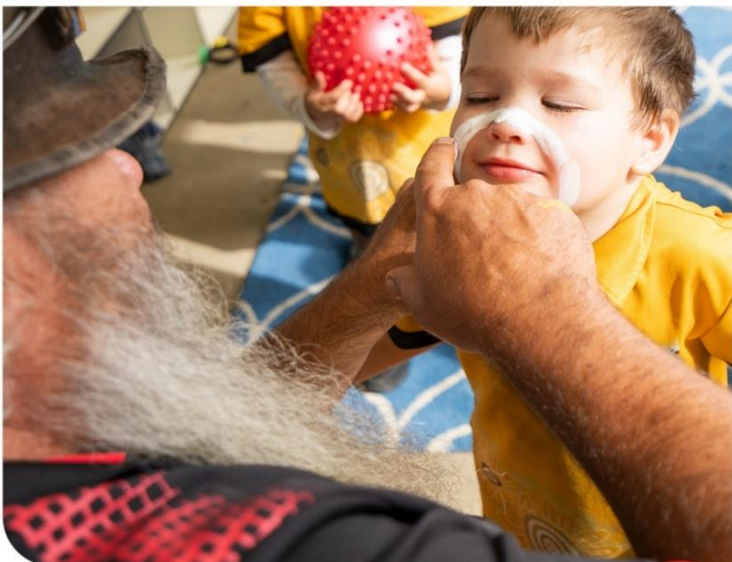


**ACT EDUCATION DIRECTORATE**

# **TEACHER ATTRACTION AND RETENTION PLAN 2023–28**

**Investing in teachers to support  
the future of education**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teachers change lives. Our teachers play a key role in shaping our children and young people to become informed, active, and involved members of their communities.

[\*The Future of Education Strategy\*](#), released in 2018, outlines the important role that teachers play in student outcomes and acknowledges that teachers are expert professionals, highly skilled at working with their students to lead them through their learning journey<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this Plan is to identify the ACT public school teacher workforce requirements for the ACT public education system for the next five years. This includes a commitment to annual target setting and public reporting.

The ACT has one of the fastest growing public education systems in the country. Between 2020 and 2021 the ACT had the highest growth in school aged population and student enrolment figures in the nation<sup>2</sup>. Since 2016, the number of students in public education has increased by 14% and the number of teachers has also increased by 13.5%.

However, the national supply of graduate teachers is in decline, with all state and territory government school systems experiencing teacher workforce shortages. In response, the Commonwealth Government led the development of the [\*National Teacher Workforce Action Plan\*](#) in conjunction with state and territory education ministers and other key stakeholders in the education sector. This national action plan was agreed by education ministers on 15 December 2022.

The Education Directorate projects that ACT public school enrolments will continue to grow each year to 2028, further increasing the demand for qualified teachers. In addition to student growth, the Education Directorate recognises that a portion of the teaching workforce will separate each year due to factors such as resignation and retirement.

Accounting for scenarios that include both high and low teacher separation rates, this Plan projects that the Education Directorate will need to employ between 210-348 full-time equivalent teachers each year. This highlights the importance of both **active recruitment** in a highly competitive marketplace and the **retention** of teachers within the ACT public education system in meeting the ACT's teacher requirements.

To address these unprecedented teacher supply and retention challenges, the ACT Minister for Education and Youth Affairs accepted the findings of the Teacher Shortage Taskforce and agreed to implement all 20 recommendations in their final report over the coming years in a partnership between the Education Directorate and the AEU. This work is ongoing.

While the ACT public education system continues to grow, the ACT Government will continue to ensure that all ACT public schools are well-resourced with funding levels that exceed the national Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). The ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia that meets the minimum funding requirements as set out by the SRS.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Future of Education: An ACT education strategy for the next ten years](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

# Teaching Workforce Profile\*

## OUR SCHOOLS



**90**  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

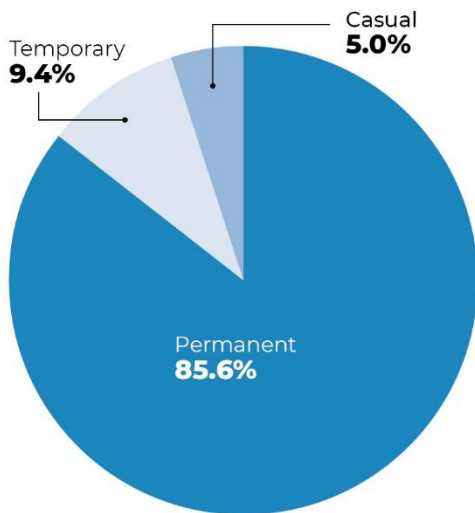


**51,088**  
ENROLMENTS  
(at February 2022)

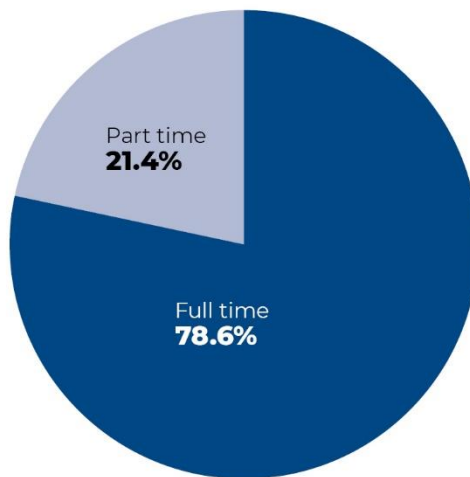
## TEACHING WORKFORCE

(at June 2022)

