, using a variety of grouping strategies, most often with flexible groups formed and instruction targeted to students' observed and assessed needs in specific aspects of literacy development |
| 4 | Play with sounds inside words | Activities that build phonological awareness (Years K and 1 and as needed thereafter) | Activities that build reading fluency and stamina with increasingly complex text |
| 5 | Brief, clear, explicit instruction in letter names, the sound(s) associated with the letters, and how letters are shaped and formed | Explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships | Explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships |
| 6 | Interactions around writing | Research-informed and standards-aligned writing instruction | Research-informed and standards-aligned writing instruction |
| 7 | Extended conversation | Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary and content knowledge | Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary, academic language and content knowledge |
| 8 | Provision of abundant reading material in the classroom | Abundant reading material and reading opportunities in the classroom | Abundant and diverse reading material, including digital texts, and opportunities to read in the classroom |
| 9 | Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy development that informs their education | Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy development that informs their education | Ongoing observation and assessment of students' language and literacy development that informs their education |

| | Preschool | Kindergarten to Year 3 | Year 4 to Year 6 |
|----|---|---|---|
| 10 | Collaboration with families in promoting literacy | Collaboration with families in promoting literacy | Collaboration with families in promoting literacy |

The Directorate provides support to school leadership teams and teachers in their literacy capability development. The Literacy Champions Initiative continued throughout 2022–23 to further embed the ongoing implementation of the EIPs. Eighty-four per cent of preschool to year 6 schools have signed up to the initiative, nominating school-based ‘champions’ or coaches who have a strong vision, understanding and knowledge, and the disposition to lead the initiative in their schools. Forums have been held each term across 2022–23 as well as Instructional Mentor collaboration with 36 schools to support ongoing implementation and leadership of the EIPs.

The literacy initiative has had significant impact on school leader and teacher knowledge and teacher practice. The initiative supports the development of leaders of literacy at the network, school, and team level.

In 2023, a 5-hour Teacher Quality Institute accredited professional learning program about the EIPs was designed for new educators. The program consisted of 2 presentations by literacy consultant Ms Christine Topfer, and 3 in-person workshops facilitated by the Directorate and was attended by 19 new educators. This series will continue to be offered to new educators to maintain a high level of professional learning support.

The initiative continues to embed and sustain quality professional learning through the professional learning communities’ model to sustain and strengthen the EIPs in literacy across all ACT primary schools. A range of resources have also been developed for the intranet.

Finding the Balance – Mathematics and Numeracy Strategy

The Directorate’s mathematics and numeracy strategy ‘Finding the Balance’ continues to support teachers and leaders in ACT public schools. Finding the Balance is a strategy to support schools in developing a balanced numeracy program, through effective numeracy mathematics planning and instruction. The key ideas behind Finding the Balance are the proficiency strands of understanding, fluency, problem-solving and reasoning.

School leaders and teachers are supported in the teaching of mathematics and numeracy through regular professional learning opportunities and through school leadership coaching and support. Professional learning videos have been developed, with content divided into 2 separate streams:

- Targeted Improvement in Mathematics
- Numeracy Across the Curriculum.

These resources draw on the expertise of best practice academics and literature.

In 2022–23, the program partnered with the University of Adelaide to pilot the newly developed Maths in Schools Online Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. Finding the Balance schools were given early access to the MOOC to consider how it could be used to drive contextual mathematics and numeracy improvement.

In 2022–23, schools involved in Finding the Balance took part in a co-design process to revise the program model to be implemented in 2023–24. As part of the revised model, conferences focusing on different aspects of mathematics and numeracy improvement were held each term as a universal professional learning offering for all ACT public schools. Each conference was developed in consultation with a national leader in mathematics and numeracy and provided teachers and school leaders with a broad range of improvement strategies.

In Term 1, 2023, the 21st Century Numeracy Conference was held by the Directorate for ACT public school teachers. The conference was held at Mungga-iri-Jingee and consisted of a targeted 3-hour leadership workshop and a whole-day conference. As part of the conference, Professor Marilyn Goos delivered the keynote address and was supported by 12 other workshop sessions delivered by both local and national experts targeting different aspects of Professor Goos' 21st Century Numeracy Model. The conference hosted 108 attendees from 41 schools across early childhood schools through to colleges.

The Term 2, 2023 conference focused on student and teacher engagement. Professor Catherine Attard from the University of Western Sydney partnered with the Directorate to lead this work. The conference was fully subscribed with over 50 school leaders registered for a targeted leadership workshop and over 100 attendees registered for the main conference.

As part of the 2023 model, Finding the Balance has also offered targeted support and professional learning for individual schools. During 2022–23, 24 schools received individualised support.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) – Academy of Future Skills and Science Mentors ACT

The Directorate's Academy of Future Skills team continued to expand its reach and offerings during 2022–23, working across primary schools, high schools, colleges and in specialist settings.

Academy staff worked in 68 schools, with 256 teachers, providing a range of STEM support including in-classroom teacher coaching and mentoring, curriculum planning and assessment support during the reporting period. Demand for specialist equipment has grown significantly this year with teachers continuing to borrow equipment to enhance and transform STEM lessons to be more contemporary and practical, with a focus on skill development.

At the 2 purpose-designed STEM centres, Mungga-iri Jingee and Dhawura Ngadjung, the Academy facilitated 8 professional learning sessions for ACT teachers to support the roll-out of the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0, and to build teacher knowledge in subject

areas such as Digital Technologies, Mathematics and Science. Eight workshop sessions were also delivered to University of Canberra pre-service teachers covering integrated STEM to strengthen problem-based teaching and learning and prepare them for working in ACT public schools.

Some of the offerings and collaborations that Academy staff undertook during 2022-23 include:

- delivering workshops at the national science teachers conference (CONASTA 69) showcasing how the Academy leads practice in STEM education
- providing an inquiry workshop for STEM professionals from the ASTRO 3D Astronomy outreach team to sharpen their science communication skills and designed bespoke in-school professional learning for 3 schools to align with their school goals.
- partnering with the ACT Government's Sustainable Schools Program to run 2 teacher workshops on designing and testing a sustainable home.
- facilitating a visit by NASA engineers to Duffy Primary School and hosted the Makers Empire Kids-in-Space workshop for 6 ACT public schools.
- facilitating a project in partnership with Australian National University to support 4 ACT public schools to design and develop experiments that will travel into the stratosphere before returning to Earth for further testing.
- partnering with a range of local and Australia-wide space industries, research institutions and start-up companies to run the inaugural ACT Space Industry Work Exploration program. This program brought together 40 year 10–12 students from across ACT public schools to develop a broad understanding of the post-school opportunities for study and work in the ACT in this fast-growing sector.

The Science Mentors ACT program provides extension learning for students with an interest and passion for scientific research. Students in the program work throughout the year with a mentor from the scientific community to carry out a research project that is published into a report at the completion of the course. In 2022, 40 students completed the program, and in 2023, there are 50 students beginning or continuing projects. The Science Mentors ACT program continues to provide a unique extension program for ACT public school students that is not available anywhere else in Australia.

Teacher librarians

In 2020, the ACT Government committed to increasing the number of qualified teacher librarians employed in ACT public schools. Part of this election commitment included funding for 25 additional teacher librarian positions in ACT public schools by 2025–26.

This initiative was supported through the Teacher Librarian Scholarships for existing teachers to undertake a Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship). Seven scholarships were awarded in the 2022–23 period, with teachers starting their studies in the 2023 academic year. This brings the total number of scholarships awarded for the government initiative to 20 as of 30 June. Teacher Librarian Scholarships will be offered again in the 2023–24 reporting period.

To further support teacher librarians, subscriptions have been purchased for all ACT public schools to Encyclopedia Britannica and World Book (K–12), ensuring equity of access to information.

Affiliated schools

Affiliated Schools Program

The University of Canberra (UC) Affiliated Schools Program is a long-term collaboration between the Education Directorate, public schools, and the UC under the *Future of Education Strategy*. The program was designed to improve student learning through professional learning for pre-service and current teachers, and support research in schools.

The program is a shared commitment to put students at the centre of their education journey, supported by a respected and professional teaching workforce with access to innovative research and professional development opportunities. The program incorporates:

- school-based pre-service teacher education clinics
- high-quality professional experience placements for pre-service teachers
- UC-facilitated professional learning for teachers
- scholarships for teachers and school- and non-school-based leaders.

The Program also includes the Affiliated Schools Research Program which fosters school-based research projects to meet school and system needs aligned to the *Future of Education Strategy*. Priority topics are regularly decided. The following priority themes and topics were agreed in 2022:

- **Major Theme 1: Student Centred Learning**
 - cultural integrity
 - personalised learning
 - student voice
 - diversity and equity
- **Major Theme 2: Teachers and Communities**
 - early childhood partnerships
 - work life of teachers and principals
- **Major Theme 3: Future School System**
 - new model for schools
 - effectiveness of theories of change
 - 50th anniversary of ACT education

Annual Affiliated Schools Conference

As part of the Affiliated Schools Program, the Directorate and UC hold an annual conference sharing the expertise of educators in affiliated schools and showcasing the educational research conducted in partnership with UC.

In October 2022, the annual Affiliated Schools Conference was held as a 4-part seminar series across multiple weeks to allow for maximum attendance.

The conference theme was 'Celebrating Partnership' and the series involved school leaders and teachers from 26 affiliated schools, UC teaching and academic staff, Directorate staff and UC pre-service teachers. Eight affiliated schools, 6 teachers and 9 UC research teams presented at the conference. The final session was face to face with a keynote speech, UC Mentor Teacher Awards and UC final year students research presentations.

Four outstanding public school teachers were presented with a UC Mentor Teacher Award for their commitment and dedication to mentoring pre-service teachers. During the reporting period there were 31 ACT teachers shortlisted for this award.

University of Canberra Master of Education Scholarships

On 27 March 2023, 20 teachers and school leaders graduated with a Master of Education from UC through the Capital Region Scholarship program. This was the third cohort of scholarship recipients to graduate from the program. Over the reporting period 39 scholarship recipients completed this postgraduate course.

Through the Affiliated Schools Program, ACT teachers and school leaders are offered the opportunity to undertake a Master of Education, jointly funded by the Directorate and UC. The scholarship program focuses on improving student outcomes by providing educators with a deeper pedagogical understanding and the opportunity to analyse and conduct research relevant to the teaching profession.

The Master of Education program has been co-designed in collaboration with the Directorate, focusing on key foundation areas of the *Future of Education Strategy*. As a final capstone unit, teachers and school leaders conduct academic research or undertake Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification.

Strong communities for learning

A strong education system requires a strong community, with schools acting as a hub for education and support services.

Career pathways and vocational learning

ACT public schools provide a range of career education services and vocational learning programs. Vocational learning programs include both nationally accredited and non-accredited courses delivered by one of the 4 ACT public school registered training organisations, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), and private registered training organisations.

Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA) provide an opportunity for students to achieve a nationally recognised vocational qualification by combining paid work and training as part of their education program. On 30 June 2023, 447 ACT public school students were undertaking an ASbA across qualification from 21 national training packages.

In 2022–23, there were 2,652 work experience placements registered in ACT high schools and colleges. A total of 1,073 employers provided these placements. An additional 123 structured workplace learning placements were also registered.

The Directorate continued to collaborate with schools and school communities, employers and industry stakeholders, and registered training organisations to improve student access to personalised learning pathways. In 2022–23, a range of career education and vocational learning experiences were made available, including:

- The 2022 Canberra CareersXpo delivered by the Rotary Club of Aurora Gungahlin in collaboration with the Directorate to highlight education, training, and employment pathways. The 2-day event was held on 9–10 August 2022 and attracted over 7,000 visitors and 100 local, national, and international exhibitors.
- A tailored information session developed by the Directorate for parents and carers of young people in high schools and colleges to support effective career planning conversations. In 2022, 7 parent workshops were conducted, with approximately 250 participants, via a combination of face-to-face and online sessions in schools, at CIT, and at the 2022 Canberra CareersXpo. During National Careers Week 2023, the Directorate delivered additional workshops to 165 participants across 5 schools.
- An additional 60 places were made available in the Career Pathways Program (Health Starter), delivered in collaboration between the Directorate, CIT, and ACT Health. This introductory course provides year 10 to 12 students with entry level skills in the health and community sector; and a study pathway to enrol in a range of health services programs at CIT, including nursing, individual support (aged care, disability) and allied health assistance (occupational therapy, physiotherapy).

- A new training taster experience (unaccredited short course) in the horticulture and hospitality industries for students from Black Mountain School and The Woden School. The program was delivered in partnership with the Directorate and CIT, aiming to enhance skills learned in the school environment.

In 2023, a new suite of vocational learning programs was introduced, including both accredited and non-accredited training options. These programs will provide up to 500 students in ACT public schools with the opportunity to explore and develop skills in various industries, such as building and construction, electrical, hospitality, business, community services, health, and creative digital technologies.

The first funded vocational learning program began in May 2023, with 20 students from 5 colleges and 5 high schools starting the Health Services Assistant Pathway Program. The program enables students to build skills, knowledge, and readiness for future training and employment in the health industry by completing 6 units of nationally recognised training.



Students from the Health Services Assistant Pathway Program

Head Start Program

The Head Start Pilot Program continued to be delivered during 2022–23, providing 50 tailored Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbA) opportunities for students in ACT public schools. The pilot program was launched in 2022 to support up to 50 students

from year 10 and 11 to undertake an ASbA while completing their senior secondary certificate.

There was strong interest in the program, with 175 applications received from students. Following work experience placements and a tailored pre-vocational training program, 41 students were selected for Head Start positions across 22 employers in industries such as building and construction, manufacturing, education and training, retail, and accommodation and food services.

The remaining Head Start positions were tailored for students from The Woden School, Black Mountain School, and Flexible Education, providing personalised vocational learning opportunities with intensive support available to students as needed.

The Head Start program enabled 2 students identified as at risk of disengaging from education and/or employment to transition to full-time Australian apprenticeships with their selected employers, with the support of their parents and school.

Understanding the Building and Construction Industry Pilot Program

In 2022, over 1,100 students participated in the Understanding the Building and Construction Industry Pilot Program. The program was delivered in 4 ACT public high schools (Harrison School, Alfred Deakin, Calwell, and Mount Stromlo High Schools) as part of a nation-leading pilot developed by the Education and Community Services Directorates in partnership with industry stakeholders.



Students from the Understanding the Building and Construction Industry Pilot Program

The program provides a learning experience aligned with the Australian Curriculum that integrates industry perspectives for students in years 7–8 and years 9–10 to improve their

understanding of the building and construction industry. The program aims to break down the barriers hindering young women and gender diverse students from pursuing a career pathway in this field.

eSafety in ACT public schools

eSafety parent and carer workshops

The Directorate's eSafety education officers continued to design, develop, and deliver online eSafety webinars for parents and carers in ACT public schools.

In 2022–23, 18 webinars were run to help prepare and inform the ACT public school communities about student Chromebooks, staying safe online over the summer, as well as delivering up-to-date and research-based information for parents and carers around online safety for their children and young people.

There were 169 synchronous (live) parent and carer participants across 2 secondary and 2 primary school-focused sessions delivered online each term, as well as 2 year 7 parent and carer sessions delivered in Term 1, 2023. As a follow up to the parents and carers in attendance and to support families unable to attend, there were 405 post-webinar engagements where content from the presentation, including resources for parents and carers, were shared via email.

The webinars have all been well received with feedback from parent communities indicating significant increases in confidence and knowledge on keeping children and young people safe online.

eSafety prompts for students

Student Chromebooks were updated with a background and pop-up message each term, designed to deliver relevant and engaging online safety content directly to students.

The pop-up messages were interactive and targeted to the student experience. Prompts were provided with links to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner website for students to continue learning about online safety and being safe and responsible online. The links are designed for students. The pop-up messages were differentiated between primary and secondary year levels, offering targeted interactivity for each group of students.

From Term 3, 2022 to the end of Term 1, 2023, there were 32,973 student interactions with these pop-ups from primary school through to college.

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day is a global initiative that brings together communities, families, schools, and organisations from more than 200 countries to help create safer online spaces.

Safer Internet Day was held on 7 February 2023, with the theme 'Connect. Reflect. Protect'. Safer Internet Day celebrated its 20-year anniversary in 2023, with ACT public schools and communities encouraged to work towards making every day a safer internet day.

As part of the campaign, schools were given the opportunity to join a virtual classroom for a lesson centred around the theme. Campaign promotional resources, teaching and learning

resources, and the opportunity to participate in online safety professional learning, were all shared with teachers and schools.

The Directorate shared resources and content with other states and territories through a cross-jurisdictional working group provided through the NSW Cybermarvel program.

School Volunteer Program ACT

The School Volunteer Program ACT recruits, trains and manages volunteer mentors to support ACT public school students with their education. Volunteer mentors work collaboratively with school coordinators or classroom teachers to support students with literacy, numeracy, and a range of other subjects and activities. At December 2022, there were 154 volunteer mentors working across 45 ACT public schools as part of the return to normal service delivery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

A new Memorandum of Understanding between the Directorate and the program was renegotiated and signed in May 2023, recognising the sustained and valuable partnership, and the program's role in supporting improved outcomes for ACT public school students.

Supporting Parent Engagement Grants

The Supporting Parent Engagement Grant Program strengthens parent engagement in ACT public schools. The \$800,000 program provides grants of up to \$20,000 to Parents and Citizens' associations (P&Cs) to enhance family-school partnerships and strengthen P&C governance and capability to effectively operate businesses. The grant program has now closed.

At the end of 2022–23, 52 schools and P&Cs had received a total of \$782,000 to enhance parent engagement and business acumen in ACT public schools. Thirty grants are fully acquitted with 22 in the process of being acquitted.

Systems supporting learning

The systems that support learning must acknowledge the importance of early intervention and promote equity of opportunity and excellent outcomes for all learners.

Recognising early childhood education in ACT law

The Directorate has continued the work to recognise the importance of early childhood education in ACT law. The fourth phase of amendments to the *Education Act 2004* are progressing through the *Education (Early Childhood) Legislation Amendment Bill 2023*.

The amendments proposed in the Bill were informed by consultation with key stakeholders and the community. The Directorate will continue this work during 2023.

Modernising enrolments, attendance, and participation requirements

Through the *Future of Education Strategy*, an action the foundation of 'systems supporting learning' is to review and amend the *Education Act 2004* to strengthen equity, student agency, access and inclusion. The fifth phase of amendments to the *Education Act 2004*, form the *Education Amendment Bill 2024*, and proposes amendments to the Act related to enrolments, attendance, participation, and distance education.

The Directorate undertook early public consultation from April to June 2023 where stakeholders and the community were invited to provide feedback on the proposed amendments and having the opportunity to review the proposed amendments in a discussion paper. These contributions will inform the final policy position.

Changes to kindergarten to year 12 enrolment criteria

Regularly reviewing enrolment policy ensures policy settings continue to meet the needs of the community, as well as supporting enrolment demand management and school capacity. Enrolment criteria were reviewed, with 2 key changes implemented for all future kindergarten to year 12 enrolments from April 2023. The following enrolment criteria were discontinued:

- Criterion 6: student is an ACT resident seeking to continue to year 7 or year 11 with the majority cohort from their current ACT public school
- Criterion 7: student is an ACT resident who had a sibling who formerly attended the school.

All ACT public schools are great schools, and every local school can meet the needs of all children and young people in its Priority Enrolment Area (PEA).

Changes to Priority Enrolment Areas

PEAs continue to provide certainty for the ACT community by enabling the ACT Government to guarantee every child from kindergarten to year 12 a place at their local school. In some cases, residents live in a PEA Shared Zone. Children in these zones are guaranteed a place at one of the shared zone schools.

PEAs are reviewed annually to reflect changes in population and demand for schooling services. During 2023, several changes to PEAs were established for 2024 enrolments.

A new PEA was established for the new Shirley Smith High School opening in 2024. Similarly, a new PEA was developed for the new North Gungahlin High School, which will open in 2025.

A minor change was made to the northern part of the PEA for Richardson Primary School to align it with the high school PEA for Caroline Chisholm School, thereby reducing potential disruption for affected Richardson families when transitioning to high school. These PEA changes were communicated through the Education Directorate website to ensure community awareness of enrolment options ahead of the 2024 enrolments year opening in April 2023.

In 2022–23, the Directorate maintained the practice of categorising schools as either Category A or B for enrolment purposes, to help manage high demand at some sites. Category A schools are generally not able to accept students from outside their PEA, while Category B schools have some capacity to accept students from out of their enrolment area, subject to meeting specified criteria.

In recognition of the various matters that can impact on children's happiness and wellbeing, all ACT public schools, regardless of capacity or categorisation, consider applications from children where there are individual circumstances related to student wellbeing.

The NSW Pathway Schools Policy continued to provide NSW residents living in the surrounding region certainty about their schooling pathway through ACT public schools. For the first time, from April 2023 a central process was introduced to assess applications against the criteria and make recommendations on NSW applicants seeking to enrol at a non-NSW Pathway School.

Standardised preschool enrolment prioritisation criteria and supporting processes ensured that students were offered a preschool place as close to their home as possible, in balance with ensuring available capacity. Several preschools were again designated 'High Demand Preschools' with limited capacity to accept enrolments from students for whom it would not also be their PEA primary school and who did not otherwise meet the enrolment criteria.

Demographic analysis and enrolment forecasting

The Directorate continued to use the School Transition Estimation and Projection (STEP) model, developed in collaboration with the Australian National University (ANU) School of Demography (finalised in 2022). STEP is a multistate cohort projection model that incorporates population changes, births, residential development, migration, current school

cohorts across various academic levels, historical behaviour, locational and household preferences to project future school demand across the ACT.

The STEP model incorporated data from the annual February census of ACT schools, as well as population projections released by ACT Treasury for the ACT region. The model is continually updated to ensure it reflects the latest information available, including updated PEA boundaries, PEA shared zones and changes in school capacity.

Working in collaboration with the ANU provided a high level of integrity in enrolment projection outcomes. The STEP model generated projections that enabled the government to anticipate future public school enrolment demand across the ACT, including in regions with high rates of population growth. The model forms the primary tool used by the Directorate to estimate future public school demand.

Planning for future school capacity

Enrolment projections from the STEP model were a key input into schools planning and demand response deliberations. This work supported the Directorate to anticipate and plan for future growth and make best use of current, and plan for future, school capacity. Through this work the Directorate has been able to guarantee children and young people enrolment at their local PEA school.

In 2022–23, ongoing feasibility and master planning work to plan for and deliver additional school capacity continued, in response to anticipated enrolment and population growth. The program of work was informed by enrolment projections, review of existing school infrastructure and consultation with school communities.

Planning for future capacity considered where new infrastructure investment may be required, whether temporary or permanent demand responses were required, and where changes to enrolment policy or PEAs may be required to support schools to manage future enrolment demand. Analysis of projections, classroom capacity and the needs of each school informed decision making on planning for and delivering relocatable learning units for some schools.

New and expanded schools

Planning progressed for the modernisation and expansion of Garran Primary School, including consultation with stakeholders, including the school and local community, as well as work towards a change to the Territory Plan, which also underwent community consultation.

The Directorate continued planning work to deliver new school capacity at Majura Primary School, as well as for other primary, high school and colleges in the ACT's growth regions.

The Directorate put forward a proposed amendment to the Fraser Primary School boundary to expand land at the school, which is currently under consideration.

The Directorate contributed to planning across government for future new early childhood to year 6 public primary school sites in the Molonglo Valley, including at Whitlam, and for Strathnairn in West Belconnen, which were established through amendments to the Territory Plan and in collaboration with other agencies. The new school at Whitlam is

expected to open in 2026 due to unavoidable delivery delays, with established schools in the Molonglo region to accommodate Molonglo student enrolments until the new school opens. Master planning is complete for these sites that will provide new local schools as well as community facilities accessible outside of school hours.

Land planning in collaboration with other directorates continued for additional future new schools in Molonglo and Ginninderry to support the development of future urban areas and ensure available school capacity that responds to population growth in future.

The Directorate also worked closely with key stakeholders to plan for land to become available for new non-government schools in the future.

Planning for Gungahlin

In 2022–23, the Directorate progressed the future delivery of 2 new high schools in Gungahlin – Shirley Smith High School in Kenny and North Gungahlin (Taylor). A delay to the opening of the new high school in North Gungahlin to 2025 was shared with the community, along with confirmation existing PEA schools can guarantee available capacity for affected students.

Expansion of existing schools has been completed at Gold Creek School and Franklin School. Work progressed for the permanent expansion at Margaret Hendry School and to plan for additional temporary capacity at Gungahlin College, in response to growing enrolment demand.

During 2022–23, a preferred site was identified next to Gold Creek School for a second college in Gungahlin. The Directorate undertook master planning and preliminary design works for the second college.

Education Amendment Bill 2022 – student movements and registration standards for non-government schools

The third phase of amendments to the *Education Act 2004* were passed in the Legislative Assembly through the *Education Amendment Bill 2022*, relating to suspensions, transfers, expulsions and exclusions.

This included the introduction of the Student Movement Register to help monitor the movement of children and young people between schools and other education settings, and ensure students stay connected to the education system.

This Bill also introduced new requirements for non-government schools through the development of a set of comprehensive registrations standards, revising the powers of the Registrar of non-government schools and authorised persons, and introduced a non-government schools Registration Standards Advisory Board to oversee the registration process. These changes came into effect in December 2022.

Digital access and equity

The Digital Access and Equity Program provides Chromebook devices to all ACT public secondary students, ensuring equity of access to technology. In 2022–23, more than 3,800

new devices were provided to students entering high school, bringing the total number of devices in use to almost 22,500.

In addition, more than 3,200 devices were refreshed. Students also received support in accessing the internet for remote learning if they needed it, with more than 500 services provided to support remote learning periods.

Digital achievements

In 2022–23, enhancements were made to the School Administration System to:

- support student transition information
- integrate to the ACT Certification System to support college reporting
- fully connect and automate the admissions system with the School Administration System.

Major system enhancements were completed on the Student Movements Register to support changes made in the *Education Act 2004*, and the School Psychologist Service Health Record Management System was extended to allied health professionals.

