

C8 Learning and development

Learning and development plays an important part in supporting organisational growth and productivity. It is a vital factor in enhancing employee capability, retention of quality staff and in the improvement of employee performance.

The Department provided extensive professional learning opportunities for staff during the reporting period. Programs and activities for teaching staff, school leaders and administrative and support staff were conducted at the Centre for Teaching and Learning in Stirling, at schools and at other venues.

Table C8.1: Departmental participation in whole of government learning and development initiatives, 2009-10

Initiative	Number of participants
ACT Public Service Graduate Program	3
Future Leaders Program	2
Executive Development Program	3
Public Sector Management Program	4
Sponsored training for first-time and front-line managers	3
Young Professionals' Network	Several networking

Source: Shared Services, Department of Territory and Municipal Services

Whole of government learning and development initiatives

The Department encouraged staff to take advantage of training opportunities provided through whole of government initiatives.

A greater number of staff benefited from training opportunities provided through the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) training calendar as indicated in Table C8.2. Study assistance support was provided to teaching and administration and support staff.

Table C8.2: Number of participants and cost for ACT Public Service training calendar and study assistance programs, 2009-10

Department	Number of participants	Cost (\$)
ACTPS training calendar	81	26,296
Study assistance	44	9,005

Source: Shared Services, Department of Territory and Municipal Service

Career development for administration and support staff

The Department provides a career development program to school-based support staff. In 2009-10, over 1,300 participants attended 88 courses on offer. Presentations and workshops addressed job-specific skills such as height training for Building Service Officers, generic skills such as record keeping, and personal skills such as writing job applications. As in previous years, presentations included information technology programs, first aid, manual handling, chemicals handling, playground safety, and building maintenance and repairs.

School-based support staff were also supported to undertake certificate or diploma studies in disability support, education support, hospitality and laboratory sciences.

Respectful Workplaces: Reducing the risk of workplace bullying and harassment

The Respectful Workplaces training program, delivered during June 2010, provided all principals in the Department with an opportunity to develop understandings of responsibilities under the new *Work Safety Act 2008*. Sessions were organised for each of the four school networks and provided information and strategies for building respectful workplaces.

Induction programs

More than 386 staff members attended induction programs in July 2009 and January 2010. This program is for all new departmental employees and covers the operations of the Department, the Code of Conduct of ACT Government employees and other matters relating to employment conditions.

Professional learning of teaching staff

The Department's professional learning priorities guide the selection of the main focus for professional learning for teaching staff in any one calendar year. In the reporting period, the priorities for professional learning activities are curriculum, literacy and numeracy, safe schools, Indigenous education and quality teaching.

Funding for the professional learning of teaching staff is sourced through the Professional Learning Fund and from school funding allocations. The Professional Learning Fund is comprised of separate allocations for teachers and principals. In 2009-10, the

fund allocated to teaching staff totaled \$1.25 million and included the Teacher Scholarship Program. This program permits teachers to apply for study assistance in a course of study approved by the Department. A total of one percent of principals' salaries contributes funding towards professional learning for principals and varies in amount each year.

Curriculum

To be completed over three years, the ACT curriculum framework, *Every chance to learn* was in its second year of implementation. School-based curriculum officers worked directly with schools within a small cluster of a high school and its feeder primary schools. This direct support provided opportunities for classroom teachers to meet more regularly, as a cluster, and to share, network and transfer understanding on the implementation of the ACT curriculum framework across preschool to year 10. This cluster-based program proved successful in assisting schools to align their school curriculum to the new ACT framework.

Literacy and numeracy

A number of Department-endorsed professional development programs were introduced to support the implementation of the *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2010-2013*. These programs were primarily delivered at the school level, with a focus on classroom practices which identify and support literacy and numeracy needs of all students. Professional development was delivered with a focus on the following programs:

- First Steps 2nd Edition Reading and Writing
- Tactical Teaching Reading
- Count Me In Too
- Middle Years Mental Computation
- QuickSmart
- Teaching ESL to Students in Mainstream Classrooms
- Incorporating Strategies for an Inclusive Curriculum.

National Partnerships have emphasised the provision of professional development to school-based groups. Each school's Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator also received support to assist teachers in the changing of teaching practices.