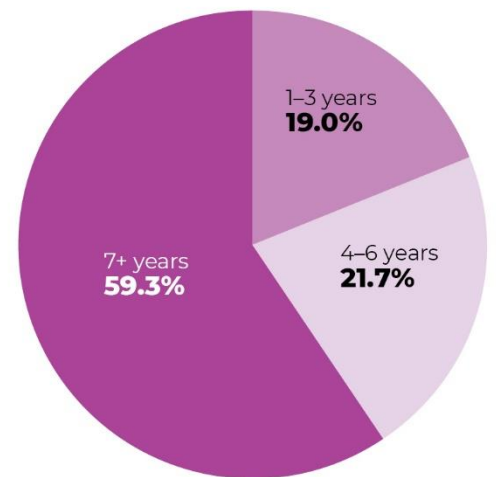
Headcount **4,380**  
FTE **3,821.0**



PROPORTION OF TEACHING WORKFORCE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



PROPORTION OF TEACHING WORKFORCE BY ATTENDANCE TYPE



PROPORTION OF TEACHING WORKFORCE BY ACT PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

## DIVERSITY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples **1.5%**

People with Disability **2.1%**

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse **10.4%**

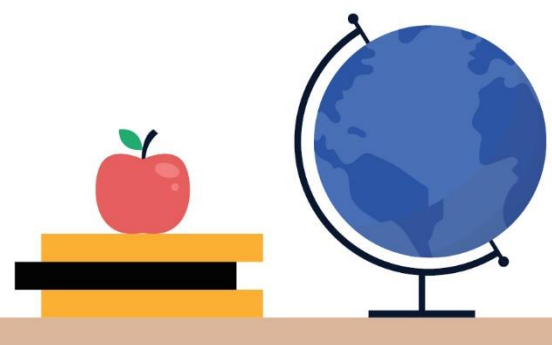
## GENDER

Female **74.5%**

Male **25.5%**

## AVERAGE AGE

41.8 years



\* The Teacher Workforce comprises school-based employees who are either Classroom Teachers or School Leader C staff.

# TEACHER SUPPLY AND DEMAND

## TEACHING WORKFORCE IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Between 2016 and 2022, the full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher workforce has increased by 13.5% with student enrolments growth at 14.0%. Both teacher and enrolment growth increased year-on-year, from 2016 to 2021. Over the same period, teacher separations have continued to be consistent with other Australian jurisdictions.

Table 1: Student enrolments and FTE Teacher Workforce, 2016-22

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Enrolments<sup>3</sup></b>	44,831	46,557	47,945	49,152	50,272	51,153	51,088
<b>Cumulative increase</b>	-	3.9%	6.9%	9.6%	12.1%	14.1%	14.0%
<b>Teacher FTE<sup>4</sup></b>	3,365.6	3,430.6	3,561.3	3,653.6	3,694.3	3,850.1	3,821.0
<b>Cumulative increase</b>	-	1.9%	5.8%	8.6%	9.8%	14.4%	13.5%

Table 2: Permanent Teacher Separation Rate 2017-2022<sup>5</sup>

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Separation rate</b>	5.8%	4.8%	4.8%	5.0%	4.4%	5.6%
<b>Separations</b>	172	142	148	165	154	201

## SCHOOL ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS 2023-28

The ACT population continues to increase, with further growth projected over the next five years. As the school-aged population in the ACT grows, the number of teachers in ACT public schools will need to increase to meet growing demand.

Table 3: Annual Projected Enrolment Growth 2023-2028<sup>6</sup>

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
<b>Annual growth (% change from previous year)</b>	1.9%	1.5%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.6%
<b>Cumulative growth % since 2022</b>	1.9%	3.4%	4.4%	5.3%	6.1%	6.7%

<sup>3</sup> ACT public school enrolments according to Census of ACT Schools.

<sup>4</sup> Classroom Teacher and School Leader C FTE as at the last pay cycle in June, annually, consistent with annual report methodology.

<sup>5</sup> Workforce data from 2016-2022 was analysed in this Plan. Separation rates are comprised of an annual figure, therefore the first annualised data point available is 2017.

<sup>6</sup> These projections have been updated since the release of the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report* on 22 August 2022. Student enrolment projections are subject to fluctuation and are revised in line with ACT population projections.