Dashboards were developed to monitor where wellbeing support is required. These are called the 'Safe and Engaging Environment' and the 'Education System Pulse' dashboards.

Security updates and reviews continued to be strengthened during 2022–23 to keep staff and student information protected online. The school staff Chromebook device refresh program continued following a long period of worldwide hardware shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

School cleaning

The in-house School Cleaning Service delivered an enhanced cleaning program to all ACT government schools during 2022–23. There were 404 staff supporting and delivering cleaning services across 90 schools and 4 office accommodation sites, 7 days per week, as at 30 June 2023. This equated to approximately 1,425 hours of cleaning each day.

Monday to Friday operations were available from 8 am to 11 pm, while weekend cleaning operations are flexible to support the changing nature of community use of school facilities.

The cleaning workforce come from a diverse range of backgrounds with 95% of the workforce born outside of Australia, and with English as a second or additional language for many. Most of the cleaning workforce are from Bhutan (62%), with other backgrounds represented including Myanmar (3.6%), Nepal (3.3%), India (2.8%), Vietnam (1.8%) and South America (1.8%).

Cleaning at the ACT Government City Office Precinct buildings commenced on 11 April 2023. There are 31 new ACT public service cleaning staff working shifts between 8 am and 10 pm, Monday to Friday, to support the operations of 220 London Circuit, Nara House and Allara House. In June 2023, the School Cleaning Service celebrated International Cleaners Day with these new cleaning staff. This was an opportunity for the Directorate to recognise the important role of the service in delivering education services to the children and young people of the ACT.

School improvement reviews

The Directorate has a systematic approach to school improvement, working in partnership with school leaders and external experts to embed evidence-based decision making, which includes a 5-year cycle of school improvement planning outlined in each school's School Improvement Plan.

At the end of the 5-year cycle, ACT public schools undergo an external review. Reviews are anchored in the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) developed by the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) and are led by accredited ACER consultants to provide the public school system with objective analysis of school performance against the NSIT.

School review activity

During 2022–23, 8 schools were reviewed between July and October 2022, with an additional 12 schools reviewed between March and June 2023.

The ACER methodology for a school review includes the requirement that the review teams interview all school leaders, over 85% of teachers and school support staff, and a broad range of students and parents from the school community.

Post-review supports to schools

At the conclusion of the review, individual school planning sessions were conducted by the Directorate to discuss the NSIT recommendations and analyse student growth and wellbeing data.

Schools reviewed in 2022 drafted their next 5-year improvement plans (2023 to 2027). Schools reviewed in 2023 are in the process of identifying improvement priorities, targets, and strategies for their 2023 to 2027 improvement plans.

Special Purpose Reviews

The Directorate approach to school review and improvement recognises that schools may require targeted support at any point in the integrated school improvement cycle. The addition of a strengthened Special Purpose Review provides an opportunity to undertake a more in-depth analysis of specific areas of need outside of the scheduled 5-year review and annual planning cycle. During the reporting period, 2 schools participated in a Special Purpose Review.

Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT

In 2020, *Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* was launched.

This 10-year plan is set out over 3 phases and outlines the ACT Government's commitment to providing quality early childhood education for all children, recognising that children's early years set the groundwork for their lifetime learning.

Set Up for Success has 4 foundations:

- **A fair start for every child** – ensuring access, equity and affordability of early childhood education.
- **Valuing educators, values children** – enhancing the workforce through education, qualification and skills development.
- **Every child has a story** – fostering seamless transitions and supporting children's diverse needs.
- **Working together for children** – connecting systems and services to maximise benefits to children.

This section of the report describes key actions and achievements under *Set up for Success*.

A fair start for every child

The provision of access to early childhood education for every child, equitably delivered with a priority on those that would most benefit.

Providing free quality early childhood education and care

The Directorate is implementing the first phase of the ACT Government's commitment to provide universal access to quality early childhood education for all 3-year-olds in the ACT.

This involves providing up to 500 places to priority 3-year-old children – those experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage – for 2 days per week, 48 weeks per year of free, quality early childhood education and care (ECEC). Places are offered through 22 providers representing 62 ECEC services, with 2 additional providers joining the initiative in 2022–23.

As at 30 June 2023, 787 children have been referred into the initiative since it commenced in January 2020. 248 children participated at a partnered ECEC service as part of the initiative during the reporting period. At the beginning of 2023, 207 priority children were supported to transition from the initiative into 4-year-old preschool.

Expanding Koori Preschool

The first phase of providing free quality early childhood education under the *Set up for Success Strategy* included providing up to 100 places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 3-year-olds in Koori Preschool.

Koori Preschool is a preschool program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0 to 5 (children under 3 years old attend with an adult) and provides culturally safe and relevant early learning through rich, play-based experiences. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are reflected across the program, which is aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework.

In 2022, the Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework and Koori Pre Curriculum were launched following a co-design process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the evolution of Koori Preschool to ensure it meets the needs of communities now and into the future.

Table 13: Enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Koori Preschool Program 2017–2022

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 3-year-old children | 35 | 13 | 43 | 39 | 44 | 39 |
| Children in year before full-time schooling (4- and 5-year-old) | 52 | 72 | 45 | 51 | 53 | 54 |
| Total enrolment | 87 | 85 | 89 | 90 | 97 | 93 |

Source: August Census of Enrolments in ACT Schools 2017–2022

Warm referrals

ACT government directorates, community organisations and the ECEC sector continue to work together to identify priority 3-year-old children. Warm referrers (practitioners who are already connected with children and families) are integral to identifying priority 3-year-old children. Warm referrers support families to access the initiative by assisting them to complete the referral form, which is then submitted to the Placement Pathway Group for consideration.

Warm referrers may continue to be involved in the placement process by acting as the main point of contact for the family, or by supporting the family to engage and build relationships with the ECEC service or to access other wraparound human services. In some instances, early childhood community coordinators act as warm referrers.

During 2022–23, the Directorate held 48 tailored sessions with 86 warm referrers representing government and community organisations, such as Community Services Directorate, Canberra Health Services, Victims Support ACT, YWCA Tenancy Support, ACT public primary schools, ECEC services and women’s refuges.

Placement Pathway Group

Placement Pathway Group is chaired by the Education Directorate and includes practitioners representing Community Services Directorate, Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), Inclusive Education, and Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA).

Placement Pathway Group considers referrals for priority 3-year-olds and identifies a

placement at a partnered ECEC service that best meets the needs of the family, such as proximity to where a family lives or works, or where older children already attend school. During 2022–23, the Placement Pathway Group met 21 times and considered 273 referrals of priority 3-year-olds.

Early childhood community coordinators

Priority children and families are supported by 2 early childhood community coordinators, who facilitate and nurture referral pathways for priority children into the 3-year-old initiative. The coordinators work with referrers, services, and families to ensure referrals and placements are ongoing. They also provide early learning pedagogical support and transition guidance to educators in ECEC settings and schools. The coordinators have actively supported 19 partnered ECEC services and 2 Out of School Hours Care services with a combination of whole-of-staff workshops, observations and individual child supports. They also provided tailored supports to CCCares (Canberra College), Gudjahgahmiamia ELC (Wreck Bay) and CIT Yurauna (Canberra Institute of Technology).

Increasing partnerships with playgroups

The *School Community Playgroups – Guidelines for ACT Public Schools* were launched during 2022–23 to provide ACT public schools with knowledge and confidence in establishing a playgroup on site. The guidelines are aimed at assisting schools to determine an appropriate model of playgroup for their setting and community and were developed in consultation with ACT Playgroups.

Valuing educators, values children

Quality interactions with children drives child development and therefore educators must be professionally recognised in rewarding, empowering, maturing but sustainable ways.

Communities of Practice

Sixteen Communities of Practice have been established to foster purposeful relationships between early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and schools to help children transition smoothly between these settings, improve sharing of expertise between educators, and increase opportunities for coaching and mentoring. They are supported by 2 early childhood community coordinators.

In the reporting period the Communities of Practice focused on enhancing professional support networks and exploring shared questions of practice within an inquiry cycle.

Developing a cross-sector workforce strategy

Set up for Success recognises that a skilled workforce is essential to delivering high-quality early childhood education that supports the best educational and developmental outcomes for children. Valuing educators and providing a framework to develop as skilled professionals is an important way to support ongoing child development and learning.

Drawing on consultation undertaken with the ECEC sector, an *Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Strategy* specific to the ACT context is being developed and will align with the *National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy*, which is supporting the recruitment, retention, sustainability, and quality of the ECEC workforce across Australia.

Developing educator professional standards

The Directorate is developing early childhood educator professional standards, initially for voluntary adoption, in consultation with unions and the ECEC sector with the aim to promote professionalism of the workforce through recognition of professional practice. The professional standards are intended to be used as part of development or career planning discussions, as a tool for personal reflection, and to support coaching and mentoring relationships.

Increasing coaching and mentoring opportunities

Increasing coaching and mentoring opportunities for the ECEC workforce allows for the development of skills, knowledge, and experience through meaningful relationships with other early childhood professionals. The Directorate is developing a Peer Support, Coaching and Mentoring Framework to support ECEC services to implement coaching and mentoring supports which will be released to the sector in the second half of 2023.

Four preschool pathways partners are working with educators in ACT public preschools and ECEC services partnered with the 3-year-old initiative, to build their knowledge, confidence, and capacity to implement inclusive practices, enhance transitions, and provide continuity for children and families. The preschool pathways partners provide targeted coaching to educators in universal practices for inclusive education and transitions. Coaching support is triaged based on the circumstances of a setting and the level of support required. In the reporting period the preschool pathways partners supported 27 early childhood settings and 55 individual children.

Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program

As part of the establishment of *Set up for Success*, the Directorate reformed the Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program to increase the attraction and retention of early childhood teachers in the ECEC sector. The Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program provides 16 scholarships per year, each to a maximum value of \$25,000 for the life of the scholarship. An additional amount of up to \$4,000 per scholarship is available to support employers to backfill staff while they undertake the practical components of their study.



It is an honour to be selected for this scholarship and I am thrilled to receive this opportunity to further my education. Receiving this scholarship means a great deal to me and it will enable me to pursue my academic and career goals. I am grateful for this generous scholarship and would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program Panel for recognising my potential and investing in my future."

Stefano Passeri, recipient of a 2022 Early Childhood Degree Scholarship

The scholarships are open to educators working in non-government and non-school-based approved ECECs in the ACT. Students are also able to participate in a 4-week placement with CECA as part of their final year of study.

The program enables employers to partner with the Directorate to provide an equivalent contribution to a scholarship. This option creates 2 scholarships for the cost of one. Several larger employers are supporting multiple employees through the scholarship program.

In 2022–23, the Directorate ran 2 scholarship rounds, in October 2022 and May 2023. Thirteen scholarships were awarded to suitable applicants for the early childhood education sector, with an additional 3 partial scholarships awarded for applicants that are part way through their studies. One employer was granted \$2,300 to backfill a student during practicum as part of their qualification.

As of 30 June 2023, a total of 39 scholarship holders are actively studying towards a degree in early childhood education. Since 2019, 4 scholarship holders successfully completed their early childhood degree.

Access to training on the National Quality Framework

The Directorate has leveraged the work undertaken by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to provide Australia’s ECEC sector with access to an online suite of eLearning induction modules that assist new and current providers and educators to understand and apply the requirements of the National Quality Framework. Access to the training is available via the ACECQA website or the Directorate’s website.

Every child has a story

Each child has a unique background and circumstances and each child's learning and development needs, and opportunities, should be nurtured and supported.

Effective transitions

Effective transitions rely on educators and families working together to make sure a child's story is passed along between education settings. Educators from early childhood education and care (ECEC) services partnered to deliver quality early childhood education for priority 3-year-olds and ACT public preschools are supported by early childhood community coordinators and preschool pathways partners to share children and families' stories and other key information, facilitating positive transitions.

In the reporting period, 207 priority 3-year-old children and 51 children with developmental needs or disability were supported to transition to 4-year-old preschool using the revised Continuity and Transitioning Framework and Statement, which was expanded to support children with developmental needs or disability.

Preschools Pathways Program

The Preschool Pathways Program aims to build the capacity of parents to be active partners in their children's education. It acknowledges parents and carers as their child's first teacher and includes resources for them to support a smooth transition to preschool, recognising that success looks different for every child.

The program includes a suite of resources for families available on the Directorate's website:

- Preschool Pathways Map
- Supporting Resource 1: Transition to Preschool and COVID-19
- Supporting Resource 2: What is the EYLF?
- Supporting Resource 3: Great books to read with your child
- Supporting Resource 4: Talking to your child about their day.

A suite of modules and supporting resources are being developed to support early childhood services to enhance preschool transition processes and support families to engage in transitions.

Support for parents as first teachers

Supporting parents as first teachers means empowering them to make informed choices in relation to early childhood development, early learning options and quality considerations, and being able to access the supports they need as parents.

In collaboration with ACT Health, the Directorate published and distributed a poster to ACT public health settings and bulk billing General Practices to provide information for parents and carers about strategies for engaging in their child's learning and development from birth.

The resource provides an overview of the ways parents and carers can support their child to have the best possible start to life with learning from birth to 5 years, and includes web links to local providers, resources and further reading. A supporting magnet was distributed to new parents at their first home visit by a Maternal and Child Health nurse.

Working together for children

The need to make the best use of public funding to ensure that children and families experience best practice in early childhood education and care.

Structured capacity planning and land allocation approach

The Directorate has analysed projected demand for early childhood education and care (ECEC) services to anticipate future requirements in the sector, including availability of ECEC places.

The Directorate continues to collaborate with key ACT government directorates involved in land planning to ensure the supply of land available for new and additional early childhood education and care services in the future, in response to anticipated demand for early childhood services, particularly in growing regions. This work is ongoing.

The Directorate has also worked with ACT Property Group to support the ongoing availability of affordable community facilities for ECEC providers.

Early years engagement officers

The early years engagement officers in the Community Services Directorate are building strong and trusted relationships with the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, connecting them with Directorate initiatives such as Koori Preschool, and supporting transitions between these settings and Child and Family Centres. The officers support stronger educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the ACT.

Koori Pre Co-Design Program

The Koori Pre Co-design Program was a key deliverable of the *Set Up for Success Strategy* and continued in 2022–23. The co-design process was completed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT and Wreck Bay for the evolution of Koori Preschool. Findings from the wide-ranging engagement with children, families, staff, community members and representatives from peak bodies were brought together in the Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework, Koori Pre Curriculum and the *About Koori Pre* children's book.

Koori Preschools are located at Kingsford Smith School, Ngunnawal Primary School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School, Wanniasa School, and Richardson Primary School.



The foundational resources were trialled by all 5 Koori Preschools during the reporting period. Revisions to the resources based on feedback from the trial was implemented and final resources were published, launched, and distributed to the Koori Preschools in November 2022.

The Directorate continued to provide pedagogy support in the implementation of the Koori Pre Curriculum and Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework at the Koori Preschools. The resources underpin the delivery of high quality, high expectation and holistic preschool that is grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledges, and values. These resources recognise that children and their families are proud, strong, and deadly.

Education and Care Services National Law – ACT Regulatory Authority

In 2012, all states and territories and the Commonwealth implemented the National Quality Framework (NQF) for the education and care sector. The NQF incorporates education and care from long day care, family day care, preschools, and outside school hours care.

Its primary function is to create a framework of education and care for children from 0 to 5 years old who are not enrolled in school, and primary school aged children (5 to 12 years old) who attend out of school hours care.



The NQF for the education and care sector includes the *Education and Care Services National Law* and regulations, and a consistent approach to the regulation and quality assessment of the education and care sector. The Director-General is the ACT's Regulatory Authority. The functions of the Regulatory Authority are delegated to Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA).

As of 30 June 2023, the ACT had 373 education and care services approved under the National Law. The National Law places obligations on CECA to undertake investigations, compliance monitoring, enforcement actions, and assessment and rating against the National Quality Standard (NQS). The capacity of the sector in the ACT is approximately 30,271 full-time places for children.

In addition, as of 30 June 2023, the ACT had 12 education and care services approved under Chapter 20 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008*. These services are licensed for a period of 3 years and are required to comply with the ACT Childcare Services Standards.

The ACT Regulatory Authority is comprised of the following teams:

- Quality Assurance
- Audit and Risk Management
- Investigations.

Quality assurance

The key objective of quality assurance is to assist providers and services in their journey of continuous improvement in delivering quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) to children, acknowledging that this is fundamental to obtaining the maximum benefits from early learning for every child.

CECA's Quality Assurance team undertake the assessment and rating of services in accordance with the National Law. This process provides several benefits, including:

- increased skills and qualifications for educators
- better support for children's learning and development
- a national register to help parents and carers assess the quality of education and care services in their local area.

Under the National Law, services are assessed and rated against the NQS. Following an assessment, an overall rating is given, which is dependent on evidence collected across 7 quality areas:

- educational program and practice
- children's health and safety
- physical environment
- staffing arrangements
- relationships with children
- collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- governance and leadership.

There are 4 rating levels within the assessment and rating process:

- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working Towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required.

At of 30 June 2023, of the 373 approved services, 349 had a quality rating, representing approximately 93.5% of services.

During 2022–23, 64 services were assessed and rated, with approximately 81% of ACT services rated as 'meeting' or above. This is a 3% improvement of services 'meeting' or above compared to 78% in the 2021–22 cycle. The percentage of services with a 'working towards' NQS rating has continued to decline slightly to 19.2% from 21% in 2021–22 and 23% in 2020–21.

The positioning of education and care services in the ACT assessed against the 4 rating levels were:

- 150 (43%) services achieved an 'exceeding' rating
- 130 (37.25%) services achieved a 'meeting' rating
- 67 (19.2%) services had a 'working towards' rating
- 0 (0%) service had a 'significant improvement required' rating.

In addition to the above assessments, 2 services (0.57%), continue to be awarded an 'excellent' rating by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

(ACECQA). This level of achievement requires an application to ACECQA, an existing exceeding rating and additional requirements beyond exceeding.

Audit and risk management

CECA's Audit and Risk Management team undertakes compliance audits and risk assessment audits of education and care services. Compliance audits help to ensure that education and care services are meeting their minimum requirements as set out by the National Law.

Announced and unannounced compliance audits are conducted throughout the year. The team also carries out short notice audits in response to incidents or complaints. This type of audit is called a 'risk audit' or, if appropriate, 'emergency response audit'. Risk audits and emergency response audits are conducted to identify and resolve any specific and immediate risks to children.

The team monitors the risk rating of each service in the ACT using the National Quality Agenda IT system to assess the risk rating of each approved service. Risk ratings inform the long-term scheduling of audits as well as assessment and rating. Each service is provided with a risk rating score and overall risk rating, which informs the frequency of audits required to monitor the health, safety, and wellbeing of children.

During 2022–23, CECA carried out 175 audits compared to 90 audits in 2021–22. Six risk audits requiring a rapid response were conducted in 2022–23, compared to 8 risk audits in the previous financial year.

Investigations

CECA's Investigation team assesses notifications and information received from multiple sources to determine if there may be contravention of the National Law, or a risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.

In 2022–23, CECA assessed 1,534 notifications of incidents or complaints at services. This is an approximate 50% decrease from the same reporting period last year.

The 2021–22 reporting year included COVID-19-related notifications. In 2021–22, 1,747 notifications were COVID-related; in 2022–23 the number reduced to 60 notifications.

As the ECEC sector returned to usual operations, notifications of non-COVID-related incidents or complaints increased from 1,212 in 2021–22 to 1,474 in 2022–23.

CECA investigated 54 notifications or complaints during 2022–23. A further 22 notifications or complaints were addressed through an audit. Other matters were managed appropriately by the providers, or compliance action taken for offences substantiated without the need for formal investigation, or there were no breaches or risks engaged by the notification.

At the end of June 2023, 18 investigations were in progress. Fifty-six investigations were completed during the year. Twenty investigations were carried over from 2021–22.

Major areas of investigation during 2022–23 were allegations of inappropriate discipline or interactions with children, failure to meet staffing obligations, and missing children.

Compliance actions

CECA took 134 compliance actions during 2022–23. This is an approximate 53% decrease from the previous reporting period, due to lowered COVID-related risk management. Compliance actions included administrative letters, cautions to individuals, prohibition of individuals, enforceable undertakings, emergency action notices, compliance notices, and cancellations of service or provider approvals.

CECA also assessed fitness and propriety of a nominated supervisor and initiated formal meetings with providers to discuss plans to address systemic non-compliance.

Waivers for early childhood educators

Under the National Law, education and care services can apply to the Regulatory Authority for a waiver when unable to comply with certain regulations.

CECA monitor and support the education and care sector through the applications of waivers. The ACT, like other jurisdictions, is experiencing a workforce shortage of educators in the early childhood and school age sectors.

Staffing waivers are usually granted for a 6-month period. The provider is required to establish a plan for how they will attempt to fill this position over this time. If a service applies for the same waiver for a second 6-month period, the provider needs to demonstrate that they have ongoing recruitment processes in place, including attempting to fill the position outside their organisation, or opportunities for professional development and training within their staffing cohort, such as an educator actively studying towards this qualification.

As of 30 June 2023, CECA approved 27 applications for waivers for an early childhood teacher, and 21 waivers for staff members with less than 50% of their Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care qualification completed.

As of 30 June 2023, there were 12 services without an early childhood teacher and 8 services with less than a full complement of early childhood teachers.

Early childhood education and care workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary response had a substantial impact on the ACT education and care sector. Providers and services continue to experience challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff at all levels. CECA continue to monitor capacity, demand, and viability of the sector. CECA use sector viability and operational issues surveys to gather information.

Educate and inform

CECA has a statutory obligation to educate and inform the education and care sector of its obligations and best practice under the NQF. CECA continue to develop and deepen opportunities to increase providers', service leaders' and educators' capacity to:

- understand and uphold their legislative obligations
- participate in best practice and ongoing continuous improvement
- make decisions that invest in quality outcomes for children.

Investing in best practice and continuous improvement

In 2022–23, education and care providers, leaders and educators were provided with a suite of workshops and forums with subject matter experts.

Sector participation in these forums and workshops was high. All materials, resources and tools from these events were circulated to the sector and made continually available through CECA communication channels.

Risk management forum and workshop

A risk management forum and workshop were held over 2 half-days on 26 and 27 July 2022. The forum and workshop were devised collaboratively with subject matter experts on risk management, as well as experts on specific risks experienced by the sector.

There was a specific focus on risks associated with:

- playground equipment
- child allergies and medication conditions
- problematic, harmful, or challenging sexualised behaviours.

Providers and service leaders had the opportunity to discuss, share and reflect on risk management strategies, and apply strategic risk management skills in an interactive workshop.

Australian Early Developmental Census forum

The Australian Early Developmental Census (AEDC) session was delivered on 1 November 2022 by the ACT AEDC Coordinator, CECA, and early childhood community coordinators. Providers, service leaders and educators examined the AEDC 2021 results and were shown the benefits of understanding the results in their communities.

AEDC is an important tool to plan for partnerships, service design, curriculum delivery and quality improvement. AEDC microlearning course materials and resources were distributed to assist with evidence-based decision making in their settings.

Refocus on quality forum

A refocus on quality forum (Quality Area 1 Educational Program and Practice) was delivered on 28 March 2023. The forum was designed for service leaders and educators to engage in interactive workshops and discussions, to gain practical insights and strategies for enhancing their educational programs and practices. Subject matter experts and sector practitioners traversed evidence-based approaches, innovative practices in curriculum development, pedagogy, educational leadership and what's new in the approved learning frameworks.

Leadership and governance forum

The leadership and governance forum (leading with impact) was held on 27 June 2023 and was designed for ECEC providers and ECEC staff in management. The forum was a master class in the relationship between good governance, leadership, and service quality. Subject matter experts set out principles and practice of good leadership and governance. They highlighted that leadership is actively governing, and good governance is a critical foundation for the development of quality services. A panel discussion brought a range of perspectives and dialogue about the importance, challenges and opportunities of leadership and governance.

Active messaging

CECA's overall engagement with the sector included timely, tailored, and targeted messaging to educate, inform and engage the education and care sector.

CECA's 'educate and inform' capacity allows the distribution of critical and time-sensitive messaging to reach education and care providers, service leaders and educators. Key sector messaging for 2022–23 included updates on:

- *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* initiatives
- the Approved Learning Frameworks
- *National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy*
- NQF review
- NQF compliance
- children's rights and child safety, health, and wellbeing
- effective transitions for children
- CECA operations
- ACT education and care workforce initiatives
- relevant ACT Health messaging
- effective risk management in education and care
- use of the AEDC to enhance outcomes for ACT children
- quality educational programs and practice
- leadership and governance in education and care
- professional networking, training, and professional development opportunities.

National early childhood reviews

National Quality Framework review

In 2022–23, CECA continued to work with all jurisdictions and ACECQA on the 2019 NQF review. Education Ministers delegated responsibility for implementation of Decision Regulatory Impact Statement (DRIS) recommendations to the Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG). The Legislative Working Group and Review Implementation Group supported ECPG in developing required legislative amendments, sector guidance and resources.

The most significant change to the National Law will commence on 1 July 2023 and establishes a better alignment with the *Family Assistance Law*. These amendments include an expanded definition of ‘person with management or control’ and clarified fitness and propriety assessments.

There will be a new ‘Joined-up Approval’ system that is due to commence on 1 July 2023. Joined-up Approvals was established by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments to manage applications for Provider and Service Approval under the National Law and Child Care Subsidy under the *Family Assistance Law*.

There are several new regulations commencing during 2023:

- new regulations commenced on 1 March 2023 to improve children’s safety in regular transportation. These regulations included better supervision and staffing arrangements, records of children embarking/disembarking and ensuring that no child remains in the vehicle.
- new regulations will commence on 1 July 2023 to reduce and ease sector burden and workforce pressures, including changes to qualification requirements for Family Day Care educators to hold a Certificate III qualification, moderate fee increases and moderate administrative changes.
- new regulations will commence on 1 October 2023 to improve safety in relation to sleep and rest, emergency evacuations in multi-storey buildings, family day care, and transitions between ECEC services and other settings.