Safe schools

ACT public schools engaged in a range of professional learning to support the implementation of the *National Safe Schools Framework*. These included:

- developing behaviour support through the Essential Skills for Classroom Teachers program
- resolving conflict and bullying through Restorative Practices and Circle Time programs
- implementing mental health programs through KidsMatter and MindMatters courses
- implementing a whole school approach to addressing bullying through the Friendly Schools & Families program
- implementing a whole school approach to behaviour support through the Everyone Matters: Behaviour Support Protocols
- managing aggressive student behaviours through the TeamTeach program and Professional Assault Response Training.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

During the reporting period, the Department enhanced leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The Accepting the Challenge leadership program focus for 2009-10 was 'What do leaders need to know, do and feel to support successful outcomes of Indigenous children and young people?'

Professional learning focused on leadership support for individual schools, school clusters and sections of the Department, including after school professional learning presentations and staff surveys, full day presentations and strategic planning sessions with school executive.

The MindMatters program is an evidence- based early intervention and prevention mental health program for secondary school students. In 2009 an additional component, *Feeling deadly not shame*, was delivered in three sessions of two hours each and emphasised the particular needs of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These sessions highlighted issues stemming from a loss of cultural connectedness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

Quality teaching

By the end of 2009, the Quality Teaching model had been introduced in all ACT public schools. A survey administered across school clusters indicated a strong growth in teachers' understanding of the model and a very positive approach to using it. Quality Teaching coordinators had worked with teachers to plan and evaluate classroom learning programs and assessment tasks through centre-based or school-based workshops.

In the first half of 2010, the Quality Teaching coordinators continued to work with schools in classrooms and provided a toolkit of information and resources to support school leaders in sustaining a focus on quality teaching in schools. Of particular note were the assessment workshops run for college teachers, which were well attended and very favourably received.

Teacher scholarships

In 2009, through the Teacher Scholarship Program, teaching staff received financial assistance to undertake graduate certificate courses. All those undertaking the four courses successfully completed studies:

- Educational Studies (Quality Teaching), with the University of Newcastle (22 completed)
- Educational Leadership, with the University of Canberra (23 completed)
- Inclusive Education (Special Education), with the University of Canberra (20 completed)
- Early Childhood Education, with the University of Canberra (15 completed).

A Recognition of Studies ceremony was conducted in December 2009 to celebrate completion.

For the calendar year 2010, two targeted scholarship programs were offered to teachers:

- Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood Education at the University of Canberra. This program commenced in February 2010 with 32 enrolments.
- Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to speakers of other languages. This course will commence in semester 2 2010 with 25 enrolments.

Individual scholarships were awarded to 24 teachers in 2009 and to 31 teachers in 2010. Some of the fields in which tertiary studies are being pursued include educational leadership, quality teaching and education for the sensory impaired.

New Educator Support Program

The New Educator Support Program supports the development of teachers in the first three years of teaching and provides up to 15 days for each new educator over the three years. In the reporting period, four modules were offered and were delivered in week five of each term.

Table C8.3: Attendance at New Educator Support Program sessions, 2009-10

Program	Session	Attendance
Enhancing Teaching and Learning with ICT	August 2009	105
Planning and Reflection	November 2009	94
Teaching and Learning (Curriculum and Assessment, Literacy and Numeracy, Quality Teaching)	March 2010	127
Essential Skills for Classroom Teachers (Essential Skills Modules 1-10)	May 2010	175

Source: ACT Department of Education and Training, Professional Learning and Events Calendar

Leadership development

Leadership development continued throughout the reporting period. This initiative was a targeted response to the need for succession planning. The leadership initiatives targeted school principals, newly appointed school leaders and aspiring school leaders for executive leadership positions in schools. The initiatives were designed in keeping with the School Leadership Framework.

In 2009-10, the Leading to Leadership program was expanded and delivered to 130 staff aspiring to be principals, deputies and executive teachers. The program orientated newly appointed and promoted school leaders through workshops relating to fields of practice as a school leader in the ACT public school system. Specific work on developing school leadership teams was carried out with executives of primary and high schools. Individual development of school leaders and aspiring school leaders was also offered as part of the school leadership development initiatives.

In 2009, 26 newly appointed School Leader A (SLA), 33 School Leader B (SLB) and 11 School Leader C (SLC) staff participated in the School Leaders' Orientation program. In 2010, 11 SLA, 15 SLB and 57 SLC newly appointed leaders commenced the program. In semester 2 2009, the program delivered workshops on two dimensions of the School Leadership Framework—Strategic Resource Management and Working with Others. In semester 1 2010, the program delivered a series of two-hour workshops addressing specific leadership and management areas such as finance, staffing, technology, team building, compliance, literacy and numeracy, and behaviour management.

Other professional development workshops for school leaders continued in the areas of ICT, financial management, evidence-

based practice and meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and special needs students.

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