The ACT and Victoria continue to collaborate on implementation of an Approval-in-Principal (AIP) Scheme for proposed centre-based services in multi-storey buildings.

Parallel to the NQF review implementation, NSW led amendments to the national regulations to



prohibit bassinets in services from 1 October 2023. This amendment to the national regulations will implement the NSW Coroner's recommendation from the inquest into the death of an infant in 2019.

National Workforce Strategy: Shaping Our Future

On 14 October 2021, *Shaping Our Future: Children's Education and Care National Workforce Strategy*, a 10-year plan (2022–2031) was published by ACECQA. The strategy was developed closely with the education and care sector nationally, led by ACECQA.

In September 2022, the *Shaping Our Future: Implementation and Evaluation Plan* was published and committed governments and national sector stakeholders to 21 actions. These actions are grouped as short-term (3 years), medium-term (within 6 years) and long-term (within 10 years).

Information on *Shaping Our Future: National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy* (2022–2031) and *Shaping Our Future: Implementation and Evaluation Plan* can be found at <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-workforce-strategy>.

In October 2022, the ACT Government committed to lead the procurement and contract management of 2 key actions as part of the National Workforce Strategy:

- FA1.1 Investigate options for improving workforce pay and conditions
- FA5.1 Review staffing and qualification requirements under the NQF, with a focus on early childhood teachers and outside school hours care educators.

Approved learning frameworks

In 2021, Education Ministers commissioned an update of the 2 national approved learning frameworks, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework* for Australia (EYLF) and *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia*. Both curriculum documents have been proven to be integral in the success of the NQF and continue to reflect contemporary developments in practice and knowledge, while supporting all educators to promote the wellbeing, learning and development of each child.

During the first half of 2022, practitioners from 16 services, including one from the ACT, piloted updates to the approved learning frameworks. The updates were reviewed by a consortium from Macquarie University, Edith Cowan University and Queensland University of Technology. The updated frameworks reflect contemporary research and what is already happening in high-quality services.

On 23 January 2023, the updated approved learning frameworks (EYLF V2.0 and MTOP V2.0) were released to the ECEC sector, with supportive resources made available on the ACECQA website. During 2023, the original national approved learning frameworks remained in operation alongside the updated versions to enable educators and services time to transition.

Changes incorporated in the updated approved learning frameworks include stronger connections between the frameworks and the National Quality Standards in areas such as sustainability, theoretical approaches, critical reflection, the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing, inclusion, and the addition of 3 new principles.

Non-Government School Regulation – Chapter 4 *Education ACT 2004*

Legislation changes in 2022

Following a co-design process with the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT and Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, amendments to the *Education Act 2004* and *Education Regulation 2005* came into effect on 20 December 2022.

Chapter 4 of the Act provides for:

- a) a regulatory framework for the registration and expansion of non-government schools
- b) the establishment of the Registration Standards Advisory Board
- c) Registration Standards for non-government schools
- d) a set of functions and powers to address issues or allegations of serious breaches
- e) provisions on enrolments, transfers, expulsions, exclusions
- f) the documentation of policies and procedures to meet the obligations of Chapter 4 and the Registration Standards.

Registration Standards Advisory Board

The Registration Standards Advisory Board supports the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and the Registrar to oversee compliance with the Registration Standards.

The Registration Standards outline the obligations and compliance requirements for non-government school proprietors and principals in 4 key areas:

- governance, including financial viability
- educational programs
- safety and welfare
- operational requirements.

Section 76 of the Act outlines the functions of the Registration Standards Advisory Board:

- a) to advise the Minister about whether applications to register non-government schools meet the criteria for registration
- b) to assist the Registrar of non-government schools in developing annual registration review programs, including identifying registered schools for registration reviews and areas of focus for registration reviews
- c) to advise the Minister on matters relating to the Registration Standards, including matters arising from registration reviews
- d) to assist the Registrar in advising the Minister about proposed regulatory action against registered schools
- e) to advise the Minister about potential improvements to the Registration Standards
- f) any other function given to the board under this Act or another Territory law.

On 15 March 2023, the Chair and Members were appointed to the Registration Standards Advisory Board:

- Ms Susan Chapman (Chair)
- Ms Laura Wedmaier
- Ms Carmel Franklin
- Ms Amy L Tang
- Ms Gai Beecher
- Mr Andrew Wrigley
- Mr Ross Fox.

Scrutiny

Auditor General Reports

Table 14: ACT Auditor General's Report 2016-17 Financial Audits Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No. 11/2017

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/1180013/Report-No-11-of-2017-Financial-Audits-Financial-Results-and-Audit-Findings.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <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">• 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• 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. | <p>The Directorate's School Staff Expenditure Monitoring System team is responsible for reviewing schools' online pay reports (approvals and follow up of schools). The Directorate reviews school pay reports on a fortnightly basis and files evidence of the reviews appropriately. In addition, salary reviews cover the date approved, name and position of reviewing officers and resolution of issues identified from the review process.</p> <p>Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).</p> | <p>In progress</p> |

Table 15: ACT Auditor General's Report 2016-17 Financial Audits Computer Information Systems Report No. 4/2018

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1184901/Report-No-4-of-2018-2016-17-Financial-Audits-Computer-Information-Systems.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|-------------|
| 12. Monitoring of Audit Logs The Education Directorate should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- incorporate procedures for the review of audit logs in the new Schools Administration System; and- perform periodic reviews of audit logs in accordance with these procedures. | Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings). | In progress |

Table 16: ACT Auditor General's Report Physical Security Report No. 6/2018

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1205793/Report-No-6-of-2018-Physical-Security.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 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. Government Response – Agreed and action commenced | This recommendation is superseded. ACT Government action is being progressed on development of a new Protective Security Framework that will include standards for physical security. The Directorate's approach to managing physical security in schools will be addressed as part of the Security Plan to implement the new framework. | No longer required |

Table 17: ACT Auditor General's Report Five ACT Public Schools Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, Families and Community Report No.7/2018

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1215334/Report-No-7-of-2018-Five-ACT-public-schools-engagement-with-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Islander-students,-families-and-community.PDF

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|-------------|
| 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. Government Response – Agreed | The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2023–26 has been endorsed by the Directorate's Executive Governance Committee Workforce Subcommittee and has been sent to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body for review and feedback. | In progress |

Table 18: ACT Auditor General's Report 2017-18 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No.12/2018

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1295133/Report-No-12-of-2018-2017-18-Financial-Audits-Financial-Results-and-Audit-Findings.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|---|-------------|
| 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. The Audit Office reported that the Directorate did not resolve the two previously reported audit findings relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the review of salary reports which has been reported | The Directorate's School Staff Expenditure Monitoring System team regularly reviews schools' online pay report approval processes and follows up schools that have not actioned. The Directorate has fully implemented the online review of school pay reports on a fortnightly basis and these documentations are retained in the system. In addition, the reviews of salary reports include the date approved, name and position of reviewing officers and resolution of issues identified from the review process. | In progress |

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

- 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.

Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).

No new audit findings were identified in 2017-18.

Table 19: ACT Auditor General's Report 2017-18 Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems Report No.4/2019

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1356963/Report-4-2017-18-Financial-Audits-CIS-Proposed-Final-Report-29-April-2019-Web-V-Final.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|----------|
| <p>10. Monitoring of Audit Logs</p> <p>The Education Directorate with respect to MAZE should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate procedures for the review of audit logs in the new Schools Administration System; and • perform periodic reviews of audit logs in accordance with these procedures | <p>Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).</p> | Complete |

Table 20: ACT Auditor General's Report Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure Report No.11/2019

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1459000/Report-No-11-of-2019-Maintenance-of-ACT-Government-School-Infrastructure.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|--|-------------|
| 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. Government Response - Agreed | Amendments to Module 7 of the School Management Manual are complete. | Complete |
| 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. Government Response – Agreed | The Directorate has developed a Property Quality Standards template. The template is being refined to ensure schools can appropriately implement required standards. | In progress |
| 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. | The overarching Operational Asset Management Plan continues to be being refined. Following this, it will be distributed and implemented by schools. | In progress |

Government Response – Agreed in principle

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.

Government Response – Agreed

Interim maintenance plan templates have been provided to schools through the Business Manager Front Door team. The Directorate's Infrastructure and Capital Works Branch is further supporting schools to develop their maintenance plans.

Complete

5. The Education Directorate should:

- a) recommence its rolling program of building condition assessments; and
- 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.

Government Response – Agreed

Network Officers continue to undertake condition assessments and input this information into the SPM system.

Complete

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.

Government Response – Agreed

The Directorate's Infrastructure and Capital Works Branch and ACT Property Group continue to work under the pre-existing Service Level Agreement. The Infrastructure and Capital Works Branch has developed and implemented arrangements and expectations (including better alignment of the Service Level Agreement with the Directorate's Strategic Asset Management Plan) to inform the performance of the Service Level Agreement. The Directorate's Audit Committee are satisfied that the approach taken by the Infrastructure and Capital Works Branch addresses the requirements of the

Complete

| recommendation. | | |
|---|---|----------|
| <p>8. The Education Directorate should review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the methods used to record repair and maintenance activities, and the expenditure on repairs and maintenance, with a view to achieving consistent and consolidated reporting; and b) the operation of the School Operational Allocation, to determine why schools exceeded their maintenance component allocations in 2017 and 2018. <p>Government Response – Agreed</p> | <p>a) The Chart of Accounts for schools provides details on the Directorate’s expenditure on repairs and maintenance in schools. As part of the transition to the new School Administration System (SAS) a Standard Chart of Accounts was implemented across all schools with supporting guidance. To support consistent reporting, schools’ financial information is consolidated on a six-monthly basis. The extent of expenditure on repairs and maintenance across schools can be identified as part of this process.</p> <p>b) The School Operational Allocation (SOA) was revised in 2017, along with the School Management Manual (SMM) Module 7, which outlines the responsibilities for maintenance items between Education Support Office (ESO) and Schools. The allocation was adjusted between Infrastructure and Capital Works and SOA to reflect the responsibilities outlined in SMM Module 7. The Directorate has compiled data from schools in relation to maintenance expenditure by schools, and within ESO through the Directorate’s general ledger, and along with the actual allocations made through the SOA and internal budget provided to Infrastructure and Capital Works from 2017-18. While schools receive minor maintenance budgets through the SOA, schools also undertake other maintenance/minor capital upgrades which are partially reimbursed by Infrastructure and Capital Works and petty cash managed by schools.</p> | Complete |

Table 21: ACT Auditor General's Report 2018-19 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No.10/2019

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1457145/2018-19-Financial-Audit-Financial-Results-and-Audit-Findings.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|---|-------------|
| <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.</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"> 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 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. | <p>The Directorate's School Staff Expenditure Monitoring System team is responsible for reviewing schools' online pay reports (approval and follow up of schools). The Directorate reviews school pay reports on a fortnightly basis and files evidence of the reviews appropriately. In addition, salary reviews cover the date approved, name and position of reviewing officers and resolution of issues identified from the review process.</p> <p>Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).</p> | In progress |
| No new audit findings were identified in 2018-19 | | |

Table 22: ACT Auditor General's Report 2018-19 Financial Audits – Computer Information Systems Report No.2/2020

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1541543/Report-No-2-of-2020-2018-19-Financial-Audit-Computer-Information-Systems.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|-----------------|
| <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> | <p>Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).</p> | <p>Complete</p> |

Table 23: ACT Auditor General's Report 2019-20 Financial Audits – Financial Results and Audit Findings Report No.10/2020

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1678399/2019-20-Financial-Audits-Financial-Results-and-Audit-Findings.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <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.</p> <p>The Directorate partially resolved an audit finding relating</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Directorate's School Staff Expenditure Monitoring System (SSEMS) team is responsible for reviewing schools' online pay reports (approvals and follow up of schools). The Directorate reviews school pay reports on a fortnightly basis and files evidence of the reviews appropriately. In addition, salary reviews cover the date approved, name and position of reviewing officers | <p>In progress</p> |

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:

- 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
- 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'.

and resolution of issues identified from the review process.

- Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).
- Bank Signatories - In 2021-22, the Directorate resolved this audit finding by removing former employees as bank signatories in a timely manner. This reduces the risk of fraudulent payments being made from the Directorate's bank accounts.
- Accountability Indicator - The Directorate resolved an audit finding relating to not measuring a result in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1996* (FMA) in the statement of performance for an accountability indicator. In 2022-23, results have been measured for all accountability indicators, and reported in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1996*.

Table 24: ACT Auditor General's Report No.6 of 2021 – Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools No.6/2021

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1780907/Report-No-6-of-2021-Teaching-Quality-in-ACT-Public-Schools.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|--|-------------|
| 3. The Education Directorate should review and update the People, Practice and Performance framework to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) reflect the revised structure of the Education Support Office, including the roles of Directors of School improvement and Instructional Mentors and their role to support and maintain accountability for school principals; | The Student-Centred Improvement Program includes the review of People, Practice and Performance. The Program of work will be delivered during 2023 and 2024. | In progress |

- b) reflect the requirements of the Evidence and Data Plan for School Improvement (2019); and
- c) require all schools to participate in school improvement activities as well as complete and publish all required school improvement documentation on their website.

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| <p>4. As part of Recommendation 3, the Education Support Office should review and revise the People, Practice and Performance framework to require the formal evaluation of school improvement documentation on an annual basis. The evaluation should involve consideration of school improvement plans, action plans, school visits feedback and impact reports as a method of gaining specific, actionable and timely information about ACT public schools' progress in improving student educational outcomes. The evaluation should then be used to assess and review Education Support Office supports for teaching quality to determine any refinements or additional assistance required to support schools achieve this outcome.</p> | <p>The Student-Centred Improvement Program of work also includes the development of a new planning and review process for ACT public schools. This will be an iterative improvement, planning and review cycle based on student learning needs and the impact and effect of teaching strategies and supports.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>5. The Education Directorate should review the role of Directors of School Improvement and in doing so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) consider whether individual directors should specialise in sector-specific oversight and support (such as roles focusing on colleges, high schools, primary schools) to better target the implementation of supports for improving teaching quality; and b) determine if the directors' span of control allows them to fulfil the requirements of the People, Practice and Performance framework. | <p>An implementation plan is currently being developed in consultation with Directors of School Improvement</p> | <p>In progress</p> |

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| <p>6. The Education Directorate should establish a development program for new school executives (School Leader C staff) that upskills these staff on the instructional leadership practices of the Empowered Learning Professional Leadership Plan during the initial years of their appointment.</p> | <p>The Aspiring Senior Leaders Program is a 12-month program and continues to develop senior leaders and Instructional Mentors continue to work with Literacy Champions.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>7. The Education Directorate should clearly identify and articulate its expectations for the role and responsibilities of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in ACT public schools. The role could include working with principals and Education Support Office to support school improvement activities, and better using the school network model to connect with other professionals to promote better teaching practice in their school settings.</p> | <p>The Directorate will continue to work with the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) to better utilise and promote engagement with Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) initiatives.</p> <p>The use of HALTs is beneficial but further work needs to be undertaken to explore how schools can use these highly capable teachers to support improvement of professional practice for individual teachers and across whole of school practice, through system- wide approaches or pedagogical best practice methods.</p> <p>There will be a particular focus on how HALTs may be used to support beginning teachers through their first 3 years, including through mentoring, planning and demonstrating best practice.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>8. The Education Directorate should develop a practice for the Education Support Office to oversee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the completion of each school's annual professional learning program; and b) the development of a school's annual professional learning program as part of the school improvement process. The program should identify the development needs of teaching staff in connection with school improvement goals, and the expected impacts on student outcomes. | <p>Most professional learning courses facilitated by the Directorate are now captured in HRIMS Learning. Further work is required to provide central oversight of each school's Annual Professional Learning Program.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |

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| <p>9. The Education Directorate should establish universal professional learning for all school leaders and teachers on the Spiral of Inquiry Model and Multiple Sources of Evidence approach in order to support school leaders to facilitate these activities. This support should focus on increasing understanding and consistency in the quality and impact of professional learning communities for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching practices in all ACT public schools.</p> | <p>The Directorate will continue to provide professional learning to all school leaders through the Spirals of Inquiry Model and Multiple Sources of Evidence approaches. The Directorate will continue to provide professional learning including continuing the new staff and leaders' induction and refresher sessions as part of universal professional learning offering. This will be captured through the new HRIMS and the Learning Management Platform.</p> <p>People Capability continue to work with delivery areas to capture all learning (including historical learning for compliance purposes) into HRIMS Learning</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>10. The Education Directorate should work with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) receive and analyse data to use for evaluating the quality of Education Directorate professional learning activities, and identifying trends and insights from its teachers' professional learning to help determine the impact this has on improving student outcomes; and b) design methods and practices to recognise key professional learning supports, including professional learning communities, as accredited learning that meets the requirements of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. | <p>TQI responded to the Directorate to accept the request to work together. A letter was sent from the Directorate to TQI from the Director-General on 17 April 2023 outlining work towards endorsing PLCs as accredited professional learning in our schools has commenced and is progressing through a collaborative design sprint with the Directorate and the TQI.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>11. The New Education Support Program should be reviewed and redesigned. The program should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) be facilitated by the Education Support Office to provide centralise oversight of all Enterprise Agreement provisions, centralised support and resourcing to New Educators in ACT public schools; | <p>The Professional Learning Framework was published and has been operating since January 2023 offering a suite of targeted professional learning for new educators.</p> <p>The New Educator Support Program guidelines have been updated.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |

- b) document a core set of highly-effective pedagogical competencies that New Educators are expected to acquire within the first three years of their teaching careers;
- c) include a series of centralised, scaffolded professional development activities to build New Educators' capabilities over the course of the three years of the program;
- d) provide schools with clear guidelines and expectations to facilitate experienced teacher coaching and mentoring for New Educators; and
- e) establish an annual monitoring and evaluation process for the program, which incorporates feedback from New Educators, experienced teacher mentors and school leaders.

12. The Education Directorate should review and revise the mechanisms that support the distribution and monitoring of the teaching workforce across ACT public schools by:

- a) monitoring the distribution of experienced teachers across ACT public schools to ensure it aligns with Education Directorate priorities under the *Future of Education*; and
- b) developing processes to monitor and review principal decisions to extend teacher placements to ensure schools have appropriate and equitable access to experienced teachers.

- a) The People and Performance Branch continue to bring teacher experience distribution for consideration at the Directorate's Executive Governance Committee (EGC) Workforce Subcommittee on a quarterly basis.
- b) This will be addressed through the Teacher Transfer Round.

In progress

14. The Education Directorate should:

- a) develop policies and guidelines and support for school leaders that enable regular, development-focussed teacher appraisals aligned with the Australian

Due to ongoing uncertainty re HRIMS delivery, People and Performance will review existing documentation during 2023 in preparation for the 2024 Performance Cycle.

In progress

Professional Standards for Teachers. These should be modelled and encouraged through the Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan and aligned with the professional learning requirements of the ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010 to gain additional benefit from these activities;

b) systematise the performance development process to improve efficiency and make teacher professional development data available for central oversight and management to improve teaching quality; and

c) develop supports for school leaders to manage underperformance for poor teaching practices. These supports should emphasise the need to quickly address performance issues, identify ways to successfully improve performance, and connect underperforming teachers with practical supports to improve their practice.

Table 25: ACT Auditor General’s Report No.7/2021 Procurement Exemptions and Value for Money

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1785081/Report-No.-7-of-2021-Procurement-Exemptions-and-Value-for-Money.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|----------|
| <p>1. To support ACT Government entities to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of procurement documentation, Procurement ACT should:</p> <p>a) promote the use of the Procurement Plan Minute, Tender Evaluation Plan and Tender Evaluation Report templates for procurements using exemptions; and</p> <p>b) provide training to entities on the use of these</p> | <p>An Education Directorate Procurement Training Strategy has been prepared for implementation Q2 2023.</p> <p>The Directorate is working with Procurement ACT in supporting the implementation of the Training Pathways and Accreditation Framework initiatives as part of Procurement Reform.</p> <p>Probity Policy delivered to the Corporate Executive (CORPEX)</p> | Complete |

templates and the assessment of value for money in procurements using exemptions.

ACT Government entities should review and revise as necessary their Chief Executive Instructions, or similar procurement policy guidance, to promote the use of Procurement ACT templates, namely the Procurement Plan Minute, Tender Evaluation Plan and Tender Evaluation Report.

members in July 2022, and will be repeated twice per year.

Intranet content has been reviewed, with updates been progressively introduced.

2. To support ACT Government entities to improve staff understanding of the importance of integrity in procurements using exemptions, Procurement ACT should:

- a) promote the *Probity in Procurement Guide (2020)*; and
- b) provide training to entities in probity risk assessments and identifying and monitoring conflicts of interest in procurements using exemptions.

ACT Government entities should improve staff understanding of the importance of integrity in procurement using exemptions by requiring delegates and officers undertaking procurement to undertake probity training, which would include the management of probity risks and identifying and monitoring conflicts of interest.

An *Education Directorate Procurement Training Strategy* has been prepared for implementation Q2 2023.

The Directorate is working with Procurement ACT in supporting the implementation of the Training Pathways and Accreditation Framework initiatives as part of Procurement Reform.

Probity Policy delivered to the Corporate Executive (CORPEX) members in July 2022, and will be repeated twice per year.

Intranet content has been reviewed, with updates been progressively introduced.

In progress

Table 26: ACT Auditor General's Report No.13/2021 Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project Procurement

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1925222/Report-No.-13-of-2021-Campbell-Primary-School-Modernisation-Project-Procurement.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|---|-------------|
| 5. Major Projects Canberra and the Education Directorate should require staff to have received probity awareness training before participating in procurement activities. The training should also identify how staff can elevate and raise any concerns with probity or conduct during a procurement. | <p>Templates updated include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procurement Plan Minute• Conflict of Interest Declarations• Confidentiality Undertaking• Tender Evaluation Plan• Tender Evaluation Report <p>Fact sheets identified to be included on the Directorate's intranet site to provide guidance on procurements including Conflict of Interest, Probity and Value for Money.</p> <p>An Education Directorate Procurement Training Strategy has been prepared for implementation Q2 2023. The Directorate is working with Procurement ACT in supporting the implementation of the Training Pathways and Accreditation Framework initiatives as part of Procurement Reform.</p> | In progress |

Table 27: ACT Auditor General's Report No.2/2022 Fraud Prevention

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1959391/Report-No.-2-of-2022-Fraud-Prevention.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|-------------|
| 3. Where not already in place, ACT Government agencies should require all recruitment panel members to complete a | People and Performance are in discussions with Shared Services to develop an online conflict of interest form for all recruitment panels | In progress |

conflict of interest declaration form when participating in a recruitment, including that they have no known actual or potential conflicts of interest.

across the Directorate.

5. Where not already in place, ACT Government agencies should undertake staff surveys that collect information about the level of staff awareness of their fraud and corruption reporting obligations and the reporting channels they should use, as well as staff perceptions of the integrity of agency senior leadership. This information should be used to benchmark staff awareness levels and inform priorities for fraud and corruption prevention activities.

Questions that explore staff fraud and corruption knowledge and opinions of senior leadership integrity are asked in the biennial ACTPS Employee Survey. These questions seek a perception rating from respondents. They are:

- Senior leaders within ACT Education operate with a high level of integrity, and
- I have a good understanding of my obligations and the policies and procedures ACT Education has in place for reporting fraud and corruption.

As these questions were asked of non-school based staff only in the March 2023 Employee Survey, work is currently progressing to consider inclusion of these questions in the School Satisfaction and Climate Survey This will ensure there is coverage on these questions, and reliable data, across the whole Directorate.

Results from the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey for our non-school based staff are anticipated to be received in June 2023.

In progress

Table 28: ACT Auditor General's Report No.12/2021 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings

A copy of the report can be found at

https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1917176/d3810acf3f4f419d54f59fab266b88d2ba2251bb.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|-------------|
| One of the four previously reported audit findings was resolved, two were partially resolved, and one was not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Directorate's School Staff Expenditure Monitoring System (SSEMS) team is responsible for reviewing schools' online pay reports (approvals and follow up of schools). The Directorate | In progress |

resolved.

- The Directorate partially resolved an audit finding relating to the timely review of salary reports which was first reported in 2013-14. A small number of salary reports were not independently reviewed by the relevant cost centre.
- In addition, some reports were either not reviewed in a timely manner or not dated to determine the timeliness of the review. Salary reports should always be reviewed in a timely manner to promptly identify and correct erroneous or possible fraudulent salary payments.
- The Audit Office has reported since 2011-12 that the Directorate's school administration system (MAZE) does not have the capability to generate audit logs on user access to the system and changes made to its data. This increases the risk that erroneous or fraudulent changes to the school administration system and data will not be promptly detected and rectified. Representatives of the Directorate have advised that the control weakness will be addressed once the ongoing MAZE replacement project is completed.
- The Directorate did not resolve an audit finding in relation to bank signatories. Since 2019-20, the Audit Office has found that bank signatories who can make payments using cheques or electronic funds transfer from the Directorate's bank accounts are not always current or relevant ACT Government employees.

The Directorate has agreed to address all previously reported audit findings.

reviews school pay reports on a fortnightly basis and files evidence of the reviews appropriately. In addition, salary reviews cover the date approved, name and position of reviewing officers and resolution of issues identified from the review process.

- Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).
- Bank signatories – In 2021-22, the Directorate resolved this audit finding by removing former employees as bank signatories in a timely manner. This reduces the risk of fraudulent payments being made from the Directorate's bank accounts.

No new audit findings were identified in 2020-21

Table 29: ACT Auditor General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings

A copy of the report can be found at https://www.audit.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2124852/Report-No.-10-of-2022-2021-22-Financial-Results-and-Audit-Findings.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|-------------|
| <p>MAZE finding subsumed into a new finding (SAS):</p> <p>SAS (new finding)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021-22, the Audit Office found that despite the SAS System Security Plan (September 2021) identifying a logging strategy and the formalisation of responsibilities for monitoring logs as 'high priority' risk treatments, these are yet to be implemented by the Education Directorate. There is a higher risk of undetected inappropriate and fraudulent changes to SAS and its data not being detected and promptly addressed when audit logs of privileged users are not monitored and reviewed. The Directorate should document an event logging strategy and formalise responsibilities for monitoring audit logs of activities performed by privileged users. Reviews of audit logs should be periodically performed by an independent officer, documented and reported to appropriately authorised individuals with responsibility over the SAS system and its data. <p>The Education Directorate has agreed to address this audit finding.</p> | <p>Audit logs finding subsumed into a new finding (refer: ACT Auditor-General's Report No.10/2022 – 2021-22 Financial Audits Financial Audit Results and Findings).</p> <p>The Directorate's Digital Strategy, Services and Transformation Branch (DSST) are in the process of finalising application testing to support the monitoring of audit logs. Testing is expected to be completed in mid-2023.</p> | In progress |
| The Directorate partially resolved an audit finding relating to the review of salary reports which was first reported in 2013-14. The Directorate now ensures that salary reports | The Directorate's School Staff Expenditure Monitoring System (SSEMS) team is responsible for reviewing schools' online pay reports (approvals and follow up of schools). The Directorate reviews school | In progress |

are independently reviewed by schools and business units. However, the audit finding is only partially resolved as:

- some salary reports were not reviewed on a timely basis (i.e. more than 2 weeks after the end of the pay period;
- there is no documented policy in place defining what constitutes a 'timely basis of review' to measure the timeliness of the salary report review against; and
- opportunities for improvements were identified in relation to the controls over the 'Schools Staffing Expenditure Monitoring System' (SSEMS) used to distribute salary reports for review to schools, for example some users are using a generic rather than a unique system login so it is not always possible to identify whether the reviewer of the salary report is the appropriate cost centre representative. The lack of timely review of salary reports and weaknesses in the controls over SSEMS increases the risk that incorrect or fraudulent employee payments will not be promptly detected and addressed.

pay reports on a fortnightly basis and files evidence of the reviews appropriately. In addition, salary reviews cover the date approved, name and position of reviewing officers and resolution of issues identified from the review process.

One new audit finding was identified in relation to the documentation supporting the payment of invoices at schools.

- There was no evidence of the satisfactory receipt of goods and services prior to payments being made for some invoices.
- While these payments were found to be properly related to the operations at schools, there is a risk of payment errors, irregularities and fraud when payments can be made without clear evidence of the satisfactory receipt of goods and services marked on the payment

School resourcing and Finance team continue to remind schools (as well as reminders in the school management manual) of the need to provide evidence of satisfactory receipt of goods and services prior to payment through the help desk and individual training undertaken to date.

In progress

documentation.

The Directorate agreed to address these audit findings.

The Directorate should ensure that evidence of the satisfactory receipt of goods or services is documented prior to payment of invoices.

Legislative Assembly Committee Reports

Table 30: Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs - Inquiry into Standardised Testing in ACT Schools, Report 5

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1393698/9th-EEY-05-Inquiry-into-Standardised-Testing-in-ACT-Schools-GR-tabled-2019-07-30.PDF

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
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| 12. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate investigate ways it can better utilise standardised testing data to improve academic outcomes. Government response – Agreed | A Data Insights Steering Committee is the governance group overseeing the development of ‘dashboards’ and exploring other opportunities to improve utilisation of data, including from standardised testing. The dashboard to better utilise standardised testing data to improve academic outcomes has commenced and is expected to be available by the end of 2023. | Complete |

Table 31: Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – Inquiry into the Management and Minimisation of Bullying and Violence in ACT Schools – Report 6 - September 2019

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1435800/9th-EEY-06-Inquiry-into-management-and-minimisation-of-bullying-and-violence-in-schools-GR-tabled-2019-10-23.PDF

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|--|-------------|
| 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. Government response – Agreed | Support is available to schools in partnership 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. An information resource for schools, the Restorative Practice page on the Directorate’s Intranet Service Portal, has been developed and is due for publication in mid-2023. | Complete |
| 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. Government response – Agreed | Schools have a variety of skilled staff who support students in and out of the classroom. Teachers, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Youth Workers play a role in supporting students at break times. Structures around student support may look different between schools and students, however, the Directorate has work in development to further support LSAs in assisting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours throughout the life of the school. Professional learning for LSAs in development will include explicit references to supporting students at break times. | Complete |
| 18. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government introduce a parent self-reporting portal for incidents relating to bullying, violence and occupational violence. Government response – Agreed in principle | The Parent Portal Project is in progress. The Education Directorate is working on the Parent Portal rollout which is expected to be launched in Semester 2, 2023. | In progress |

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| 19. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government introduce a student self-reporting portal for incidents relating to bullying, violence and occupational violence. Government response – Agreed in principle | A Feedback and Complaints icon, which links to information on how to submit a complaint to the Directorate via an online form, is available on the Digital Backpack for any students who have access to Education’s Google Workspace for Education Services. | Complete |
|---|--|----------|

Table 32: Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs - Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2018–2019 – Report 8 March 2020

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1606315/9th-EEYA-08-Annual-Report-2018-GR-tabled-23-July-2020.pdf.

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
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| 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. Government response – Agreed in principle | <p>In line with the commitment to increase the number of social and youth workers in ACT public schools, in 2022–23 the Directorate’s full-time equivalent (FTE) across the professional streams increased by 10.0 FTE.</p> <p>These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Director/HP5 position to oversee the strategic direction of the 2 professional streams • 4 senior youth workers • a youth work lead • 3 social workers • a social work lead. <p>The funding for the next tranche of positions is scheduled for the 2024–25 financial year.</p> <p>In 2022–23, the Directorate funded 81.0 FTE psychology and 40.2 allied health professional positions.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration with government and community partners to</p> | Complete |

deliver and promote services and resources for students, families and school communities continues as business as usual.

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| 11. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues to provide flexible and secure employment options for workers. Government response – Agreed in principle | Since 2022, the Directorate has conducted quarterly assessments of employee eligibility for conversion to permanency under the Secure Workforce Conversion Policy. In accordance with the agreed staged implementation process, a registration of interest process was initially introduced, to ensure prioritisation of employees seeking permanent employment. As at March 2023, 1,999 employees have been assessed in accordance with the policy. The Directorate continues to undertake quarterly assessments/reassessments of employees to determine suitability for conversion. In building upon the staged implementation of the policy, it is anticipated all remaining employees will be assessed in 2023. | Complete |
|--|--|----------|

Table 33: Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs – Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT - Report 9 – August 2020

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1701069/9th-EEYA-09-Inquiry-into-Youth-Mental-Health-in-the-ACT-GR-released-14-Jan-2021-and-tabled-9-February-2021.pdf.

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|----------|
| 3. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government recruit more youth workers in schools. Government response – Agreed in principle | In 2022–23, there was an increase of 10.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) across the social and youth workers professional streams. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Director/HP5 position to oversee the strategic direction of the 2 professional streams • 4 senior youth workers • a youth work lead | Complete |

- 3 social workers
- a social work lead.

The funding for the next tranche of positions is scheduled for the 2024–25 financial year.

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| <p>5. The Committee recommends the ACT Government improve privacy for students accessing counselling services at schools.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>As needed, Clinical Practice works with schools to identify suitable, welcoming spaces for health professionals to provide direct work with students and their families.</p> <p>The current upgrade of Wanniasa High School will include a Southside office space for the Allied Health Service. When completed the office will provide spaces for direct client work, including a family-friendly space.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>In 2023, school psychologists continue to be part of their school’s student services team and provide direct, indirect and universal support to students learning and wellbeing.</p> <p>The School Psychology Service Early Intervention team delivers a variety of group programs to young people in secondary schools and parents/carers. The focus of these groups is to build emotional regulation skills that promote resilience.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate continues to collaborate with other government directorates and agencies to support the development of mental health services for children and young people.</p> <p>In the 2021–22 Budget, the Australian Government committed to working in partnership with state and territory governments to create a national network of 15 Head to Health Kids Hubs (mental health and wellbeing centres) for children aged 0–12 years.</p> <p>Head to Health Kids will deliver a community-based multidisciplinary</p> | <p>Complete</p> |

mental health service for children 0–12 years experiencing mild to moderate and emerging mental health concerns. The service will also provide education, support and connection for families and carers. Head to Health Kids Hubs are scheduled to commence nationally in 2023–24.

ACT Health will deliver one Head to Health Kids Hub in the ACT.

The Education Directorate meets quarterly with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Childhood Early Intervention Program, Canberra Health Services, which run the Understanding and Responding to Feelings and Behaviour in schools (UR FaB). UR FaB is an early intervention program for children in primary school, their parents and teachers. The program is run by CAMHS in collaboration with the Education Directorate.

Previously reported groups are now business as usual.

Table 34: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion - Annual and Financial Reports 2019-2020 and the Appropriation Bill 2020–2021 – Report 1— April 2021

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1744810/ECI-01-Annual-Report-2019-20-and-ACT-Budget-2020-21-Govt-Response-on-Budget-tabled-2021-04-20.pdf.

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|----------|
| 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. Government response – Agreed | The Education Directorate has confirmed enrolment projections demonstrate future demand requirement for new college capacity in north Canberra. A preferred site has been confirmed. The service delivery model and scope of works has been finalised by the Education Directorate for the new college in Canberra’s north. This service delivery model and scope will be combined with the | Complete |

Education Directorate Infrastructure Specification. This will allow the procurement of a design consultant to commence master planning and preliminary design works on the proposed site.

Master planning and preliminary design works have been undertaken to inform investment deliberations.

Table 35: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion Report on Appropriation Bill 2021–2022 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021–22 – Report 2

A copy of the government response can be found at

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1905439/Government-Response-to-Standing-Committee-Reports-on-Appropriation-Bill-2021-2022-and-Appropriation-Office-of-the-Legislative-Assembly-Bill-2021-2022.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|----------|
| <p>5. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) implement measures to improve access for young disabled people in ACT Government schools. b) ensure that the disability education review process is accountable and transparent to disability stakeholders. c) respond to community concern about the use of specialist schools and specialist streaming and the desire to have students with disability fully included in mainstream schools. <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>a) ACT public schools are committed to meeting the needs of students with disability. In partnership with the student, parents, carers and other professionals, schools make reasonable adjustments for students with disability at the time of their enrolment and during their education. This supports students to access and participate in the school curriculum, programs, and activities on the same basis as their peers. In 2023, in-person and online professional learning opportunities continued to be offered to educators in relation to inclusive education. The Directorate also facilitated professional networks to share information about inclusive education between schools and provided inclusion coaching to schools upon request.</p> <p>b) The <i>Inclusive Education Strategy</i> has been drafted to ensure as a system there is a shared starting point for policy, practice and related dialogue to help work towards a common goal of inclusive education in all schools. The strategy was informed by extensive engagement over the past 2 years. This has included engaging</p> | Complete |

with the workforce, the broader ACT community including children and young people with disability and their families, and also consideration of contemporary evidence. A discussion paper was published that outlined 7 focus areas based on information gathered from the evidence review and engagement. These areas are culture; relationships; workforce (including staff capability); learning; key transitions; resourcing; and infrastructure. The ACT Disability Education Reference Group has had ongoing involvement with this work to date.

c) All students with disability are welcome and encouraged to attend their local school. Students with disability can access different settings in their local ACT public school.

All primary schools, high schools and colleges offer the Inclusion Support Program, which resources reasonable adjustments in a mainstream classroom with same-aged peers; and disability education programs, which provide smaller class sizes and a dedicated space for regulation.

10. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government:

- a) engages with the community sector to provide chrome books and data access to vulnerable families and young people.
- b) undertake an evaluation of online learning during lockdown, including an assessment of the social and economic impacts on young people and their families.

Government response – Agreed in principle

Over 3,800 Chromebook for new secondary students were provided in Term 1, 2023. Devices that had reached 3 years were refreshed in Term 2, with over 3,200 devices being replaced.

The primary school shared Chromebook program refreshed over 2,100 devices in late-2022.

Internet services were provided to over 200 students to continue their learning at home.

eSafety professional learning and supports were provided to all ACT public schools.

Planning is underway for the evaluation of remote learning.

In progress

16. The Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate provides quarterly updates to the Assembly on

The Taskforce completed its work at the end of June 2022. In August 2022, the Taskforce released a comprehensive report, Teacher

Complete

the work of the Teacher Shortage Taskforce.
Government response – Agreed in principle

Shortage Taskforce – Final Report which outlined the Taskforce’s findings with 20 recommendations for the Directorate to deliver.

18. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide quarterly updates to the Assembly on:

- a) teacher employment casual to permanency conversion.
- b) progress towards the goal of establishing 400 new full-time teaching positions during the current term of government.

Government response – Agreed in principle

a) As at 31 March 2023, 20 casual teachers have been assessed as eligible for conversion to permanency in accordance with the Secure Workforce Conversion Policy (the Policy). Of the 20 casual teachers assessed as eligible, 11 have accepted conversion to permanency, 8 employees have declined conversion to permanency and 1 employee has yet to accept or decline. A further 26 casual teachers have been assessed as ineligible in accordance with the Policy.

b) The Directorate continues to perform ongoing recruitment for classroom teachers and support staff to meet the commitment of 400 additional staff in the ACT public school system during the current term of government. Between 4 November 2020 and June 2023, the number of full-time equivalent teaching and support staff employed in the Education Directorate has increased from 6,359.3 to 6,898.2 representing an increase of 538.9 full-time equivalent staff.

Complete

19. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government:

- a) increase the number of registered teachers in ACT government schools.
- b) provide the full number of FTE registered teachers required to fully staff ACT government schools.
- c) provide to the Committee the number of job vacancies for school teachers across the entire government school system.
- d) ensure that teacher exit interviews are conducted and a full report delivered analysing the reasons staff leave teaching.

The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs tabled the Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023–2028 in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 9 February 2023, which outlined the number of teachers required to be employed in ACT public schools. Refer to the Human Resources Management section of this annual report for progress against teacher recruitment targets. Recommendations A, C and D were addressed in the 2021–22 Education Directorate Annual Report.

Complete

Government response – Agreed in principle

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| <p>20. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore options to increase investment in training and recruiting more A&TSI teachers and explore infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2023-2026 (Action Plan) has been provided to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body for consultation, prior to finalisation and launching of the Action Plan. The launch of the Action plan is scheduled for the second half of 2023.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>22. The Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate aim to accredit all ACT schools under the Moneysmart program by the end of the 2022–2023 financial year.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Moneysmart program was re-profiled from 2021-22 to 2022–23 to provide targeted support to schools to build teacher capacity and implement changes in the teaching and learning of financial capability. In particular, the transition from the Australian Curriculum Version 8.4 to Version 9.0. Version 9.0 has an increased emphasis on financial capability across all learning areas, particularly HASS, Mathematics and Economics. In addition, the Program provided funding to ACT public schools to improve the financial capability of students.</p> <p>Thirty schools opted-in to receive accreditation through the Program. Accredited schools received \$3,000 to support financial capability further, for example, professional learning, resources, or community events. Examples of financial capability practice of accredited schools are shared on the Education Directorate’s Service Portal. The Program will cease on 30 June 2023.</p> <p>The Education Directorate will continue to support schools to deliver financial capability through the Numeracy: Finding the Balance and Curriculum Implementation and Improvement projects.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |

Table 36: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion – Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020–21

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2009451/ECI-Report-4-Inquiry-into-Annual-and-Financial-Reports-2020-2021.pdf.

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|----------|
| <p>4. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to invest in high-quality public schools in the Gungahlin area.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The ACT Government has continued to invest in high-quality public schools in the Gungahlin area. The Education Directorate is delivering new schools in Gungahlin, including at Shirley Smith High School in Kenny, North Gungahlin High School in Taylor, and planning for a second college in Gungahlin. Expansion of existing schools is also progressing at Margaret Hendry School and Gungahlin College in response to growing enrolment demand.</p> | Complete |
| <p>5. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate finalise the priority of enrolment area for Kenny high school as soon as practicable.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>A Priority Enrolment Area for the new Shirley Smith High School was published on the Education website ahead of 2024 enrolments opening on 26 April 2023.</p> | Complete |
| <p>6. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate ensure all delegates are well-trained in procurement and probity processes and that supplementary refresher training is provided regularly.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate’s Executive staff participated in a Probity in Procurement Masterclass in June 2022, ensuring there is a clear and consistent approach through the procurement lifecycle.</p> <p>Procurement awareness and training sessions have been delivered to school-based staff and office-based staff and will continue to form part of the Directorate’s procurement training. The Directorate is working closely with the Whole of Government Procurement Reform Program.</p> | Complete |
| <p>7. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate consider expanding the performance measures</p> | <p>The Directorate continues to participate in national conversations through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting</p> | Complete |

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| used in annual reports when reporting on its strategic objectives. Government response – Agreed in principle | Authority (ACARA) and Education Ministers on changes to the National Measurement Framework. | |
| 8. The committee recommends that the Education Directorate monitor the results of ACT students. Should trends emerge, the Directorate should take further steps to understand and address the factors that may be contributing to the relevant changes, with a particular focus on any academic gender gap. Government response – Agreed | The Directorate continues to monitor the results of ACT students. Trends in results are used to inform policy and program development. | Complete |

Table 37: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion – Inquiry into the ACT Auditor-General Report No.6 of 2021 – Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2155493/ECI-05-Inquiry-into-the-ACT-Auditor-Generals-report-No-6-of-2021-Teaching-Quality-in-ACT-Public-Schools-Government-Response-tabled-1-Dec-2022.pdf.

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|-------------|
| 2. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate clearly articulate in its response to a System School Review Report (Review Report) how it has implemented the recommendations set out in the Review Reports for previous years. Government response – Agreed | School reviews for 2023 are scheduled to finish mid-September 2023. Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) will then develop a system report based on all 2023 school reviews. The Directorate will develop a plan for how recommendations will be implemented. | In progress |
| 5. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure all teachers and learning support assistants have | Following the delays due to hardware shortages and ACT Health Digital Health Record project laptop device requirement being | In progress |

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| access to appropriate information technology (IT) equipment. Government response – Agreed | prioritised, Digital, Data and Technology Solutions has delivered over 50% of the refreshed devices and over 30% of the additional devices to casual relief teachers, all teachers, and all administration staff. Remaining uplift is scheduled to be completed over the next year. | |
| <p>8. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government invest additional resources in occupational health and safety for ACT public schools, and ensure that at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all public schools in the ACT have clear, consistent policies for managing occupational violence in school settings and reducing risks to staff and students; staff have the capacity to manage risks of violence, including clear strategies for escalation and de-escalation; and staff have access to streamlined processes for reporting and recording incidents and are enabled to share experiences in a safe and non-judgmental setting. <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Safe at School Taskforce was established in June 2022. The taskforce is focused on providing subject matter expertise, strengthening the safety culture across the Education Directorate, and creating and operationalising safe systems of work.</p> <p>The taskforce has started reviewing the existing processes for managing incidents of occupational violence to identify areas for improvement. The taskforce, in collaboration with other areas of the Directorate, has completed the review of incident management and the professional learning program with the view to enhance staff ability to prevent, respond to and manage incidents in schools.</p> <p>The taskforce has also led the review of a suite of work health and safety policies and procedures, including the development of a Work Health and Safety Plan, Work Health and Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and Training and Induction Policy as well as their respective procedures and implementation documents.</p> | In progress |
| <p>11. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide additional learning and development opportunities to all educators focused on inclusive education and behaviour management.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate is providing additional professional learning available to all educators focused on inclusive education and positive behaviour support. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning networks to provide information-sharing and opportunities for educators at regular meetings held in-person or online. These included the Disability Coordination Education Officer Network, the Supporting Students with Disability Network, and the Physically Included Network. Online training courses on a wide range of contemporary topics, | Complete |

including the Disability Standards for Education, Understanding and Supporting Behaviour, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Understanding Hearing Loss, and Dyslexia and Significant Reading Difficulties.

- Face-to-face training for educators on a range of other topics, including Team Teach Training, the Everyone Everyday Program, Universal Design for Learning, and evidence-based pedagogical practices.
- A new Learning Support Assistant (LSA) Professional Learning package has been developed covering a range of subjects including legislative and regulatory requirements, building positive teacher/LSA relationships, effective communication, knowing and responding to a learner's learning, social and emotional development and communication needs, trauma-informed practice, understanding neurodiversity, and contributing to inclusive communities.
- Targeted support to schools is made available when required. This includes access to Inclusion Coaches, the School Psychology Service, and the Allied Health Service.

In addition, to enhance behaviour management, ACT public schools use the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework to support students, staff, families, and the school community to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students through the clarification, teaching and acknowledging of expected behaviours.

PBL implementation in ACT public schools has reached 84% of schools and the Directorate will continue to work with remaining schools to support readiness, need and suitability for PBL implementation. Of the ACT public schools that have implemented PBL, 10 have progressed to the next phase of PBL implementation and been provided additional training modules contextualised for the ACT.

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| | <p>These additional modules support staff to embed evidence-informed small group interventions for students in need of more intensive behaviour and academic supports.</p> <p>In May 2023, the Education Directorate also launched a Prevention of Bullying professional learning module for school-based staff. This module supports school-based PBL teams to create a school-wide approach to the identification of bullying behaviours, understanding and working with data, and empowering students to safely take action against bullying behaviours. During Term 2, 2023, 26 schools accessed this training with future sessions scheduled for Term 3, 2023.</p> | |
| <p>12. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that all school leaders are provided with the necessary resources to implement and evaluate Annual Professional Learning Programs.</p> <p>Government response – agreed</p> | <p>This is an ongoing annual process that ensures the professional learning plan is developed to support the school planning tools and Principal Professional Development Agreement.</p> | Complete |
| <p>13. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement in full Recommendation 11 of the ACT Auditor General’s Report 6 of 2021—Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools. This should include close consultation with New Educators, and the provision of clear guidance as to the operation of the New Educator Support Program and associated entitlements.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The New Educator Support Program was endorsed by the Education Directorate’s Executive Governance Committee in November 2022. A Professional Learning (PL) framework was developed for new educators in their first 3 years of their teaching career, which aligns with the Directorate’s Enabling Pedagogies Framework and the <i>Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Teaching Standards</i>.</p> <p>The PL framework covers a range of topics such as pedagogy, behaviour management and inclusion; and assists new educators move from graduate to proficient.</p> | In progress |

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| <p>14. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expedite development of systems to estimate and address future workforce needs in ACT public schools. The system should capture specialist roles, experienced teachers, and learning support assistants.</p> <p>Government response - Agreed</p> | <p>The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs tabled the <i>Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023–2028</i> at the ACT Legislative Assembly on 9 February 2023, which outlined the number of teachers required to be employed in ACT public schools from 2023 to 2028.</p> <p>The Directorate has commenced work to mature its workforce planning and projection methodologies to incorporate segmentation of teacher specialisation requirements.</p> | Complete |
| <p>15. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide incentives for teachers with relevant expertise to take up specialist teaching roles.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate offers Priority Area Scholarships of up to \$10,000 to encourage teachers to undertake further training and to take up specialist teaching roles. Current priority areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complex needs and challenging behaviours • languages education • science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) • Certificate IV in Training and Assessment • Certificate III and IV in Outdoor Leadership, and individual Statements of Attainment • other education qualification with a demonstrated link to the <i>Future of Education Strategy</i> and <i>Strategic Plan 2022–2025</i>. | Complete |
| <p>16. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with teachers, school leaders and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement clear policy and guidance on the work that teachers can reasonably be expected to perform outside of school settings, and the priority that should be assigned to particular activities.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Directorate has commenced work to mature its workforce planning and projection methodologies to incorporate segmentation of teacher specialisation requirements.</p> | In progress |

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| <p>17. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that educators are never required to supervise classes of a larger size those set out in the Education Directorate's Class Size Policy. This should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more effective oversight and enforcement of the Directorate's Class Size Policy and Class Size Procedures; and • consideration of a cap on class sizes in enterprise agreements for teaching staff. <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The principal is responsible for the implementation and management of class sizes in accordance with the Class Sizes Policy. Directors of School Improvement have oversight over the enforcement of Class Size Policy and Class Size Procedures in schools within their network.</p> <p>The new enterprise agreement continues to recognise the fundamental contribution of class size to learning outcomes for students, quality of teaching, and the health and wellbeing of teachers.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>18. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure a more even distribution of teachers across the ACT public school system, including but not limited to consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing incentives for experienced teachers to transfer to schools with a low concentration of experienced teachers—particularly schools in areas of lower socioeconomic advantage; and • limiting the ability of principals to exempt teachers from the transfer round. <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate acknowledges the important role that teacher experience plays in providing high-quality teaching outcomes, however, recognises that placement of teachers is made based on a number of factors relevant to the needs of schools and individual teachers.</p> <p>The ACT Government proposal for the new <i>Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement</i> provides a commitment to review the Classroom Teacher and School Leader Transfer Process in consultation with the Australian Education Union.</p> <p>The proposal also includes an employer-initiated transfer allowance to attract experienced teachers to schools where they are needed most across the system.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>19. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide more guidance and training to school leaders on performance management and review, including when to initiate formal performance management processes and how those processes should be implemented.</p> | <p>The Directorate will develop more guidance and training for school leaders to assist the performance management process, including a range of practical supports that underpin the procedures within the Enterprise Agreement.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |

Table 38: Select Committee Report on the Inquiry on the COVID-19 2021 Pandemic Response

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1973029/COVID-19-Report-on-the-Inquiry-into-the-COVID-19-2021-Pandemic-Response-GR-tabled-22-Mar-2022.pdf.

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
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| <p>28. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government further extend and increase as needed the funding of extra school psychologists to schools due to long-term collective stress experienced by children during COVID-19, noting that demand is currently outstripping supply and that the tail end of COVID-19 stress is likely to last for several years.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate continues to monitor national trends on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psychological wellbeing of students. As areas of needs are identified, the Education Directorate supports educators and families by providing targeted advice and resources.</p> <p>The temporary investment of 2 psychology positions to assist with the increased need for mental health supports because of the COVID-19 pandemic ceased in June 2022. The central telehealth service continues in a limited capacity to help address any temporary psychology vacancies in schools.</p> <p>The Education Directorate maintains strong partnerships with community stakeholders to raise awareness about mental health and promote help-seeking behaviours, including with ACT Mental Health, Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Headspace ACT and the ACT Child Development Service.</p> <p>In 2023, 2 national initiatives are providing additional funding to schools to support student wellbeing, which may result in positive mental health outcomes for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Student Wellbeing Program • The National Student Wellbeing Boost. | Complete |

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| 29. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate giving home educated students access to school psychologists and ensure that future restrictions about gathering for home educated children are consistent with restrictions placed on school educated children. Government response – Agreed in principle | Currently the Education Directorate provides psychology services to students enrolled in ACT public schools. The demand often outstrips supply, and consideration would need to be given to the legal and workforce capacity to reach out to students enrolled for home education. | In progress |
| 30. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the benefits of remote learning for some children and consider whether to introduce this as an ongoing arrangement for those who are better suited to remote learning. Government response – Agreed in principle | <p>The ACT Government, through the Education Directorate, continues to ensure that students remain engaged with their education.</p> <p>The Directorate continues to provide several opportunities for students who cannot or choose not to physically attend school to continue engaging in learning. ACT teachers are supported to identify the appropriate teaching method to support the relevant learning needs of all students.</p> <p>Where a regular school setting may not suit an individual student, the Education Directorate’s Distance Education Program is also an offering provided through the Flexible Education team in partnership with the Finigan School of Distance Education.</p> | Complete |

Table 39: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion Report No.3 – Inquiry into the Management of School Infrastructure

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2083359/ECI-03-Managing-ACT-School-Infrastructure-Government-Response-tabled-21-September-2022.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
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| 1. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government more carefully plans the construction of new schools to better meet size demands to avoid further construction in | The development of the School Transition Estimation and Projection (STEP) model was finalised in 2022 in collaboration with the ANU School of Demography. The STEP model is used to estimate future | Complete |

the early life of the school.

Government response – Agreed

anticipated public school enrolment demand, as a key input to support infrastructure demand responses and enrolment policy planning.

The model has a high level of accuracy and supports evidence-based deliberations and decision making to manage the balance of enrolment supply and demand, including through informing future investment decisions. The model is continually updated to ensure it reflects the latest information available. Updates include revised population projections (including ACT Population projections released by ACT Treasury), school census data, enrolment policy changes such as updated Priority Enrolment Area boundaries and school capacity, as well as investment.

While the STEP model itself has been finalised, the Directorate continues to work with ANU to further enhance enrolment projections capability and undertake demographic analysis.

The Education Directorate Infrastructure Specification (EDIS) details the design requirements for new Education Directorate schools based on the predicted maximum Long Term Enrolment for the school, i.e. the average enrolment figure that accommodates the natural fluctuation of enrolment over a 15-to-25-year cycle.

The EDIS brief requires detailed planning for the predicted maximum enrolment, or peak enrolment, as part of the master planning process. This includes the siting and integration of Relocatable Learning Units to provide appropriate learning infrastructure during enrolment peaks. Depending on the size of the original school this may also include comprehensive designs and sighting for expansion buildings.

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| <p>2. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that schools always maintain the capacity to accept the transfer of students from outside Priority Enrolment Areas who possess suitable reasons for requesting a transfer.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate’s enrolment policy settings continue to enable enrolment from students outside of their Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) under specific, standard enrolment criteria and recognition of circumstances (such as legal considerations or individual circumstances based on student wellbeing), in balance with continuing to ensure available capacity for local in-area demand.</p> <p>Applicants who meet the legal or individual wellbeing enrolment criteria will be enrolled regardless of school capacity. All other out-of-area criteria are subject to available capacity after meeting demand from in-PEA and legal/wellbeing enrolments. This ensures obligations under the Education Act 2004 are upheld.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>3. 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.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate has confirmed enrolment projections demonstrate future demand requirement for new college capacity in north Canberra. A preferred site has been confirmed. The service delivery model and scope of works has been finalised by the Education Directorate for the new college in Canberra’s north. This service delivery model and scope will be combined with the EDIS. This will allow the procurement of a design consultant to commence master planning and preliminary design works on the proposed site. Master planning and preliminary design works have been undertaken to inform investment deliberations.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>4. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government build a flexible offsite learning centre on Canberra’s northside.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate has reviewed its capacity to deliver flexible education and briefing is underway. Additional capacity challenges will continue due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the response to raising the age of criminal responsibility • the impact of COVID-19 on students and staffing • the national interest in school attendance | <p>In progress</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a report from the Disability Royal Commission, which will identify the requirements for expanding the Directorate's Flexible Education programs. <p>The Directorate will take a considered approach as the need for expansion becomes more evident.</p> | |
| <p>5. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government articulates and communicates to the wider community medium- and long-term plans to address capacity issues at schools.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The ACT Infrastructure Plan 2019 is a comprehensive multi-decade plan detailing priority infrastructure investment, including proposals for new and expanded schools. The next update to the ACT Infrastructure Plan will detail infrastructure investment in new and existing schools for the next 5 years, in 5–10 years and in 10–20 years. The ACT Infrastructure Plan 2019 includes medium- and long-term plans to cater for children and young people at ACT public schools. An Education update to the ACT Infrastructure Plan is planned and will identify indicative infrastructure investment needs for new and existing schools.</p> <p>The Education Directorate has continued to provide updates on medium- and long-term infrastructure, investment, and demand management plans through the Education Directorate website. The Education Directorate is continuing to engage with ACT community stakeholders about schools planning.</p> | Complete |
| <p>7. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that the adequacy of library and specialist teaching spaces are taken into account when the capacity of a given school is increased.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The design and pedagogical requirements of library and specialist teaching spaces are considered and addressed in the EDIS. When undertaking an expansion that increases the capacity of the school, the adequacy of existing infrastructure, including the library, specialist teaching spaces, sanitation and administration space, amongst others, are considered using the EDIS.</p> <p>Where these requirements are identified for specific schools, they are</p> | Complete |

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| | captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements. | |
| 8. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provides more outdoor learning spaces. Government response – Agreed | Schools submitted their infrastructure requests for the 2023–24 PSIRP budget in October 2022. Seven additional schools will receive external learning structures as part of the 2023–24 PSIRP budget deliverables, totalling \$2.150 million. | Complete |
| 9. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provides more Technology classrooms. Government response – Agreed | <p>The design and pedagogical requirements for technology classrooms in schools are considered and addressed in the EDIS.</p> <p>The Education Directorate works closely with Digital, Data and Technology Services (within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate) to design and install various technology services into schools.</p> <p>Where unique requirements are identified for specific technology classrooms/teaching spaces, these are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements.</p> | Complete |
| 10. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government factors in the provision of Out of Hours School Care into capacity planning at the school and Education Directorate level. Government response – Agreed | Planning for school infrastructure has continued to consider facilities that support out of school hours care (OSHC) and other community uses of school infrastructure outside of school hours at all ACT schools. The design and pedagogical requirements of library and specialist teaching spaces are considered and addressed in the EDIS. Where unique requirements are identified for specific schools, these are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements. | Complete |
| 11. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures the use of environmentally sustainable materials in the construction and upgrade of schools. Government response – Agreed | <p>One of the overarching principles within the EDIS is that of ‘Sustainable Design’, which requires the design to consider, and to incorporate, the necessary elements to create sustainable education environments.</p> <p>These elements include architecture, landscape, transport, linkages to</p> | Complete |

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| | <p>broader networks and infrastructure that is low carbon, water sensitive and resource efficient in both construction and operation.</p> <p>The Education Directorate will continue to mandate the use of environmentally sustainable materials in the construction of schools. Where unique requirements are identified for environmentally sustainable design, these are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements.</p> | |
| <p>12. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate immediately focus on upgrading and maintaining tools, hardware, software, and firmware, as well as internal policies and procedures, to enable optimal digital literacy learning for ACT students.</p> <p>Government response - Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate continues to support an ICT environment that is fit for learners, with key highlights being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chromebooks for new secondary students, with over 3,800 being provided in Term 1, 2023. Devices that had reached 3 years were refreshed in Term 2, with over 3,200 devices being replaced. • Primary school shared Chromebook program refreshed over 2,100 devices in late-2022. • Internet services provided to over 200 students to continue their learning at home. • eSafety professional learning and supports provided to all ACT public schools. • Ongoing Google enhancements aligned to Digital Pedagogy practices. • Devices (switches) supporting the SchoolsNet education network were refreshed in early-2023. | Complete |
| <p>14. The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate engage with the Australian Electoral Commission to firstly understand their accessibility requirements for polling places, and then identify how the Directorate might address any barriers, to assist not only polling day, but even more importantly, everyday access for</p> | <p>The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has provided its accessibility assessment tool to the Education Directorate which highlights the criteria used for determining accessibility.</p> <p>The Directorate is working with the AEC to ensure there is a clear understanding of the accessibility assessments undertaken by AEC of ACT public schools proposed to be used by the AEC. This will form part</p> | Complete |

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| its own students. | of the future process for negotiating the hire agreement with AEC. | |
| Government response – Agreed in principle | | |
| <p>15. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government adopt a definition of ‘inclusion’ consistent with Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and General Comment No. 4 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the provision of public education in the ACT.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>An <i>Inclusive Education Strategy</i> (the Strategy) is being developed. It is designed to ensure that children and young people with disability are welcomed, valued, and access quality, differentiated education on the same basis as their peers. The Strategy is informed by extensive engagement over two years which involved various stakeholders, including the schooling workforce, the broader ACT community including children and young people with disability and their families. The Strategy focuses on seven key areas: culture, relationships, workforce, learning, key transitions, resourcing, and infrastructure and was also shaped by a review of contemporary evidence. The <i>Inclusive Education Strategy</i> aligns with the UNCRPD Definition of inclusion. It commits to a process of systemic reform that will amplify and expand current good practice, coordinate and commence areas of work across the Directorate and in our schools, to ensure as a system, inclusive education is strengthened in all ACT public schools.</p> | In progress |
| <p>16. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that all ACT school infrastructure adheres to Universal Design principles to ensure accessibility for students, teachers, parents, students who are carers, and carers with disabilities.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The ACT Government has committed to universal design principles through the EDIS, which identifies universal design as one of the key overarching principles in designing school infrastructure. The need to incorporate universal design is necessary to reflect the Directorate’s commitment to the principles of ‘equity, universality and non-discrimination’. EDIS describes universal design as ‘the design of products and environments (both indoor and outdoor) to be usable by all people, without the need for adaptation or specialised design’. Where unique requirements are identified for universal design principles, these are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific</p> | Complete |

| | Requirements. | |
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| <p>17. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commit to ensuring that all ACT public schools are universally accessible as soon as possible.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate continues to commit \$4 million annually to support inclusion and access works across ACT public schools through the Public School Infrastructure Renewal Program budget.</p> <p>The Directorate’s EDIS identifies the requirements that indoor and outdoor environments are to be usable by all people, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.</p> <p>Where unique requirements are identified for universal access principles, these are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements.</p> | Complete |
| <p>18. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government articulates a clear and equitable process to prioritise accessibility and maintenance modifications to school infrastructure and facilities, as well as prioritise maintenance of accessibility facilities including ramps, toilets, and lifts.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate continues to commit \$4 million annually to support inclusion and access works across ACT public schools through the Public School Infrastructure Renewal Program budget.</p> <p>A joint coordination team, including representatives from Infrastructure and Capital Works and Inclusion and Allied Health, meet fortnightly to plan, prioritise and manage inclusive works for specific student needs within this budget.</p> | Complete |
| <p>19. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on the tree canopy at ACT Government schools and detail plans for its expansion.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Education Directorate has commenced discussions with Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) with a view to improving access to existing geospatial data for the evaluation and reporting of canopy coverage in ACT schools.</p> <p>TCCS and EPSDD are also exploring options to improve the coverage and currency of their geospatial data resources which will further enhance the Directorate’s future reporting capability on Living Infrastructure in ACT schools.</p> | In progress |

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| <p>20. The Committee recommends that all ACT Schools prioritise the incorporation of green space and sensory spaces into design to support the mental and emotional health of all students and especially students with disabilities and mental ill health.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate recognises the importance of appropriate outdoor and sensory spaces for students. The amount of available green space varies across different school sites due to the amount of available land and other urban developments. The Education Directorate Infrastructure Specification (EDIS) states that there must be an integrated approach to the design of external environments that will help define the character of the school, enhance learning and teaching, and provide a sense of connection to the school. This standard is also applied to the expansion and major refurbishment of existing schools.</p> <p>The ACT Government supports safe and inclusive environments in ACT public schools through meeting the needs of individual students via recommendations from allied health experts, and through universal design that promotes inclusion. This includes initiatives such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible classroom spaces with works done to enable adjacent small group learning areas; • Quiet rooms and withdrawal spaces where students can meet with a teacher or self-regulate; • Sensory gardens, outdoor courtyards, and playgrounds to ensure everyone can enjoy an outdoor area with a range of sensory experiences; and • Disability access compliance, including automatic doors and ramps, and accessible toilets. | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>21. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide adequate space for community organisations to do in-reach support and provide adequate guidance for its use.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The Directorate continues to work with schools when planning new or upgrading existing school spaces, including student wellbeing and psychology offices to ensure they are fit for purpose and improve accessibility.</p> <p>Allied Health professionals (Occupational Therapists and</p> | <p>Complete</p> |

physiotherapists) provide advice to schools to support individual students participate in their learning and school activities.

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| <p>23. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implements the Recommendations of ACT Auditor-General Report No. 11 of 2019—Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The ACT Government is continuing to progress the response to the ACT Auditor-General Report No. 11 of 2019—Maintenance of ACT Government School Infrastructure.</p> <p>Updates on the status of the Education Directorate response to this report are available in this Annual Report.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>24. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that operational asset plans and annual maintenance plans are adequately funded by the Directorate, to remove the current need for schools to use money from other areas of their budget for maintenance.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>Operational Asset Management Plan (OAMP) templates have been developed as part of the implementation of the Strategic Asset Management Framework.</p> <p>These OAMPs will be implemented in consultation with schools to augment their current infrastructure management practice and allocation of maintenance activities. This will provide consistency and best practice across the ACT public school system.</p> <p>These OAMPs will be distributed for implementation by ACT public schools once completed. Interim maintenance plan templates have been provided to schools while the OAMP document is being finalised.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>26. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure appropriate, comfortable, and secure amenities in ACT public school staff rooms.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed</p> | <p>The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that appropriate, comfortable and secure amenities are provided to public school staff at all ACT public schools.</p> <p>The Education Directorate upgrades staff rooms each year as part of the Capital Upgrades program.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>27. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that decisions on current and future school infrastructure needs are informed by a collaborative</p> | <p>The Education Directorate has continued to engage with key stakeholders and school communities on school enrolment, capacity management and investment in new and expanded school</p> | <p>Complete</p> |

community engagement process that includes advice from relevant professionals.

Government response – Agreed

infrastructure. The Directorate has continued to seek advice from subject matter experts in planning matters as needed.

28. The Committee recommends that as part of the collaborative community engagement process the ACT Government outlines an overall vision for schools which includes short, medium, and long-term infrastructure plans and forecasted costs for budgeting.

Government response – Agreed in principle

The ACT Government has outlined commitments to future public school planning and investment through the *ACT Infrastructure Plan 2019*.

The Education Directorate also provides regular updates on medium- and long-term infrastructure and demand management plans through the Education Directorate website.

Future updates to the *ACT Infrastructure Plan* will include planned and anticipated investment in public education infrastructure.

Complete

29. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that all indoor spaces in ACT public schools are climate controlled by the end of 2024.

Government response – Agreed in principle

In 2023–24, the Education Directorate will spend \$8 million as part of the Delivering Energy-Efficient Heating Upgrades for ACT Public Schools initiative.

In progress

31. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government obtain expert advice in the design and location of bike and scooter storage facilities and consult with school communities based on that advice.

Government response – Agreed

Schools submitted their infrastructure requests for the 2023–24 Public Schools Infrastructure Renewal Program budget in October 2022. Two schools will receive new secure bike and scooter shelters as part of this program budget with deliverables totalling \$0.5 million.

In progress

32. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government address traffic concerns by implementing traffic management plans and investing in infrastructure upgrades, including the installation of flashing school lights and other traffic calming measures.

Traffic management concerns in relation to the traffic network outside school boundaries are the responsibility of TCCS.

The design requirements around traffic, parking, vehicle and pedestrian movements in and around new schools are considered and addressed in the EDIS. Where unique requirements are identified for

Complete

Government response – Agreed in principle

traffic, parking, vehicle and pedestrian movements they are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements.

33. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government includes adequate consideration of car parking and traffic management measures in any school expansion plans.

Government response - Agreed

The Education Directorate has continued to review traffic and parking management and plans for existing schools and for new or expanding schools, in collaboration with TCCS.

Complete

34. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that all development applications for developments adjacent to schools include traffic assessment and traffic management plans to minimise negative impacts on school users, nearby residents and the community and protect the safety of students.

Government response – Agreed

The design requirements around traffic, parking, vehicle and pedestrian movements in and around schools are considered and addressed in the EDIS.

Where unique requirements are identified for traffic, parking, vehicle and pedestrian movements they are captured in EDIS Part A – Project Specific Requirements.

Complete

35. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues to support schools to communicate and engage with families on hazardous materials in schools.

Government response – Agreed

The ACT Government has allocated an additional \$15 million in funding until 2024–25 to accelerate the removal of hazardous materials from ACT schools.

This program, supported by dedicated staff, will continue to prioritise communication and engagement with school communities.

Complete

Table 40: Select Committee Inquiry into the Appropriation Bill 2022-23 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2022-23

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/2088338/Estimates-2022-2023-Government-Responses-tabled-11-October-2022.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|--|-------------|
| 92. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide annual update to the Assembly on the number of additional teachers employed against the recruitment targets as covered in the Teacher Shortage Taskforce Final report. Government response – Agreed | The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs tabled the <i>Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023–2028</i> in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 9 February 2023, which outlined the number of teachers required to be employed in ACT public schools. Refer to the Human Resources Management section of this report for progress against teacher recruitment targets. | Complete |
| 94. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government annually update the Assembly on progress of the use of inbuilt relief teachers across all schools to support schools in managing teachers’ absences. Government response – Agreed | The Education Directorate is piloting a process for capturing data on the use of in-built relief teachers across all ACT public schools. Following consultation, this process will be rolled out to all schools in the second half of 2023. | In progress |
| 96. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that in the event of any incidents of serious violence occurring in ACT schools that the Minister is briefed immediately. Government response – Agreed in principle | A strengthened process has been implemented to ensure the Minister is notified as soon as is practicable and to ensure all necessary supports and actions are coordinated. | Complete |

Table 41: Select Committee Report on the Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2016300/Select-Committee-Drugs-Of-Dependence-Personal-Use-Amendment-Bill-2021-tabled-9-June-2022.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
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| <p>13. The ACT Government should review current ACT drug education programs and implement an evidence-informed school drug education program, appropriately funded, for ACT school students and their teachers.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The ACT Health Directorate, with support from the Education Directorate has developed curriculum resources for years 7 and 8, and teacher professional learning to support education about e-cigarettes and associated risks in all ACT schools. The Health Directorate has indicated these resources will be made available to schools in 2023. During 2023, the Education Directorate will work with the Health Directorate to develop a corresponding package of curriculum resources for years 5 and 6. The School Youth Health Nurse program continues to support ACT school communities to adopt a whole-school approach to address the health and social issues that face young people and their families. School Youth Health Nurses also continue to see students individually to perform thorough psycho-social assessments, provide brief solutions-focused care, and make referrals to external agencies where appropriate.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |

Table 42: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion – Inquiry into Racial Vilification

A copy of the government response can be found at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2199471/Government-Response-Report-6-Inquiry-into-Racial-Vilification.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|--|---|-----------------|
| <p>16. That the ACT Government encourage ACT public schools to promote the social media accounts of the Office</p> | <p>In consultation with the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner, the Education Directorate provides schools with the</p> | <p>Complete</p> |

of the Children and Young People Commissioner to ACT public school students.

Government response – Agreed

resources to assist them in promoting the social media accounts of the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner to their students and school communities through the weekly Schools Bulletin. The Education Directorate promotes these channels through its own social media accounts throughout the year.

Table 43: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion – Inquiry into Access to Services and Information in Auslan

A copy of the government response can be found at

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2234784/Government-Response-Inquiry-into-access-to-services-and-information-in-Auslan-7-June-2023.pdf

| Recommendation | Action | Status |
|---|---|-------------|
| <p>17. That the ACT Government liaise with relevant organisations in order to establish dedicated, formal and frequent learning and social networks for Deaf school students throughout the ACT and Australia.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate’s Hearing Support Team continues to facilitate social groups for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students and will continue to offer and strengthen these dedicated social groups.</p> <p>After COVID-19 restrictions were eased, the Directorate supported the reinstatement of the Sign Club in 2023 and has provided opportunities (through the Hearing team) for social groups and gatherings. Hearing Support Teachers will continue to be supported with professional learning opportunities.</p> | Complete |
| <p>18. That the ACT Government investigate the current delivery status of the subject of Auslan (LOTE, Australian Curriculum, F-10) in ACT schools with the view to increasing the offering of this subject throughout a range of year levels and schools.</p> <p>Government response – Agreed in principle</p> | <p>The Education Directorate is reviewing its language offerings and Auslan will be included as part of this review.</p> | In progress |

Risk Management

The Directorate faces a range of potential strategic and operational risks and is committed to effective and early identification and treatment of risks, and regular review and monitoring of risks across the Directorate. The approach to risk management is consistent with the Directorate's vision, mission and values in delivering education services for children and young people.

Risk management seeks to promote a positive risk culture through standardisation, consistency, and accountability for risk management in schools and the Education Support Office (ESO).

In May 2023, the Directorate published the Risk Management Framework, based on the *Australian Standard ISO 31 000:2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines* and the ACT Government Risk Management Policy 2019.

Following extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders, the framework provides the foundation and organisational arrangements for how risk is managed across the Directorate. It supports and guides staff to actively engage with risk to achieve the Directorate's strategic and operational objectives. The framework elements (process, tolerance, environment and governance) guide the Directorate to manage the identification of key risks in the changing risk environment as it relates to the Directorate. Integral to success is leadership at all levels, supporting and promoting effective risk management and performance through the application of risk management principles and processes in the pursuit of promoting a positive risk culture.

The Directorate's risk governance is based on the 3 lines of defence model:

- At the first line – direct service delivery – all staff in schools and the ESO are responsible for managing risks within the scope of their delegated authority and area of responsibility.
- This is supported by risk management control at the second line, including support by specialist areas such as risk, security and emergency management, and work, health and safety.
- In the third line, the Executive Governance Committee (EGC) provides governance leadership and oversees strategic risks, and the internal audit function provides independent assurance on controls to manage operational and strategic risks. Further independent assurance is provided by the Education Directorate Audit Committee.

Monitoring, review and reporting on risk management occurs through the 3-line model, particularly for reporting and escalating new and emerging risks. The EGC and the Audit Committee receive regular risk management reports, providing an overview of strategic risks, allocating responsibilities, and reviewing the corresponding mitigation strategies. These committees also assist with the allocation of resources and timeframes to ensure appropriate mitigation and monitoring strategies are implemented.

Growing risk maturity continues to be a focus for the Directorate. Working collaboratively with ACT Insurance Authority, staff are offered training opportunities to support business areas. A tailored approach to risk management is offered to schools to address school-specific risks, including business needs, and work health and safety. Training for all staff addresses workplace risk roles and responsibilities, accountabilities, risk assessment and control effectiveness.

The Risk Management Framework supports risk training and information, providing staff with procedural steps, risk tools and guidance materials to ensure standardised approach to risk management across the Directorate's diverse settings.

Risks across the Directorate are identified and managed through a range of internal governance control structures, including:

- the Directorate's Risk Management Framework, policy and procedures
- the EGC and subcommittee structure
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan
- the Directorate's Strategic Risk Register
- school operational risk registers
- the annual internal Audit and Assurance Program
- school compliance reporting
- detailed policies and controls, such as the *Director-General's Financial Instructions*
- detailed financial operating procedures and practices.

Potential risks that could influence the future financial position of the Directorate are detailed in the Management Discussion and Analysis section of the report.

Internal Audit

The internal audit function provides assurance to the Director-General that the Directorate's financial and non-financial management activities are transparent and subject to continuous improvement. The Chief Internal Auditor is accountable to the Director-General for the efficient and effective operation of the internal audit function.

During 2022–23, the Audit Committee Charter and Internal Audit Charter were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Director-General. These charters reflect ACT Government requirements and the Institute of Internal Auditors better practice guidance.

The Audit Committee's membership during 2022–23 comprised 3 external independent members (including the Chair) and an internal non-member adviser/observer. As determined by the Audit Committee Charter, the Director-General appoints all members of the Committee, and membership was reviewed during the reporting period.

The Audit Committee provides independent advice on the Directorate's:

- enterprise risk management framework and whether it effectively identifies and manages business and financial risks
- fraud control and corruption prevention plan, including whether there are adequate systems to detect, capture and effectively respond to fraud and corruption risks including reporting from the Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity and Risk (SERBIR)
- financial and performance reporting activities, including reviewing the annual audited financial statements and related management representations
- resourcing, coverage and independence of the internal audit function
- internal audit reports and implementation of agreed audit actions
- overall control environment as it relates to governance, risk management and assurance arrangements.

The Audit Committee met 5 times during 2022–23. The committee membership and attendance are detailed in Table 44.

Table 44: Audit committee membership and meetings in 2022–23

| Name of Member | Position | Meetings eligible to attend | Meetings attended |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Ms Maria Storti | Independent Member and Chair | 5 | 5 |
| Ms Sue Chapman | Independent Member | 5 | 5 |
| Mr Greg Field | Independent Member | 5 | 5 |
| Ms Jane Simmons PSM | Non-Member adviser/observer (Deputy Director-General) | 3 | 3 |
| Ms Vanessa Attridge | Non-Member adviser/observer (A/g Executive Group Manager, Business Services) | 1 | 1 |
| Ms Kristen Laurent | Non-Member adviser/observer (Executive Branch Manager, Governance) | 1 | 1 |

Source: A/g Chief Internal Auditor, Audit and Assurance

Five internal audit activities were tabled at the Audit Committee in 2022–23:

- School Compliance Audits 2021
- School Administration System post-implementation review
- School Audits 2022 – Narrabundah baseline review outcomes report
- Review of funding arrangements for 2 ACT public schools – Telopea Park School and Narrabundah College
- School Audits 2022 – School Excursions – observations report.

The Directorate uses a mix of internal and external resources to complete its internal audit program. When used, external auditors are sourced from the ACT Government panel of external audit service providers.

Fraud Prevention

The Directorate's fraud and corruption prevention strategies address the requirements of the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Integrity Governance Policy (2022) and are incorporated into the Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan (2023). The *Director-General's Instructions (Section 2.2 Management of Risk Fraud and Corruption Prevention)* and the *School Management Manual (Part 6.10: Fraud Control and Prevention)* describe the fraud and corruption control processes for undertaking risk assessments, delivering education and awareness programs, and recording/reporting fraud within the Directorate.

The Directorate's Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan details the Directorate's fraud prevention strategies and actions. All instances of fraud and corruption are reported to the Director-General and the Audit Committee. This ensures that the potential for fraud or corruption is mitigated with appropriate controls.

The Directorate maintains a Fraud Risk Register, which is updated at least annually, and periodically where new risks are identified.

The Executive Branch Manager, Governance is the Directorate's Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity Risk (SERBIR). The SERBIR reports to the Director-General on matters of fraud and integrity, and to the Audit Committee.

The Education Directorate's intranet provides employees with access to the fraud plan, resources for ethical decision making, information on Public Interest Disclosures and guidance on conflict of interest. The site also includes video messages from the Director-General and the SERBIR, and news articles for staff raising awareness on integrity issues in the workplace.

The general obligations for all ACT Public Service (ACTPS) staff are outlined in the ACTPS Code of Conduct, Section 9 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, and the *Public Sector Management Standards 2016*. All new Directorate staff are required to undertake an induction program that includes codes of conduct and a mandatory online training module, which references the Act and the Standards.

Any person appointed to the Directorate is required to acknowledge that they have read and will comply with the provisions of Section 9 of the PSM Act, Section 153(1) of the *Crimes Act 1900 (ACT)* and Section 244 of the PSM Act. They are also required to acknowledge the potential consequences of breaching these requirements. Nothing in this acknowledgement is taken to discourage the disclosure of conduct that is 'disclosable conduct' as defined in the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*. The PSM Act, the Standards, the ACTPS Code of Ethics and the codes of conduct are all available on the Directorate's website and intranet.

Over the reporting period, the Directorate has worked with the ACT Integrity Commission to promote fraud and corruption prevention, including reporting obligations under the *Integrity Commission Act 2018*.

During the reporting period, the SERBIR was notified of 3 new cases of possible fraud, each relating to procurement. For 2 of these matters, there was no evidence of fraud and corruption. The third matter, disclosed by the Integrity Commission following their decision to dismiss the case, is being managed by the Directorate.

During the reporting period, the Integrity Commission also notified the Directorate that a matter referred in an earlier reporting period had been dismissed. Another case referred to the Integrity Commission in March 2021 remains open.

Freedom of Information

Requests under ACT legislation

Freedom of Information (FOI) reporting as required by the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, which commenced on 1 January 2018, is provided as follows:

Table 45: Open Access Information – Section 96 (3) (a) (i), (ii) and (iii)

| Open Access information | Number |
|--|--------|
| Number of decisions to publish Open Access information | 57 |
| Number of decisions not to publish Open Access information | 0 |
| Number of decisions not to publish a description of Open Access information withheld | 0 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

Table 46: FOI Applications received and decision type – Section 96 (3) (a) (iv), (vii), (viii) and (ix)

| FOI applications received and decision type | Number |
|---|-----------------|
| Number of access applications received | 100 |
| Number of applications where access to all information requested was given | 8 |
| Number of applications where access to only some of the information requested was given (partial release) | 70 ¹ |
| Number of applications where access to the information was refused | 18 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

¹Includes 10 decisions carried over from 2021–22 reporting period.

There were 12 applications on hand on 1 July 2022, and 8 undecided applications on 30 June 2023.

The number of decisions made in accordance with Section 35 of the FOI Act during 2022–23 was 96. In addition, 7 applications were withdrawn, and one application did not meet the requirements of a valid application set out at Section 30 of the FOI Act.

One of the applications received by the Directorate during 2022–23 was for records held by the ACT Teacher Quality Institute.

In addition, 740 requests for access to personal information relating to 1,192 individuals were processed by the Directorate under the *Information Privacy Act 2014* and the Access Student Records Policy, available on the Directorate's website. This enables requests

for routine records, such as academic reports and student attendance information, to be handled outside of the formal FOI process, providing a faster response to the applicant.

Table 47: FOI processing timeframe – Section 96 (3) (v) and (vi); Section 96 (3) (d)

| FOI processing time | Number |
|---|---|
| Total applications decided within the time to decide under section 40 | 65 ¹ |
| Applications not decided within the time to decide under section 40 | 32 ¹ |
| Number of days taken to decide over the time to decide in section 40 for each application | 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 28, 30, 35, 36, 39, 47, 54, 62, 69 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

¹ Includes 8 decisions carried over from 2022–23 reporting period.

Table 48: Amendment to personal information – Section 96 (a) (x) and Section 96 (3) (e)

| Request type | Number |
|--|--------|
| Number of requests made to amend personal information, and the decisions made (e.g. amended, refused, notation added to record, other) | 0 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

Table 49: Reviews – Section 96 (3) (b); Section 96 (3) (c)

| Request type | Number |
|---|----------------|
| Number of applications made to Ombudsman under section 74 and the results of the application (e.g. affirmed, varied, set aside and substituted, withdrawn, other) | 7 ¹ |
| Number of applications made to ACAT under section 84 and the results of the application (e.g. affirmed, varied, set aside and substituted, withdrawn, other) | 0 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

¹ 1 decision confirmed (carried over from 2021–22); 1 decision varied; 1 withdrawn by applicant; 1 Ombudsman decided not to review; 1 invalid application; 3 decisions pending.

Table 50: Fees – Section 96 (3) (f)

| Fee collected | Number |
|---|--------|
| Total charges and application fees collected from access applications | 0 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

Requests under Commonwealth legislation

The Directorate also processes FOI requests under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)* in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011* and associated regulations. This applies to requests for records held by the ACT Regulatory Authority, Children's Education and Care Assurance, relating to the regulation of preschools, family day care, long day care, and out of school hours care.

During 2022–23:

- 3 applications were received
- one application was carried over from 2021–22
- 2 applications were undecided as at 30 June 2023.

The outcomes for the 2 applications processed during the year were partial release of information for both applications.

Further information is available in the National Education & Care Services FOI & Privacy Commissioners & Ombudsman (NECSOPIC) annual report available at <https://necsopic.edu.au/>.

Lodging an FOI request

Information about how to make an access application under FOI legislation is available on the Directorate's website at https://www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/freedom_of_information.

The Education Directorate's Disclosure Log provides information about the access applications that have been processed, including a copy of the decision and documents released to the applicant. The Disclosure Log does not include information about any access applications seeking personal information and does not disclose the applicant's personal information. The Disclosure Log is available at https://www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/freedom_of_information.

Community Engagement and Support

Community engagement activities

During 2022–23, the Directorate held a range of engagement activities across ACT public schools and their local communities.

In 2023, the Directorate celebrated 50 years of the ACT education system, working closely with schools and stakeholders to share the stories of the unique system, its founders and to celebrate the people that make up ACT public schools today.

During the reporting period, our engagements included:

- communication through email and written correspondence
- face-to-face engagement with stakeholders, school staff and the broader community
- online information sessions, open house information sessions, school events and project announcement events
- social media posts, Directorate website and school website updates and news stories, newsletters, flyers, surveys and YourSay engagements.

Shaping the future of inclusive education

In Term 4, 2022, the Directorate engaged with schools, the community and key stakeholders on a discussion paper aimed to help inform the *Inclusive Education Strategy* for the ACT, planned for release in late-2023.

This work built on the ‘Community Conversation’ consultation held in 2021 and 2022 and has helped shape how the Directorate can strengthen inclusive education across ACT public schools.

Helping inform future education legislation reforms

The Directorate started engagement on a range of legislative improvements to ensure supports remain contemporary, and reflect the needs of students, families, and teaching staff now and into the future.

Feedback was sought on proposed amendments designed to:

- clarify school enrolment requirements
- modernise participation and attendance requirements to reflect the different methods of education delivery
- strengthen enrolment, attendance and participation provisions to minimise the risk of children and young people disappearing from the education system
- outline requirements for distance education.

The Directorate engaged with community and stakeholders through a YourSay conversations web page (3,196 views), a discussion paper (2,381 downloads), a survey (108 contributions), stakeholder meetings, a roundtable, the Directorate website, social media posts, and school newsletters. This feedback will inform the scope of these changes and the drafting of a Bill in

the second half of 2023. It is anticipated that these reforms will come into effect for the 2025 school year.

Opening of Molonglo's first high school

In Term 1, 2023, the first high school for Molonglo – Evelyn Scott Senior School – opened.

This milestone was celebrated with a media event on the first day of school, social media posts, information in the *Our Canberra* newsletter, and a video capturing the student voice at the end of the school's first term.

New public high schools in the suburbs of Taylor and Kenny

The Directorate continued to engage with the Gungahlin community to provide updates on construction works for 2 new high schools in Taylor and Kenny. This included progress updates via social media posts, school newsletters and presentations to community stakeholders, as well as support for students transitioning to high school in the area for 2024.

Early engagement with both Traditional Owners and ACT Place Names was undertaken for official names for these 2 schools. The community will soon have the chance to be involved in the selection of uniform colours and school logos.

Refresh of Florey Oval

Canberrans were invited to have their say on the redevelopment of a portion of the Florey Dryland Oval through a YourSay survey (493 respondents), letterbox drops (1,200 homes), information in the *Our Canberra* newsletter, stakeholder meetings, and pop-up sessions at the school and local shops.

The redevelopment will help create a natural outdoor space for students at Florey Primary School, who use this space every day, and the wider community for recreational use in the evenings and weekends.

Student ideas and input were also sought and every student at the school (782 students) was invited to vote on the elements they most wanted to see in the new space.

Draft designs were released in early-2023 and were refined based on feedback, school input and consultation with Traditional Owners. This exciting project will be constructed in the second half of 2023, ready for the 2024 school year.

Engaging the community on infrastructure projects

The Directorate is committed to providing great schools that ensure every young person can access a quality education in facilities that are accessible, safe, inclusive, and sustainable. In delivering these projects, the Directorate works closely with the school leadership team, school community, stakeholders, and the wider community.

During the reporting period, the Directorate provided information to keep the community well informed on infrastructure projects, as well as inviting engagement and participation.

School and Directorate websites and social media platforms, as well as school newsletters and emails, were used to provide updates to school communities and the wider Canberra community about school infrastructure projects.

In 2022, an official 'naming ceremony' was held for Throsby School, which had been delayed as a result of COVID-19 and is usually held when a school first opens.

Expansions and modernisations of ACT public schools

The Directorate continued to support community communication throughout expansion and modernisation projects involving the Margaret Hendry School, Garran and Majura Primary Schools, Campbell Primary School, and Gold Creek School Senior Campus. Regular updates were provided through the school websites, school and community newsletters, community meetings, letterbox drops, social media posts and *Our Canberra* newsletters.

The Directorate created videos highlighting student voices and capturing the newly furnished learning spaces for the community.

School fences and boundaries

The Directorate supported several schools to work with their boards, P&Cs, and communities on proposals for boundary fences.

Engagement was held through open house information sessions, school websites, online surveys, letterbox drops, presentations at community council meetings, and email correspondence with communities.

The Directorate also engaged with the Fraser Primary School community on a proposed school boundary expansion to support this growing school community.

COVID-19 communications and engagement

The Directorate continued to support schools and their communities, as well as the early childhood education and care sector, to understand and manage the changing impacts of COVID-19 relevant to their settings. This included ensuring the impacts of changing public health advice affecting schools was communicated clearly. A range of communications were shared through school and Directorate websites and social media platforms, as well as school newsletters, websites, and emails.

The Directorate also supported schools to proactively communicate potential impacts to learning because of staff shortages due to COVID-19 and seasonal illness.

Table 51: Community support initiatives: grants and sponsorship

| Recipient | Project purpose/Summary | Term of grant | Amount |
|---|---|--|----------|
| ACT Children's Week | Run by the ACT Children's Week Committee, this initiative provides seeding grants of up to \$200 to organisations to celebrate and promote Children's Week. It also invites schools to nominate individuals and groups for awards acknowledging local Canberrans who have made a difference to children and young people. | Annual grant | \$21,000 |
| History Teachers Association | National History Challenge Prize encourages students to engage in research and inquiry-based learning to discover history of the world through an examination of an event or person in terms of a theme. The prize winner, the best entry in the ACT receives a medal, prize money and attends the National Ceremony each November. | Annual Grant | \$500 |
| Belconnen Arts Centre | A sponsorship was provided for NAIDOC in the North events. | Annual sponsorship | \$1,500 |
| Dickson College | A sponsorship to support the Inner North Indigenous Cluster celebration. The celebration is attended by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from inner north public schools. | Annual sponsorship | \$1,000 |
| Australian Children's Television Foundation | Education support to schools. Access to Australian Children's Television Foundation film and video resources, lesson plans, classroom materials, online resources, and professional learning for all sectors in the ACT. | Three year deed of grant, paid annually 2022–2025 | \$18,700 |
| Mura Awards recipients | An initiative that recognises the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which supports the <i>Future of Education Strategy</i> and cultural integrity in ACT public schools. | Ongoing award program; award periods covers 2023 school year. | \$19,200 |
| Secondary Scholarship Program recipients | The Directorate provides scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are interested in pursuing a career in post-year-12 study and/or pursuing a vocational pathway. | Ongoing scholarship program; scholarship period covers the 2023 school year. | \$40,000 |
| Tertiary Scholarship Program recipients | The Directorate provides scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recipients undertaking an approved teaching or health degree. | Ongoing scholarship program; scholarship period covers the 2022 school year. | \$52,500 |

| Recipient | Project purpose/Summary | Term of grant | Amount |
|--|--|---|-----------|
| ANU Extension Program | The Directorate provides a grant to the ANU Extension Program to support students across the full range of extension subjects. The Australian Government is the primary source of funding for the ANU Extension Program through the Commonwealth Grants Scheme. | 3-year Deed of Grant – 22/12/2020 to 31/12/2022 New Deed of Grant paid annually, from 29/3/2023 (date of signing) – 31/12/2025 | \$109,091 |
| The ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations Inc | The Directorate provides an annual grant to facilitate consultation with parents and citizens with an interest in public school. The association uses the financial assistance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support affiliate associations • promote parent participation in ACT Government schools • advise the government on views, expectations and concerns of parents • support participation on relevant committees and working parties. | Five-year Deed of Grant paid annually – 1/7/2019 to 30/6/2024 | \$234,186 |
| Supporting Parental Engagement Grants | The Supporting Parent Engagement Grant Program provides individual grants of up to \$20,000 to enhance family–school partnerships as well as strengthen P&C association governance and capability to effectively operate businesses (e.g. canteens, uniform shops). | Successful grants will be paid out until funds are exhausted. Grant payment began in 2020–21 | \$20,000 |
| Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program Recipients | The Directorate provides scholarships to recipients undertaking an Early Childhood Teaching Degree. | Ongoing scholarship program; scholarship period covers 4 years (full-time)/8 years (part-time) study | \$104,696 |
| ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards | The awards acknowledge those who have demonstrated a clear commitment to include people with disability in their workplace, business and/or community. | Sponsorship 2022-23 only | \$5,000 |
| Association for the Teaching of English Incorporated | The Grant is for the 2023 AATE/ALEA National Conference which focuses on supporting ACT Teachers to build capacity to use English and literacy to empower students in their learning. | Grant 2022-23 Only | \$45,455 |

| Recipient | Project purpose/Summary | Term of grant | Amount |
|------------|--|--------------------|----------|
| CareersXpo | A sponsorship was provided for the 2023 Canberra CareersXpo presented in association with the Rotary Club of Aurora Gungahlin. | Annual sponsorship | \$10,000 |

Source: ACT Education unpublished data

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reporting

The Directorate continues to strengthen its cultural integrity to meet the needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to support all students and staff to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, languages, and knowledge.

Professional learning

In January 2023, approximately 150 new educators participated in sessions that included presentations on cultural integrity in schools, the difference between a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, an introduction to Engoori, and ways of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in teaching and learning.

Cultural competency training

Cultural competency online training involves the completion of 10 online modules through the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia. This training is supplemented by 3 face-to-face workshops facilitated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education section in the Directorate. In 2023, this professional learning continued to be offered to school-based staff, Education Support Office (ESO) staff, P&C members, and school board members. During the reporting period, a total of 76 participants, including 38 teachers and 38 non-teaching staff, participated in cultural competency training. This included 8 ESO staff.

On Country Walks

‘On Country Walks’ have been popular professional learning opportunities for several years. Participants engage with community members to share knowledge of Country and to learn about, and from, the Country on which we live, learn and work.

A total of 41 people attended 3 ‘On Country Walks’ during the reporting period. These were held at Theodore Grinding Grooves, the Pinnacle Nature Reserve, and the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Ngunnawal language workshops

Ngunnawal language workshops are 2-hour workshops providing an overview of the Ngunnawal language revitalisation process and impact of colonisation on language retention. Participants learn how to give an Acknowledgement of Country in Ngunnawal language, including protocols that should be followed.

During 2022–23, 6 workshops were held with a total of 71 participants. These workshops were delivered to school-based staff and ESO staff, with Ngunnawal language appearing in Acknowledgements across different educational settings.

The Irene Lind Speaker Series

The Irene Lind Speaker Series focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, recognising Irene Lind's contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the ACT. The series has featured guest panellists with lived and professional experience in the field. Two sessions were delivered during the reporting period. The first session was delivered in August 2022 with 28 people attending. The second session was delivered in November 2022 with 32 people attending. Attendees were a mix of school based and ESO staff.

Engoori

Engoori is a strength-based training approach to addressing complex challenges and transforming organisational and school culture. During the reporting period, several schools organised Engoori training, recognising the usefulness of this approach for school leadership. The Directorate continues to provide Engoori training to schools and within the ESO. Key examples include targeted Engoori training for new educators as part of the New Educator Induction, training for teams within the ESO, as well as sessions for school leaders, executives, supervisors of Indigenous education officers, and school students. Over 250 Directorate employees participated in Engoori training during 2022–23.

Book clubs

Book clubs assist educators to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority into their teaching and learning programs. Six book clubs were conducted during the reporting period, with over 90 participants attending.

In 2022–23, book clubs have been delivered face to face based on teacher feedback that meeting in person provides better opportunities to share reflections and work samples.

Author and illustrator talks

Author and illustrator talks are developed concurrently with book clubs, supporting students and teachers to engage with authors and illustrators in an informal discussion about their texts. In 2022–23, the author talk with Thomas Mayo featured his highly successful children's book *Finding Our Heart*. The session included whole-school student workshops as well as a teacher workshop delivered to 25 teachers. The illustrator talk with Dub Leffler engaged students in learning about his illustration process, demonstrated his visual art diaries, and took questions from students. A workshop for teachers was also delivered and attended by 30 staff.

Professional learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education officers and cultural integrity coordinators

Professional learning has been developed and delivered to support the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education officers (IEOs) and cultural integrity coordinators (CICs) in schools, with a particular focus on strengthening their understanding of the Australian Curriculum and relevant resources to support teachers, teacher librarians and schools.

All IEOs and CICs attend these professional learning sessions. Ongoing professional learning is routinely delivered for 2 full days at the end of the stand down period prior to the commencement of the start of term.

Supporting Education Directorate staff and students

Koori preschools

The Koori Preschool Co-design, a key deliverable of the *Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*, was completed during 2022–23.

On 3 November 2022, the Directorate launched resources developed through the Koori Preschool Co-design, including the Koori Preschool Cultural Safety Framework, Koori Preschool Curriculum, *About Koori Preschool* children's book and a Koori preschool promotional video. These foundational resources work together to support Koori preschools to meet the aspirations and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and deliver high-quality and holistic preschool that is grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledges and values, and recognises that children and their families are proud, strong and deadly.

The schools implementing Koori preschool are Kingsford Smith School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School, Ngunnawal Primary School, Richardson Primary School and Wanniasa School.

Student Aspirations Program

Tertiary scholarships of up to \$10,000 per annum for 3 years are available, by application each year, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking a teaching qualification at an ACT university, as well as one-off scholarships in any discipline, as part of a transition to a new scholarships program model. In 2022–23, 4 scholarships were awarded – 2 to teaching students and 2 one-off scholarships to students undertaking tertiary courses in any discipline.

Secondary scholarships of up to \$4,000 are available annually, by application, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students to support Year 12 completion and pathways to further education and training. Eleven students were awarded secondary scholarships in 2022–23.

The Mura Awards is an annual program providing bursaries of \$400 each to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in key transition years who demonstrate high engagement with learning, leadership within their school community or improved achievement. Mura Awards were awarded to 46 students over the reporting period.

Lighting the Spark

On 5 and 6 August 2022, the Directorate assisted in coordinating a careers event called Lighting the Spark, alongside Young Change Agents and the Canberra Indigenous Business Network. The event was facilitated by Aboriginal businesswomen who have previously, or

are currently, running their own business and was made available to female-identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The workshops focused on informing students on what it is like to be their own boss, identifying business opportunities, how to establish a business and how to use business to make meaningful change in their community. Participants gained valuable insights into what it means to be an entrepreneur and gained access to networks to help them consider and access future opportunities.

Broaden Your Horizons

On 22 June 2023, the Directorate delivered the annual Broaden Your Horizons careers event, available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 9 to 12. Each year, the event focuses on a different career pathway. This year, the event occurred at the ACT Courts and focused on legal and justice career pathways, including a greeting from the Chief Justice, presentations from Magistrates, a behind-the-scenes tour of the court, presentations on pathways to studying law and exhibitions on legal career pathways. A total of 22 students attended.

Indigenous engagement officers and cultural integrity coordinators

IEOs assist schools to develop and implement programs and resources for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across student learning. CICs lead and mentor the development of cultural integrity awareness and practice for IEOs and school-based staff. They also collaborate with school staff and communities in the development and implementation of programs, activities and resources aimed at embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in student learning. There were 4 CIC and 16 IEO positions funded in 2022–23, with occupancy of these positions fluctuating over the reporting period due to normal staff turnover.

IEOs and CICs also plan for significant dates and events with their cultural integrity teams, including Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day, Mabo Day and NAIDOC.

The Directorate's IEOs and CICs continue to support teachers and schools to build cultural integrity. Some best practice examples included:

- an IEO collaborated with their art faculty, particularly the dance and media classes. The IEO supported teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their dance assessment by examining one of Bangarra Dance Theatre's productions
- an IEO organised a breakfast for teachers, students and families. The school's 'Deadly Dingoes' group made and cooked omelettes using Warrigal greens from their bush garden. This was a great opportunity for families to meet other families and teachers, and further develop community connections
- an IEO worked with secondary teachers to critically examine a pre-made lesson on Customary Law and the *Native Title Act*. The IEO identified opportunities to improve cultural integrity by working with the CIC to enhance lessons. The IEO collaborated with

the teachers to strengthen the lessons with appropriate and relevant content and resources.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy Program

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy Program is an Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) that provides year 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the opportunity to pursue a Certificate II in Allied Health Assistance while working towards a Year 12 Certificate.

In 2022, 14 students were enrolled in the program, with 10 new students enrolled in the 2023 program and 4 students continuing from the 2022 cohort.

The first cohort included 3 students from ACT public schools who successfully completed their Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance through this program in 2022. These students went on to enrol in further education programs or accepted employment in the field.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Pathways Program

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Pathways Program commenced in October 2021.

In 2022–23, the program employed 13 students to work across various divisions of CMTEDD to complete a range of Certificate II and III pathway qualifications, with the opportunity to gain ongoing employment with the ACT Government upon completion of year 12. Of that cohort, one student transitioned over to full-time employment at an ACT public school, one student left the program, and the remaining 11 students went onto full-time employment within CMTEDD after year 12.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 12 outcomes

The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* requires the ACT Government to report against the following indicator relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 12 completion: 'By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20 to 24) attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%'.

As the indicator relates to 20- to 24-year-olds, this information is only available through Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data. Annualised data is available for the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receiving a Senior Secondary Certificate in the year that they graduate. There was a marked increase between 2017 (60%) and 2018 (69%), with results from 2019 to 2022 fluctuating between 66% to 69%. In 2022–23, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receiving a year 12 certificate was 64%. Small cohort numbers contribute to this variability.

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028

The Directorate continues to meet its reporting obligations under *the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028*.

Phase one of the Agreement concluded at the end of July 2022 after an extension to the phase following the COVID-19 pandemic.

For phase 2 of the Agreement, the Education Directorate has leadership or partnership responsibilities under the following focus areas and focus area actions:

Children and Young People, including:

- continuing to implement the ACT Government’s 10-year plan for early childhood education, *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*, ensuring access to two days per week, 48 weeks per year, of quality education and care for up to 500 three-year-olds, prioritising children and families most in need
- leading the implementation of actions from the Koori Preschool co-design process, including the Koori Pre-Cultural Safety Framework and Koori Pre-Curriculum and associated professional learning for school staff
- developing a cross-sector approach to effective transitions for children, based on strong collaborative relationships, best practice, and a formal process for sharing information about children’s learning and development across early childhood education and care settings and schools
- partnering on work to build supports around children and their families accessing the three-year-old initiative, including investigating the feasibility of developmental checks to make sure children have the best possible start to their education, including speech and hearing, and undertaking further screening prior to them starting school, as well as linking their parents and families with a range of other supports
- partnering in the continuation of work across government and with the community to develop the *Best Start for Canberra’s Children: the First 1000 Days Strategy* and test approaches to better support children and their families in their early years
- developing a Child and Family Network across government and community service partners to improve connection and service integration across health, mental health, education, early childhood education and care, community and mainstream health and paediatric services, and community service sectors to better support children, young people, and their families.

Cultural Integrity, including:

- leading the development and implementation of an *ACT Public Service Cultural Integrity Framework* to support each Directorate to create their own Cultural Integrity Action Plan and Professional Learning Plan relevant to their own contexts
- leading the establishment of an ACTPS Cultural Integrity Professional Learning database to guide the creation of Directorate specific Professional Learning plans aimed at building ACTPS workforce cultural capability and workplace cultural safety

- leading the development of a Cultural Integrity ‘best practice’ guide including case studies that align with the ACT Public Service Cultural Integrity Framework to support all Directorates to develop their own Cultural Integrity Action Plans
- partnering in the ACTPS development of general guidelines on identifying systemic racism in systems and processes, including expert input on barriers and governance to progress.

Lifelong Learning, including:

- strengthening of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary and Tertiary Scholarship Programs to support Year 12 retention and attainment and to extend support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking a teaching degree
- increasing community awareness of post school pathways and lifelong learning opportunities available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans
- leading the development, implementation, and promotion of quality pathways to tertiary qualifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT
- monitoring the uptake and breadth of Australian School-based Apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to inform future planning
- collaborating with the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group in the development of Ngunnawal language resources for use in ACT Government and public schools.

Economic Participation, including:

- alongside all ACT Government directorates, incorporating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans through conducting Wellbeing Impact Assessments for new budget, projects, and programs, with input from partners and community
- alongside all ACT Government directorates, maximising opportunities to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment with the ACTPS workforce, to achieve the employment target of 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People employed across the service by 2026
- assisting with the establishment of a whole of government inclusion KPI to ensure the ACTPS is consistently building and maintaining inclusive workplace cultures. Progress against this target will be measured objectively through all staff surveys.

Inclusive Community, including:

- alongside all directorates, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service and product design capability across Directorates and ensuring it is seen as integral to delivering on policy intent
- alongside all directorates, increasing diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander user perspectives for all programs and services early and often
- alongside all directorates, co-designing mainstream government policy and service pathways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- alongside all directorates, designing ACT Government services in an integrated way, from end to end, ensuring it makes sense to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans

- alongside all directorates, collecting wellbeing data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT and region, to help identify barriers experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and support self-determination in seeking solutions.

Community Leadership, including:

- alongside all directorates, co-designing the *ACT Disability Strategy* with people with disability to ensure the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability are included
- alongside all directorates, encouraging development of community leaders with disability.

The Directorate has submitted its action plan to the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to deliver on its phase 2 actions across all the relevant focus areas. Phase 2 of the Agreement is scheduled to conclude in December 2024.

Work Health and Safety

The Directorate is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all staff and students. Health, safety and wellbeing practices are embedded in all activities to support the formation of a maturing workplace safety culture. Work, health and safety (WHS) is managed in accordance with the statutory provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The WHS Early Intervention and Wellbeing team builds accountability and responsibility in health, safety and wellbeing by committing to healthy and safe working and learning environments in all Directorate workplaces. During 2022–23, this was achieved by:

- recognising the legal and moral obligations in building a positive workplace culture, where risks to health and safety, including psychosocial safety are assessed and managed
- finalising a WHS Management Plan to guide the Directorate's safety culture focus
- developing a Wellbeing Policy and Procedure to provide enhanced safe work practices and ensuring staff have the support they need
- developing a Training and Induction Policy and Procedure to support staff achieve a better understanding of their place in the ecosystem of WHS rights and responsibilities
- deploying counselling support to staff through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) where specific crisis or post-traumatic incident intervention was required
- consulting and collaborating with the Directorate's workforce and their representatives to achieve positive health, safety and wellbeing outcomes
- driving continuous improvement in health, safety and wellbeing practices across all sites in the Directorate with the provision of training and resources
- fulfilling relevant health, safety and wellbeing legislative and compliance obligations through targeted site visits, some of which have involved multiple site visits
- improving WHS practice across the organisation through provision of advice and support to staff.

The WHS team visited 27 schools since February 2023, when 2 additional WHS specialist officers joined the team. During these visits, issues observed by WHS specialists were promptly rectified, where possible. Where not possible, a follow-up action was conducted by the responsible business area within the Directorate. During these visits, schools were also able to introduce any new issues to the WHS specialists for advice and rectification.

The WHS team has a strong escalation and communication process, linking schools to other supports where needed, such as Risk and Emergency Management, Infrastructure and Capital Works. In some cases, the team link schools with supports from Positive Behaviours for Learning and Occupational Violence teams.

Supporting worker physical and mental health and wellbeing is critical to the success of the Directorate and achieving exemplary education outcomes.

The WHS team supported Directorate staff by:

- providing wellbeing services in response to incidents aligned to a triage model and expanding proactive wellbeing services, including on-site EAP following critical incidents and traumatic occurrences
- collaborating across the Directorate in response to staff wellbeing and school supports through the development of training, policies and procedures that increase safe practices in all Directorate workplaces
- monitoring and analysing data to inform and improve practice, and supporting workers to prevent and respond to occupational violence incidents at the workplace
- strengthening a positive reporting culture across all schools through awareness campaigns, risk management support to staff directly, when required, and training
- developing and refining data analysis tools that provide the Directorate's senior executive with current incident information, the supports provided to staff and students, as well as identifying the business areas involved
- delivery of the annual influenza vaccination program.

Most significant risk and actions to address

Based on reported incidents, the most significant risk to health and safety of workers in ACT public schools continues to be occupational violence in the form of verbal or physical aggression by students or parents. In 2022–23, there were 7,448¹ distinct work incident reports submitted via the RiskMan reporting system in relation to occupational violence. This is in comparison to 7,164 reports in 2021–22¹. The increase is primarily attributed to schools remaining open for longer in the reporting period, where in 2020 and 2021, shutdowns due to COVID-19 caused a noticeable decrease in reports of occupational violence.

At the end of 2022–23, 83%² of Directorate employees had completed the mandatory occupational violence online training module designed to assist staff to understand what constitutes occupational violence, the importance of reporting incidents, and strategies to manage the risk of occupational violence. In comparison, 70% of employees had completed the training in the previous reporting period.

The Directorate has invested significant resources into the full implementation of the Occupational Violence Management Plan, which encompasses a range of strategies to manage aggressive and other unacceptable behaviours of parents and students. Wellbeing supports and resources are also provided to staff to enable safe and sustainable resumption or continuation of duties.

¹ This may differ from statistics provided from CMTEDD once coding processes have been finalised.

² This figure represents paid permanent and temporary employees who have completed this training within the last two years.

The Safe at School Taskforce

The Safe at School Taskforce was established in June 2022. The Taskforce is focused on providing subject matter expertise, strengthening the safety culture across the Directorate, and creating and operationalising safe systems of work.

The taskforce has advanced work in 2022–23 under 3 components.

Component 1: Safety culture (discovery phase)

The taskforce developed a Safe at School Operating Framework to provide clear guidance about the way the taskforce operates, and strong project methodology to enable and support safe systems of work.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the taskforce established the Safe at School Advisory Group to provide guidance and advice to the taskforce about a range of safety topics and its performance, including opportunities to improve. The advisory group is comprised of representatives from the Directorate and key external stakeholders.

During 2022–23, the taskforce initiated a Rapid Review. This review was an assessment of the Directorate’s work health and safety systems to determine areas for priority and improvement based on best practice. The review focused on policy and safety management systems relating to incident management and post-incident responses for ACT public schools, the suitability of risk controls for occupational violence in schools, and issues identified in WorkSafe ACT regulatory activity.

The taskforce developed an action plan to support implementation of the 7 recommendations identified in the Rapid Review report. This was published on the Education Directorate website and internally on the Directorate’s intranet. The action plan provides key milestones and activities to ensure the review recommendations are met within the agreed timeframes.

The taskforce continued to work with schools and stakeholders to identify areas of safety concerns and apply a risk management approach to keep schools safe and supportive for staff and students. A Safe at School showcase event was presented to stakeholders and was an opportunity to uplift the safety culture by sharing the breadth of work completed and planned.

Component 2: Safety response – cultural change

The taskforce continued to collaborate with business areas to deliver professional learning on legislation, codes and regulation, and support an uplift in the safety culture through a stronger understanding of roles and responsibilities.

The Directorate actively works towards collaborative relationships with regulators, unions, key stakeholder groups, and other government and non-government organisations to drive engagement and support of the Directorate’s safety cultural change program.

The Directorate has developed and published a Risk Management Framework, incorporating a risk management policy, procedure, overview and guide for schools, and supporting Risk Appetite and Tolerance Statement template and fact sheets. The framework will be a

key mechanism for creating a strong, sustainable foundation to mature the Directorate's risk management capability and practice.

A WHS Management System was delivered and published on the Directorate's intranet site. The intent of this system is to provide a central location for access to WHS resources and 'one-stop-shop' advice and expert assistance. Quick and easy access to this information ensures staff have the resources to enhance safety and meet their compliance requirements.

In collaboration with other business areas, the taskforce actively identifies opportunities for system-wide programs and activities which improve safety and/or reduce workload and administration from schools, where possible. For example, the taskforce introduced ChemWatch, a chemical management system across all schools, a centralised coordination of training, and templates/local site plans to support schools with compliance activities.

To support psychosocial safety and wellbeing and WHS legislative compliance, the Directorate developed and published a system-wide Consultation Statement and Consultation Information Sheet, including supporting resources such as a process summary, consultation paper template, feedback summary template and email template.

These resources give staff a mechanism to provide feedback on issues that impact them. This has successfully increased staff input on working arrangements and engaged them in owning and developing solutions.

The following WHS training opportunities were made available in 2022–23:

- due diligence training was delivered to school leaders and Education Support Office (ESO) staff. The training supported school leaders and Directorate senior officers and executives to strengthen their understanding of their WHS obligations and duty of care requirements
- a centralised 5-day Health, Safety Representative (HSR) training in May 2023 for HSRs who had not attended this training and a one-day refresher training in March and May 2023. Training sessions were fully subscribed and well received by the staff attending
- negative Incident Scenario Training was delivered to school leaders in Term 1, 2023 and ACT Policing staff attended school network meetings to discuss processes
- a memorandum of understanding between ACT Policing and the Directorate has been drafted and is in final stages of consultation. It will include regular training and collaboration activities between the 2 organisations.

The taskforce continued to raise awareness and understanding on safety issues through several mechanisms:

- delivery of a series of School Safety Leadership videos, with specialist information contextualised by school leaders about issues relating to safety in schools that can be shared with staff
- a safety notification system consisting of Safety Notices and Safety Alerts, which provides timely and responsive information either emailed directly to key staff or received indirectly through publication on the Directorate's intranet site, based on the severity/urgency of the notice

- a refreshed compliance checklist for school leaders to know and understand their compliance obligations, providing greater accountability and assurance.

A range of strategic measures were taken to help alleviate workload pressures for teachers due to the ongoing staff shortages. This included the allocation of a curriculum officer to help reduce workload pressures associated with curriculum improvement and the transition to Australian Curriculum V9.0. At 30 June 2023, over 130 engagements and more than 35 professional learning sessions were held with individual schools since Term 4, 2022.

Component 3: Understanding safety through data

Work continued on using data to inform preventative and early intervention measures, including through dashboards and reporting tools to bring data sets together. Data has been collected to enhance the capability of the Directorate to identify and assess critical issues and risks related to safety. The data captured informed and supported decision making, planning and program delivery to improve systems of safety.

The Work Health and Safety Management Plan (WHS Management Plan) was developed and published on the Directorate's intranet. The WHS Management Plan outlines a set of plans, actions, and key performance indicators to assist the Directorate to systematically monitor, measure and evaluate health and safety risk associated with the delivery of education services in ACT public schools.

The Work Health and Safety Consultative Committee was re-established to provide a forum to Directorate stakeholders to discuss work health and safety matters relevant across the workforce. An element of the Work Health and Safety Consultative Committee's role is to identify opportunities for improving work health and safety performance through the review of the Directorate's risk profile and statistical data on reported hazards, incidents, accidents, injuries, or diseases.

Through regulatory activity in schools, the Taskforce identified several trends and issues that would benefit from a systemic approach. The Taskforce developed several supporting factsheets, templates, and guidelines for schools to utilise in strengthening safe systems of work.

Resourcing and consultation arrangements

Table 52: Dedicated work health and safety resources

| Position | Number of resources |
|---|---------------------|
| Senior Director, Work, Health, Safety and Early Intervention and Wellbeing (Senior Officer Grade A) | 1 |
| Director Work Health, Safety Early Intervention and Wellbeing (Senior Officer Grade B) | 1 |
| Assistant Director, Work, Health and Safety (Senior Officer Grade C) | 1 |
| Assistant Director, Early Intervention and Wellbeing (Senior Officer Grade C) | 1 |
| Assistant Director, Injury Management (Senior Officer Grade C) | 2 |
| Wellbeing Officer (Administrative Service Officer Class 6) | 2 |
| Safety Adviser (Administrative Service Officer Class 5) | 2 |
| Incident Triaging Officer (Administrative Service Officer Class 5) | 1 |

Source: Shared Services/Education Directorate

The Executive Governance Committee WHS subcommittee provides governance of and oversees WHS performance and activity. During 2022–23, 100 Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) and 41 Deputy HSRs held positions across the Directorate. This HSR network has been critical to provide advice and support to the development of WHS policies and procedures via the WHS Consultative Committee.

Audit activity

Table 53: Type and number of work health and safety audits undertaken during 2020–21

| Type of audit | Number of audits | Further information |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Whole of Government Audit Program | 1 | Tier 2 Audit – Notification and Incident Investigation Procedures |

Source: ACT Education Directorate, People and Performance branch

Incident reporting and notices under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

RiskMan Reporting System

During 2022–23, there were 10,067² incident reports lodged across the Education Directorate using the RiskMan Work Incident Reporting System. In accordance with Part 3 Section 38 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, 35 events/incidents were notified to WorkSafe ACT.

WorkSafe ACT activity

During 2022–23, WorkSafe ACT issued 2 Prohibition Notices and 30 Improvement Notices to the Directorate under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The schools affected by Prohibition Notices were Dickson College and Melba Copland Secondary School.

The schools affected by Improvement Notices were Calwell High School (2 notices), Dickson College (6 notices), Hawker College (11 notices), Lanyon High School (3 notices), Lyneham Primary School (2 notices), Gold Creek School (3 notices) and Melba Copland Secondary School (3 notices).

The Directorate worked with each school and WorkSafe ACT to address the issues identified in the notices and close them within the timeframes agreed with WorkSafe ACT.

During the reporting period, the Directorate has focused on strengthening its collaboration with the regulator. This allowed the Directorate to increase its understanding of the powers and strategic intent of the regulatory function. That strengthened relationship has supported improved WHS practice across all ACT public schools.

²This figure (n=10,067) represents all Riskman incident reports, including those relating to occupational violence, reported above (n=7,448).

Performance against the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–23* targets

Table 54: Target 1 – reduce the incidence rate of claims resulting in one or more weeks off work by at least 30%

| Financial year | Number of new 5-day claims | Rate per 1,000 employees | Directorate target | ACTPS number of new 5-day claims | Rate per 1,000 employees | ACTPS target |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| 2012–13 | 60 | 12.53 | 10.69 | 274 | 13.42 | 12.08 |
| 2013–14 | 44 | 9.28 | 10.36 | 257 | 12.20 | 11.70 |
| 2014–15 | 31 | 6.17 | 10.03 | 228 | 10.49 | 11.33 |
| 2015–16 | 34 | 6.63 | 9.70 | 205 | 9.36 | 10.96 |
| 2016–17 | 50 | 9.45 | 9.37 | 243 | 10.91 | 10.58 |
| 2017–18 | 45 | 8.24 | 9.04 | 202 | 8.93 | 10.21 |
| 2018–19 | 54 | 9.45 | 8.71 | 201 | 8.50 | 9.84 |
| 2019–20 | 63 | 10.36 | 8.38 | 231 | 9.32 | 9.46 |
| 2020–21 | 101 | 15.90 | 8.05 | 325 | 12.46 | 9.09 |
| 2021–22 | 59 | 8.91 | 7.72 | 255 | 9.37 | 8.72 |
| 2022–23 | 79 | 11.80 | 7.72 | 255 | 8.98 | 8.72 |

Source: Work Safety Group, Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy, CMTEDD

The Directorate is committed to strengthening the systems in place to prevent injury and implement early interventions to support workers when illness or injury occurs.

The following programs are in place to support staff and schools:

- the triage of risks and incident reports, and support given to injured workers by the Early Intervention and Wellbeing team
- the Employee Assistance Program, which is used to stand up critical incident responses as required.

Table 55: Target 2 – reduce the incidence rate of claims for musculoskeletal disorders resulting in one or more weeks off work by at least 30%

| Financial year | Number of new 5-day claims | Rate per 1,000 employees | Directorate target | ACTPS number of new 5-day claims | Rate per 1,000 employees | ACTPS target |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| 2012–13 | 33 | 6.89 | 5.81 | 183 | 8.96 | 8.29 |
| 2013–14 | 26 | 5.49 | 5.63 | 174 | 8.31 | 8.03 |
| 2014–15 | 12 | 2.39 | 5.45 | 144 | 6.63 | 7.78 |
| 2015–16 | 20 | 3.9 | 5.29 | 146 | 6.67 | 7.52 |
| 2016–17 | 26 | 5.06 | 5.09 | 150 | 6.73 | 7.26 |
| 2017–18 | 19 | 3.48 | 4.91 | 128 | 5.66 | 7.01 |
| 2018–19 | 17 | 2.98 | 4.73 | 102 | 4.31 | 6.75 |
| 2019–20 | 29 | 4.77 | 4.55 | 126 | 5.09 | 6.49 |
| 2020–21 | 49 | 7.71 | 4.37 | 194 | 7.44 | 6.24 |
| 2021–22 | 21 | 3.17 | 4.19 | 118 | 4.33 | 5.98 |
| 2022–23 | 25 | 3.73 | 4.19 | 106 | 3.73 | 5.98 |

Source: Work Safety Group, Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy, CMTEDD

The Directorate focuses on early intervention strategies to successfully decrease musculoskeletal rates of claims with a particular emphasis on early intervention physiotherapy. Early intervention physiotherapy provides injured workers with access to up to 6 sessions of physiotherapy to support rapid recovery.

Engagement with the program limits the impact of injury on an employee's work and personal life and reduces the lodgement of workers compensation claims for minor injuries.

Human Resource Management

Education Directorate Workforce Strategy 2021-2023

The Directorate continues to implement the *Education Directorate Workforce Strategy 2021-2023* (Workforce Strategy) to ensure that the Directorate has the right workforce, with the right capabilities, in the right capacity, at the right time to deliver learning outcomes for children and young people in the ACT.

The Workforce Strategy is underpinned by 6 focus areas that shape and drive actions across a three-year period:

- strategic recruitment of teachers and education professionals to meet current and emerging needs
- evidence-driven and integrated workforce planning to enable our service delivery model
- a highly capable, skilled, and future-focused workforce
- leadership excellence and development at all levels
- workforce safety and wellbeing
- a diverse and inclusive workforce to reflect the communities we serve.

To support the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, the Directorate progressed the following priority workforce programs in 2022-23:

- bargaining for the ACT public sector enterprise agreements
- implementation of recommendations for the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report*
- the *ACT Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023-2028*
- National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

Directorate Enterprise Agreements

ACT Public Sector Enterprise Agreements are the primary source of employment conditions for ACT government employees. The Directorate has 6 Enterprise Agreements covering a range of employee classifications:

- *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022*
- *ACT Public Sector Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2021-2022*
- *ACT Public Sector Infrastructure Services Enterprise Agreement 2021-2022*
- *ACT Public Sector Health Professional Enterprise Agreement 2021-2022*
- *ACT Public Sector Technical and Other Professional Enterprise Agreement 2021-2022*
- *ACT Public Sector Support Services Enterprise Agreement 2021-2022.*

Employees and unions were notified of the commencement of bargaining for the ACT public sector enterprise agreements in February 2022.

Concurrently, bargaining commenced for the *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2023-2026 (Teaching Staff EA)* with the Australian Education Union (AEU).

In June 2023, Elections ACT advised that 2,971 eligible staff voted in the ballot for the Teaching Staff EA with 83% of those having voted 'yes' in favour of the agreement.

The agreement represents an investment of an additional \$201 million and reflects the high value placed on ACT public school teachers and school leaders. The agreement will deliver nation leading pay for public schools and better workloads for all teaching staff and school leaders to ensure we can attract and retain new and experienced educators to ACT public schools.

The *ACT Public Sector Infrastructure Services Enterprise Agreement 2023-2026* covering Building Services Officers, Cleaning Services Officers and General Services Officers in the Education Directorate had a successful ballot in May 2023.

The Education Directorate, in conjunction with other directorates, continue to bargain in good faith to replace the remaining agreements.

Teacher Shortage Taskforce

In August 2022, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs released the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report* (Taskforce Report) and agreed to implement all the Teacher Shortage Taskforce's 20 recommendations to address the ongoing teacher shortage in the ACT.

In 2022-23, the Directorate made significant progress in implementing all recommendations, which included:

- launching the *ACT Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023-2028* (Recommendation 1)
- revising teacher workforce projections and reporting progress against annual teacher recruitment targets (Recommendation 2)
- establishing a process for the temporary engagement of Permit to Teach holders (Recommendation 3)
- expanding conditional offers of employment to students in their third year of teaching qualification studies (Recommendation 4)
- providing Permit to Teach holders with access to 6 weeks of paid practicum leave in the new Teaching Staff EA (Recommendation 6)
- providing paid professional learning for casual teachers and incentives for recently retired teachers to return to work in the new Teaching Staff EA (Recommendation 9)
- establishing an employer-initiated transfer allowance in the new Teaching Staff EA to attract experienced teachers to schools where they are needed most (Recommendation 11)

- launching the New Educator Support Program as an assurance framework to ensure that the New Educator Development Program is implemented for all new educators (Recommendation 15)
- assessing, planning, and responding to COVID-19 impacts on school operations, as required (Recommendation 18).

ACT Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023-2028

On 9 February 2023, the *ACT Education Directorate Teacher Attraction and Retention Plan 2023-2028* (the Plan) was tabled at the ACT Legislative Assembly. The Plan identifies teacher workforce requirements for the ACT public education system for the next 5 years and includes a commitment to annual target setting and public reporting. It also reinforced the commitment by the ACT Government to implement all 20 recommendations outlined in the Taskforce Report to support the Directorate in achieving its annual teacher recruitment targets.

The February 2023 ACT School Census showed that enrolments in ACT public schools were 50,556, a decrease of 532 students (-1.0%) from February 2022. This contrasts to projections outlined in the Plan, which had projected an enrolment growth of 1.9% in 2023.

On 13 April 2023, the Executive Governance Committee Workforce Subcommittee endorsed revised student enrolment and teacher workforce projections, detailed below:

Table 56: ACT public school enrolment projections

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 |
|------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Annual enrolment growth | -1.0% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% |
| Cumulative growth since 2022 | -1.0% | 0.5% | 2.0% | 3.4% | 4.9% | 6.3% |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

Table 57: Teacher workforce projections

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Required teacher FTE | 3,801 | 3,860 | 3,917 | 3,974 | 4,032 | 4,089 |
| Annual teacher FTE | -40 | 59 | 57 | 57 | 58 | 57 |
| Cumulative growth since 2022 | -40 | 19 | 76 | 133 | 191 | 248 |

Source: ACT Education Directorate

As at 21 June 2023, the Directorate's teaching workforce (Classroom Teachers and School Leader Cs) was 3,791.9 FTE, representing a decrease of 29.1 FTE since 30 June 2022. The Directorate's current teacher workforce is 9.1 FTE lower than the 2023 teacher FTE required to maintain a student-teacher ratio of 13.3:1. These FTE numbers are a single point in time and fluctuate each pay period.

The Directorate acknowledges that not all schools have a full complement of FTE teaching staff and continues to actively prioritise recruitment and placement of teachers to fill all vacant positions in ACT public schools.

The Directorate has committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of the projection methodology before the next reporting period to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

The Directorate continues to work with other states and jurisdictions to implement the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* (Action Plan), released in December 2022.

The Action Plan outlines both immediate actions and actions that are needed over the medium and longer term and brings a national focus to the teacher shortage across the country.

ACTPS Employee Survey

The Directorate is committed to listening to the needs of its employees and ensuring that they are supported to thrive. Between 6 to 24 March 2023, staff within the Education Support Office were invited to participate in the ACTPS Employee Survey (the Survey) to give honest feedback about working in the Directorate. This was the second time that the Directorate has participated in the Survey.

58% of staff responded to the Survey, with the Directorate recording improvement across the three key outcome measures of the Survey and exceeding the ACTPS average:

- 75% of employees reported high levels of engagement (74% in 2021)
- 79% of employees reported high levels of satisfaction (78% in 2021)
- 73% of employees showed strong commitment and loyalty to our Directorate (68% in 2021).

Employees also reported a stronger personal connection to the Directorate with:

- 86% of employees strongly believing in the purpose and objectives of the Directorate (85% in 2021)
- 80% of employees feeling proud to work for the Directorate (76% in 2021)
- 76% of employees reporting that they would recommend the Directorate as a good place to work (65% in 2021).

Of the 29 workplace factors explored in the Survey, the Directorate saw improvements of at least 5% in 7 factors, with 21 factors scoring similar to 2021 and one factor declining by more than 5%.

Induction

The Directorate provides a suite of induction programs to ensure that all employees are aware of their obligations as ACT Public Service employees. Induction programs provide an overview of the Directorate's strategic direction, roles and responsibilities and key compliance information. In addition, there is an explicit focus on work, health, safety and wellbeing, as well as understanding the risk of occupational violence.

New starters are identified and sent an invitation to the All Staff Induction, and tailored induction programs are run for other cohorts such as New Educators and School Cleaning Services. Other important information is relayed through information sessions such as the 'Work Health and Safety induction for new and acting school leaders, business managers and principals' information session.

New Educator Induction

New educators (in their first 3 years of professional practice) participate in a 5-day induction program prior to the commencement of each school year. In 2023, the New Educator Induction Week was held from 17 to 23 January with a total of 153 new educators attending.



New Educator induction week

The New Educator Induction Week covered the following topics, with sessions being delivered by subject matter experts from across the Directorate:

- Professional expectations and obligations
- Equity, Inclusion, Safety, and Wellbeing

- Learning and teaching
- Cultural Integrity.

Training and development programs

Mandatory Training

The Directorate requires all staff to complete online foundation modules every 2 years. The modules are designed to support staff to understand their obligations, and to ensure the Directorate fosters a safe environment for staff, students, and visitors. The following modules are available on HRIMS Learning:

- Work Health and Safety (Refresher)
- Occupational Violence in the Workplace
- Reportable Conduct
- Code of Conduct
- Disability Standards for Education
- Keeping Children and Young People Safe.

Domestic and Family Violence Training

The ACT Government recognises that the impacts of domestic and family violence on the workplace. Research and consultation by the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety shows that most people affected by domestic and family violence are more likely to disclose to someone they trust. This may include a work colleague or a manager.

As an employer, the Directorate is committed to the safety and wellbeing of staff. The Domestic and Family Violence training package is an ACT Government commitment to help educate staff about the impacts of domestic violence, provide guidance in how to respond and direct colleagues to professional support if needed.

In 2023, the Domestic and Family Violence eLearning training package was added as a recommended training package to all staff members via the Directorate's Learning Management System. Face-to-face training was also offered to staff to complement the online training package.

Since July 2022, 1,219 staff members have completed the Domestic and Family Violence online foundation modules available to all staff. The Domestic and Family Violence online modules for managers was completed by 75 managers. In addition, face-to-face sessions building on the online training was completed by 120 staff.

Joint Selection Committee Compliance Training

The Joint Selection Committee Compliance training is designed to support staff in recruiting the right people with the right skills. The training is mandatory for staff to complete if they will be participating or leading the recruitment of any school-based staff member, as agreed between the Directorate and the Australian Education Union.

The training provides participants with information on the different roles and responsibilities of those involved in recruitment, the open recruitment process, and the teacher transfer rounds. The training has been designed in line with the ACTPS Recruitment Guidelines and incorporates Directorate specific policies and procedures.

Entry Level Programs

Entry level programs support new starters, graduates, and inclusion participants with the opportunity to work within the Directorate and gain practical skills while supporting the outcomes of the Directorate. Entry level programs support talent attraction and engagement strategies.

ACTPS Graduate Program

The Directorate participates in the ACTPS Graduate Program annually. The program provides participants with a comprehensive learning and development program with on-the-job skill development. The program provides participants with exposure to senior leaders and regular training designed to help them to build the skills that they need for a successful career within the Directorate and across the ACTPS. In 2022, the Directorate supported 4 graduates to complete the program. A further 4 graduates were secured for the 2023 program. Graduates in the Directorate are placed within teams in the Education Support Office.

Learning Support Assistant Scholarship Program

The Directorate supported a cohort of 24 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to undertake the Certificate IV in Education Support in 2022. In the first half of 2023, a further 21 LSAs commenced a bridging course entitled Introduction to Education Support, which included completion of 2 units of the Certificate IV in Education Support.

Senior Leadership Programs

The Directorate continues to support senior leadership development, providing staff with access to:

- the ACTPS Senior Executive Speaker Series
- executive learning groups
- nomination/participation in the Australia and New Zealand School of Government Executive Program
- participation in whole of government talent initiatives and pilot development programs.

Two Directorate Senior Executive Service (SES) members participated in the ACTPS Senior Executive Induction Program this financial year. The program aims to ensure those who are new to executive positions have the information and connections they need to transition quickly into their new roles.

Two SES members (Band 1) from the Directorate commenced the ACTPS SES Leadership Beyond Crisis Program during this financial year. The program aims to create a space for senior executives across the ACTPS to come together to consider, experiment and practice

skills which respond to the question: ‘What do we collectively need to do, learn, and unlearn in order to lead the ACTPS to thrive, not just survive?’. A further SES member (Band 2) completed the SES Band 2 Leadership Program in April 2023.

Study Assistance Program

The ACTPS Study Assistance Policy assists staff undertaking an approved course of study in line with the operational needs of the work area with linkages to the goals in the Strategic Plan. Study assistance can be in the form of paid or unpaid leave to undertake study, and/or financial assistance for course costs.

In 2022-23, 20 staff were provided support through the Study Assistance Program. From this cohort, 3 staff were approved for more than one semester, 17 were approved for paid study leave and 6 were approved for financial assistance. Staff have undertaken a broad range of studies including ethics and governance, communications, public policy, and advanced study in education.

Reward and Recognition

The Directorate values and recognises the achievements of our employees. The ACT Public Education Awards recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements in public education in the ACT. In 2022, 13 award categories were open for public nominations and the Directorate introduced the Director-General’s Award for Excellence.

Table 58: 2022 ACT Public Education Award Recipients

| Award | Recipient |
|--|--|
| Early Childhood Teacher of the Year | Claire Wirth, Nicholls Preschool Unit, Gold Creek School |
| Primary Teacher of the Year | Sharee Hodge, Macgregor Primary School |
| Secondary Teacher of the Year | Nick Maniatis, Campbell High School |
| School Leader of the Year | Michael Hatswell, Evatt Primary School |
| New Educator of the Year (joint winners) | Kieran Sibley, Calwell High School Catherine Dempster, Harrison School |
| Education Support Person of the Year (joint winners) | Karen McLachlan, Curtin Primary School Chris Cowie, Taylor Primary School |
| Outstanding Partnership of the Year | Understanding Building and Construction Pilot Program |
| Excellence in Cultural Integrity | The Waruga Yardhura Team, Flexible Education |

| | |
|---|--|
| Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion | Jean Walker, Student Engagement Branch |
| Allied Health Professional of the Year | The Allied Health Team, Black Mountain School |
| Education Support Office Employee of the Year | Murray McKay, Student Engagement Branch |
| Excellence in Innovation | The Library Team, Melba Copland Secondary School |
| Volunteer of the Year (joint winners) | Lauren Johnston, Macquarie Primary School Rhodina Ellison, Namadgi School |
| Director-General's Award for Excellence | Understanding Building and Construction Pilot Program |



Education Directorate ACT Public Education Awards Recipients

Recognition and Reward for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers

In 2015, the reward and recognition process for teachers who achieve certification at the national Australian Standards of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher career stages was established. The Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement recognises and financially rewards certified teachers with an additional salary increment or equivalent allowance for one year.

During the reporting period there were 3 Directorate employees who achieved either Highly Accomplished or Lead certification.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Directorate is committed to a diverse workforce that reflects the community and pursues respectful and inclusive workplace behaviours.

In the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey, 80% of Education Support Office staff reported that the Directorate supports and actively promotes a safe and inclusive workplace culture.

The foundations for the *Future of Education Strategy* asserts the commitment to fostering and promoting an inclusive workplace and learning environment where every student and staff member can see themselves thriving and succeeding. This is further supported by Focus Area 6 of the Workforce Strategy, to build 'a diverse and inclusive workforce to reflect the community we serve'.

The Directorate has been pursuing priority actions under this Focus Area, including:

- delivering on initiatives within the *Access and Inclusion (Disability) Employment Action Plan 2019-2023*
- finalising the development of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2023-2026*
- continuing our work on an action plan to support our commitment to cultural integrity
- establishing a culturally and linguistically diverse staff network.

The Directorate considers gender equity a key contemporary responsibility and critical component in embracing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Work undertaken in 2022-23 included:

- gender data analysis of the Directorate's workforce profile, with an additional emphasis on intersectionality with other underrepresented cohorts
- publication of the Gender Inclusive Policies and Forms Factsheet
- development of promotional material (pronoun factsheet, books, and high-profile artist and celebrities) and articles that normalises trans and gender diversity.

In May 2023, the Directorate announced the Pride Executive Champion, Angela Spence and in June 2023, the Women's Executive Champion, Mandy Kalyvas. This continues a strong commitment of our Senior Executive in supporting and championing diversity within the Directorate.

The Directorate continues to implement a range of initiatives that provide a supportive workplace culture that recognises, celebrates and supports workforce diversity including:

- recognition of dates of significance
- promotion, coordination and enhancing the Respect, Equity and Diversity Contact Officers Network
- promoting staff diversity networks and engaging with the networks on initiatives to improve inclusive practices
- coordination of Directorate staff to attend the 2023 Garma Festival

- delivery of training to increase workforce capability, including Unconscious Bias, Cultural Appreciation, and Let's Talk Disability
- published monthly, the Diversity and Inclusion Newsletter to highlight days of significance, inclusion topics and share upcoming training opportunities.

Workforce Profile

The workforce figures in this section represent Education Directorate employees who received a payment on the last payday of 2022-23. Employees who separated from the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) prior to 21 June 2023 and received a payment have been included. The figures exclude employees not paid by the ACTPS and employees on leave without pay.

On 21 June 2023, the Directorate's paid workforce was 8,341 employees – a decrease of 110 in the year since June 2022. The 8,341 employees equated to 6,918.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. This is a 126.5 FTE increase on the same time last year. ACT public schools represent approximately 85% (5,868.0) of the Directorate's total FTE.

The Directorate fosters and promotes inclusive environments so that every staff member can see their whole-self thriving, succeeding, and fully participating. The diversity in our communities is recognised and celebrated at the Directorate, and this is reflected in the unique and positive cultures of individual schools and workplaces.

During 2022-23, the Directorate increased the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, and staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds employed in the Directorate's workforce.

The proportion of employees who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander rose 0.1 percentage points to 1.9% (159 people). The proportion of people with disability increased 0.2 percentage points to 2.6% (216 people). The proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse employees increased to 15.3%, from 15.2% in June 2022.

The Directorate continues to strengthen its inclusive employment strategies in line with the Directorate's *Workforce Strategy 2021-2023*.

The Directorate had a high female employment rate of 73.4%. Female employees make up 75.1% of teachers, and 72.2% of school leaders.

The highest proportion of employees (27.1%) were in the age group 35 to 44 years. The average age of the Directorate's workforce is 42.3 years, with teachers at an average 42.4 years of age, and school leaders at an average 45.9 years of age.

The average length of service for Directorate employees was 8.6 years. School leaders (17.3 years) and teachers (9.0 years) have an average length of service above the Directorate average.

The Directorate's workforce separation rate increased to 7.9% from 5.9% in 2021-22. The increased rate in 2022-23 follows a period of reduced separation reflecting employment uncertainty during 2019-20 to 2021-22. The Directorate's separation rate in 2022-23 was also higher as a result of the Directorate initiating 'forfeiture of office' procedures for employees on extended periods of unauthorised absence, in accordance with clause 127 of

the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*. The separation rates of teachers (7.3%) and school leaders (5.9%) remain below the overall Directorate separation rate.

For privacy reasons, the ACTPS has elected not to publish detailed information on non-binary employees. All the 'total' rows include staff who identify as neither male nor female.

Table 59: FTE and headcount by gender

| | Female | Male | Non-binary | Total |
|---------------------|---------|---------|------------|---------|
| FTE by Gender | 5,024.0 | 1,890.5 | 3.9 | 6,918.5 |
| Headcount by Gender | 6122 | 2,212 | 7 | 8,341 |
| % of Workforce | 73.4% | 26.5% | 0.1% | 100.0% |

Source: Shared Services

Table 60: Headcount by classification and gender

| Classification Group | Female | Male | Non-binary ¹ | Total |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Administrative Officers | 1,930 | 520 | | 2,450 |
| Executive Officers | 10 | 10 | | 20 |
| General Service Officers & Equivalent | 200 | 332 | | 532 |
| Health Assistants | 5 | 0 | | 5 |
| Health Professional Officers | 72 | 6 | | 78 |
| Information Technology Officers | 5 | 29 | | 34 |
| Professional Officers | 93 | 17 | | 110 |
| School Leaders | 588 | 226 | | 814 |
| Senior Officers | 252 | 91 | | 343 |
| Teacher | 2,967 | 981 | | 3,948 |
| TOTAL | 6,122 | 2,212 | 7 | 8,341 |

Source: Shared Services

¹Breakdown by classification groups not provided due to privacy reasons.

Table 61: Headcount by employment category and gender

| Employment Category | Female | Male | Non-binary ¹ | Total |
|---------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Casual | 585 | 243 | | 828 |
| Permanent Full-time | 2,814 | 1,144 | | 3,958 |
| Permanent Part-time | 1,769 | 253 | | 2,022 |
| Temporary Full-time | 226 | 168 | | 394 |
| Temporary Part-time | 728 | 404 | | 1,132 |
| TOTAL | 6,122 | 2,212 | 7 | 8,341 |

Source: Shared Services

¹Breakdown by employment category not provided due to privacy reasons.

Table 62: FTE and headcount by division/branch

| Branch/Division | FTE | Headcount |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Business Services | 470.1 | 618 |
| Casuals | 347.1 | 804 |
| Deputy Director General's Office | 3.0 | 3 |
| Director General's Office | 5.0 | 5 |
| Safe at School | 12.9 | 13 |
| School Improvement | 5,553.0 | 6,319 |
| Service Design and Delivery | 414.0 | 462 |
| System Policy and Reform | 113.3 | 117 |
| TOTAL | 6,918.5 | 8,341 |

Source: Shared Services

Table 63: Headcount by age group and gender

| Age Group | Female | Male | Non-binary ¹ | Total |
|-------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Under 25 | 474 | 313 | | 787 |
| 25-34 | 1,295 | 554 | | 1,849 |
| 35-44 | 1,699 | 563 | | 2,262 |
| 45-54 | 1,532 | 452 | | 1,984 |
| 55 and over | 1,122 | 330 | | 1,452 |
| TOTAL | 6,122 | 2,212 | 7 | 8,341 |

Source: Shared Services

¹Breakdown by age group not provided due to privacy reasons.

Table 64: Average years of service by gender

| Gender | Female | Male | Non-binary ¹ | Total |
|--------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| Average years of service | 9.1 | 7.4 | | 8.6 |

Source: Shared Services

¹Not for publication due to privacy reasons.

Table 65: Headcount by diversity group

| Diversity Group ¹ | Headcount | % of Total Staff |
|--|-----------|------------------|
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 159 | 1.9% |
| Culturally & Linguistically Diverse | 1,274 | 15.3% |
| People with a disability | 216 | 2.6% |

Source: Shared Services

1. Employees may identify with more than one of the diversity groups.

Table 66: Recruitment and separation rates

| Classification Group | Recruitment Rate % | Separation Rate % |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Total | 11.9% | 7.9% |

Source: Shared Services

Table 67: Gender pay gap

| Classification Group | Female Avg Salary (\$) | Male Avg Salary (\$) | Pay Gap |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Administrative Officers | 74,536 | 70,912 | -5.1% |
| Executive Officers | 247,387 | 224,398 | -10.2% |
| General Service Officers & Equivalent | 54,968 | 61,760 | 11.0% |
| Health Assistants | 77,610 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Health Professional Officers | 110,882 | 114,485 | 3.1% |
| Information Technology Officers | 86,051 | 89,869 | 4.2% |
| Professional Officers | 122,976 | 109,061 | -12.8% |
| School Leaders | 146,784 | 149,479 | 1.8% |
| Senior Officers | 136,605 | 140,908 | 3.1% |
| Teacher | 107,497 | 105,179 | -2.2% |
| TOTAL | 101,797 | 98,605 | -3.2% |

Source: Shared Services

Ecological Sustainability Reporting

The 2022–23 reporting period saw the Directorate continue to demonstrate excellence and leadership in best practice ecological sustainability across ACT public schools.

The Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2022–2025* adopts the various sustainability goals and targets outlined in the ACT Government's broader suite of policies, including the:

- *ACT Climate Strategy 2019–2025*
- *ACT Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy 2022–30*
- *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City*
- *ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2012–2023*
- *ACT Water Strategy 2014–2044.*

It was evident during 2022–23 that long-established protocols on the way things are done had changed forever as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of new initiatives such as activating outdoor spaces as classrooms and reinvigorating sustainability teaching modules had a profound impact on the Directorate's contribution to future ecological sustainability by inspiring students to value the importance of the environment as part of their learning journey.

Although the pandemic provided opportunities for change and improvement, it also presented challenges to the Directorate's sustainability performance. Increased ventilation and indoor air quality requirements in schools increased energy consumption, while rising building costs and supply chain constraints threatened to restrict the Directorate's capability to deliver on its planned sustainability initiatives. However, the Directorate responded to these challenges with reforms that have embedded lasting improvement to its environmental footprint.

Emission reduction and climate adaptation

The Directorate continues to uphold its commitment to the emission reduction targets set out in the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025*. All new schools are designed and constructed as all-electric facilities, and rigorous efficiency performance standards have been integrated into ongoing capital works upgrades at existing schools.

The Directorate recognises the importance of integrating living infrastructure in ACT public schools as a means to address adaptation and resilience against climate change.

The development of green spaces, trees and other natural elements in schools all create sustainable and resilient protection against the adverse environmental conditions created by climate change such as heatwaves, droughts, storms, and bushfires. Green roofs, green walls and extended tree canopies also enhance shade and evaporative cooling and create comfortable outdoor spaces.

Energy efficiency and thermal comfort

Energy efficiency and thermal comfort initiatives minimise the use of energy from existing buildings and subsequently reduce operating costs and emissions.

Energy efficiency and thermal comfort initiatives completed or commenced in 2022–23 included:

- LED lighting upgrade at Campbell Primary School
- roof upgrades at Alfred Deakin High School, Dickson College, Forrest Primary School, Melba Copland Secondary School (both senior campus and high school campus)
- double-glazing upgrades and/or airlock upgrades at Arawang Primary School, Curtin Primary School, Lanyon High School and Yarralumla Primary School
- insulation upgrades at Curtin Primary School and Macgregor Primary School
- Building Management System (BMS) upgrades, including new central BMS server to improve oversight of heating ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC) operation and energy use across more than 80 schools
- BMS data analytics pilot projects to optimise energy efficiency at Canberra College and Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning
- electrification of the HVAC systems at Alfred Deakin High School, Fadden Primary School, Forrest Primary School, Gilmore Primary School, Latham Primary School, Lyons Early Childhood School, Macquarie Primary School, Red Hill Primary School, Wanniasa School Senior Campus, Wanniasa Hills Primary School and Weetangera Primary School.

Indoor air quality and COVID-19

The Directorate continued to maintain its focus on indoor air quality to ensure a safe teaching and learning environment within ACT public schools. On advice from various agencies such as the World Health Organization, Safe Work Australia and the ACT Chief Health Officer, the Directorate significantly increased the level of fresh air ventilation in schools to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

While this was effective in facilitating a safe environment for students and teachers, the introduction of additional fresh air came at a significant cost to sustainability performance in the form of increased energy consumption and associated emissions, particularly gas consumption throughout winter.

The Directorate is exploring opportunities to optimise the balance of fresh air with efficient energy consumption.

100% electric schools

In 2023, the Directorate opened the Evelyn Scott School Senior Campus. The Senior Campus forms part of the Evelyn Scott School Junior Campus, one of the Territory's 3 all-electric schools. Evelyn Scott School's integrated sustainability features include a 100 kilowatt (kW) solar array, double glazing, air permeability barriers to provide air tightness, LED lighting and a fully electric HVAC system.

The Directorate also installed a total of 330 kilolitres of inground water tanks for irrigation at Evelyn Scott School, which will contribute to the objectives outlined in the Territory's ambitious Living Infrastructure Plan, including a 30% tree canopy coverage target.

In September 2022, the Evelyn Scott School won the ACT Master Builders award for Sustainable Commercial Project.



Evelyn Scott School

During 2022–23, construction works commenced on the new Shirley Smith High School (Kenny) as well as the expansion of Margaret Hendry School.

Both projects include integrated sustainability features such as large solar arrays, double glazing, air permeability barriers to provide air tightness, LED lighting, fully electric HVAC systems and large inground rainwater tanks for irrigation.



Margaret Hendry High School – increased solar array

Innovation

Innovation Hub for affordable heating and cooling (i-Hub)

The Directorate continued its collaboration with the University of Wollongong to progress the i-Hub Living Laboratories project at Amaroo School. The i-Hub is an initiative led by the Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heating (a not-for-profit industry body providing industry leadership in heating and cooling technologies) in conjunction with the CSIRO and supported by the Australian Government Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

A prototype indirect evaporative cooling system with integrated electric heat pump that can significantly improve indoor air quality by providing up to 100% outside air was installed at Amaroo School in 2022–23. This heating unit is being evaluated by the University of Wollongong under strict laboratory conditions to assess the performance and suitability of these systems with a view to upscaling similar technology across additional ACT schools.



Amaroo School indirect evaporative cooling system with integrated electric heat pump

Waste and resource recovery

The Directorate has started developing and implementing solutions to enhance waste management and recycling within ACT public schools. These solutions include the installation of worm farms to manage organic waste, bottling of worm tea, collecting seedlings, and recycling bottles through the container deposit scheme. All solutions are engaging for students while decreasing waste to landfill, reducing waste management costs, and eliminating scope 3 emissions.

The Directorate has also started developing a Sustainable Waste Management Policy, which will guide schools to adopt a best practice waste recovery model and result in further reductions in waste across the school portfolio.

Table 68: Sustainable development performance current and previous financial year

| Indicator as at 30 June | Unit | Current FY ¹ | Previous FY ² | % change |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Stationary energy usage | | | | |
| Electricity use | Kilowatt hours | 26,044,217 | 23,773,539 | 10% |
| Natural gas use (non-transport) | Megajoules | 121,962,159 | 103,752,033 | 18% |
| Diesel use (non-transport) | Kilolitres | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Transport fuel usage | | | | |
| Battery electric vehicles (BEV) | Number | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles | Number | 7 | 7 | 0% |
| Plug-in Hybrid Electric vehicles (PHEV) ³ | Number | 15 ⁴ | 14 | 7% |
| Hydrogen vehicles | Number | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) Vehicles | Number | 57 | 60 | (5%) |
| Total number of vehicles | Number | 79 | 81 | (2%) |
| Fuel use – Petrol | Kilolitres | 16 | 8.47 ⁵ | 89% |
| Fuel use – Diesel | Kilolitres | 46 | 29.96 ⁵ | 54% |
| Fuel use – Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) | Kilolitres | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fuel use – Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) | Gigajoules | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Water usage | | | | |
| Water use | Kilolitres | 273,768 | 227,126 | 21% |
| Resource efficiency and waste^{6,7} | | | | |
| Reams of paper purchased | Reams | 62,662 | 47,886 | 31% |
| Recycled content of paper purchased | Percentage | 4.86 | 9.67 | (50%) |
| Waste to landfill | Litres | 23,673,741 | 303,679 | 7,696% |
| Co-mingled material recycled | Litres | 2,571,061 | 78,176 | 3,189% |
| Paper & Cardboard recycled (incl. secure paper) | Litres | 6,054,944 | 218,947 | 2,665% |

| Indicator as at 30 June | Unit | Current FY ¹ | Previous FY ² | % change |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Organic material recycled | Litres | 11,191 | 471 | 2,276% |
| Greenhouse gas emissions⁸ | | | | |
| Emissions from electricity use | Tonnes CO ₂ -e | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Emissions from natural gas use (non-transport) | Tonnes CO ₂ -e | 6,285 | 5,346 | 18% |
| Emissions diesel use (non-transport) | Tonnes CO ₂ -e | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Emissions from transport fuel use | Tonnes CO ₂ -e | 163 | 101.3 | 61% |
| Emissions from refrigerants | Tonnes CO ₂ -e | 184 | 184 | 0% |
| Total emissions | Tonnes CO ₂ -e | 6,632 | 5,631.3 | 18% |

Source: Enterprise Sustainability Platform, waste invoices, ACT procurement records and SG Fleet

1. 2022-23 figures may include estimated accrual data where actual data is not available.

2. As reported in the 2021-22 Education Directorate Annual Report.

3. From 1 January 2023, plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) are no longer considered zero emission vehicles (ZEVs).

4. Increase in the number of PHEVs was due to orders placed prior to above-mentioned ZEV policy definition amendment on 1 January 2023.

5. Public health orders relating to COVID-19 limited to the use of vehicles for school excursions and other activities in 2021-22.

6. Waste to landfill, co-mingle recycling, paper/cardboard and organic material data for ACT public schools is being reported for the first time in 2022-23.

7. Where necessary, the following conversion rates were applied to waste and recycling volumes:

- 0.15kg/litre for waste to landfill
- 0.63kg/litre for co-mingled recycling
- 0.1kg/litre for paper and cardboard recycling
- 0.425kg/litre for organic waste

8. Emission factors used to calculate natural gas and transport fuels are based on the latest National Greenhouse Account factors.

9. The ACT Government reports zero greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use as a result of the ACT's 100% renewable electricity supply.

All measures were taken to ensure accuracy was maintained in the table above. Where data is not available, the Enterprise Sustainability Platform provides estimations using an accrual function.

State of the Environment Report

In 2022–23, the Office of the Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability requested that the Directorate provide a response to recommendations contained in the *State of the Environment Report*. The Directorate’s response to the Commissioner outlined the following key budget appropriations:

- ongoing funding to upgrade gas heating systems to low or zero emission heating systems and thermal envelope upgrades (\$15.9 million)
- continuation of existing program to upgrade roof systems, including minimum R4 insulation and higher stormwater capabilities (\$10.9 million)
- electrification of gas assets (\$2.7 million)
- innovative program opportunities such as the i-Hub pilot initiative to enable the upscale of zero emission HVAC technology in schools.

In addition, the Directorate noted that minimum performance specification standards have been integrated into all capital works upgrades which include double glazing, insulation, LED lighting, and water saving toilets and taps.

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