## TEACHING WORKFORCE PROJECTIONS 2023-28

Teacher workforce projection modelling is based on projected ACT public school enrolments and a defined ACT student-to-teacher ratio of 13.3:1, to identify the additional teachers required to meet the projected student enrolment growth. The projection is subject to fluctuation due to external impacts, including variations in actual student enrolment.

Table 4: Projected Annual Teacher FTE Required based on Student Enrolment Growth 2022-28<sup>7</sup>

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
<b>Required teacher FTE</b>	3,841 <sup>8</sup>	3,915	3,973	4,011	4,050	4,082	4,107
<b>Annual FTE growth</b>	-	74	58	38	39	32	25
<b>Cumulative growth since 2022</b>	-	74	132	170	209	241	266

In addition to student growth, the Education Directorate recognises that a portion of the workforce will separate each year due to factors such as resignation and retirement. Teacher separation rates between 2016 and 2022 typically sat within the range of 4.5% to 6.0% per year. This rate of separation is consistent with available separation trends in New South Wales and Victorian teacher workforces.

Preliminary separations data for 2023 indicates a likelihood of higher than typically expected teacher separations. This is consistent with data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>9</sup> showing that national job mobility rates in the year ending February 2022 have risen to their highest rates since 2012. On this basis, three higher separation rate scenarios are considered below in addition to the three scenarios projected in the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report* released in August 2022.

The table below (Table 5) quantifies the number of teachers likely to leave the workforce based on 6 separation rate scenarios, from low separation to high.

Table 5: Projected Teacher Separation Rates 2023-28

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
<b>Required teacher FTE</b>	3,915	3,973	4,011	4,050	4,082	4,107	
<b>Scenario 1 (4.5% separation)</b>	176	179	180	182	184	185	<b>1,086</b>
<b>Scenario 2 (5.0% separation)</b>	196	199	201	203	204	205	<b>1,208</b>
<b>Scenario 3 (5.5% separation)</b>	215	219	221	223	225	226	<b>1,329</b>
<b>Scenario 4 (6.0% separation)</b>	235	238	241	243	245	246	<b>1,448</b>
<b>Scenario 5 (6.5% separation)</b>	254	258	261	263	265	267	<b>1,569</b>
<b>Scenario 6 (7.0% separation)</b>	274	278	281	284	286	287	<b>1,690</b>

<sup>7</sup> These projections have been updated since the release of the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report* on 22 August 2022. Student enrolment projections are subject to fluctuation and are revised in line with ACT population projections.

<sup>8</sup> The variation between 2022 teacher FTE figures stated in Table 1 and Table 4 indicates the presence of teacher vacancies. Table 1 reflects actual FTE as at June 2022, whilst Table 4 reflects the target FTE figure.

<sup>9</sup> [Australian Bureau of Statistics | Job mobility February 2022](#)

## TEACHER ATTRACTION AND RETENTION PLAN 2023-2028

These figures demonstrate the importance of retaining the current Education Directorate teaching workforce. A low separation rate scenario will require up to 604 fewer teachers to be recruited over the life of this Plan compared to a high separation scenario.

To account for net increases in teacher FTE requirements and for attrition, annual recruitment targets for teachers over the next five years are outlined below:

Table 6: Projected Additional Teacher FTE Required (based on separation scenarios) 2023-28

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
<b>Additional teacher FTE (Scenario 1)</b>	250	237	218	221	216	210	<b>1,352</b>
<b>Additional teacher FTE (Scenario 2)</b>	270	257	239	242	236	230	<b>1,474</b>
<b>Additional teacher FTE (Scenario 3)</b>	289	277	259	262	257	251	<b>1,595</b>
<b>Additional teacher FTE (Scenario 4)</b>	309	296	279	282	277	271	<b>1,714</b>
<b>Additional teacher FTE (Scenario 5)</b>	328	316	299	302	297	292	<b>1,835</b>
<b>Additional teacher FTE (Scenario 6)</b>	348	336	319	323	318	312	<b>1,956</b>

Depending on the various teacher separation scenarios, the Education Directorate will need to recruit between 210-348 teachers each year from 2023 to 2028.

## RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The ACT has a potential supply of teachers from initial teacher education (ITE) graduates and newly registered teachers in the ACT (trained and transferring from other jurisdictions). Recruiting these teachers to the ACT public education sector is the next significant part of the teacher supply equation.

As a result of nationwide teacher recruitment campaigns undertaken by the Education Directorate in 2022, a total of 400 teachers will commence or be appointed in 2023. This includes teachers recruited directly into permanent and fixed-term employment, as well as the conversion of casual teachers into permanent and fixed-term employment.

## TEACHER SUPPLY

Most graduate teachers (60-70%) employed by the Education Directorate completed their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in the ACT. The next largest sources of graduate teachers are NSW (15%) and Victoria (5%). Changes to the number of ITE completions across these three jurisdictions will have a significant impact on ACT public school teacher supply.

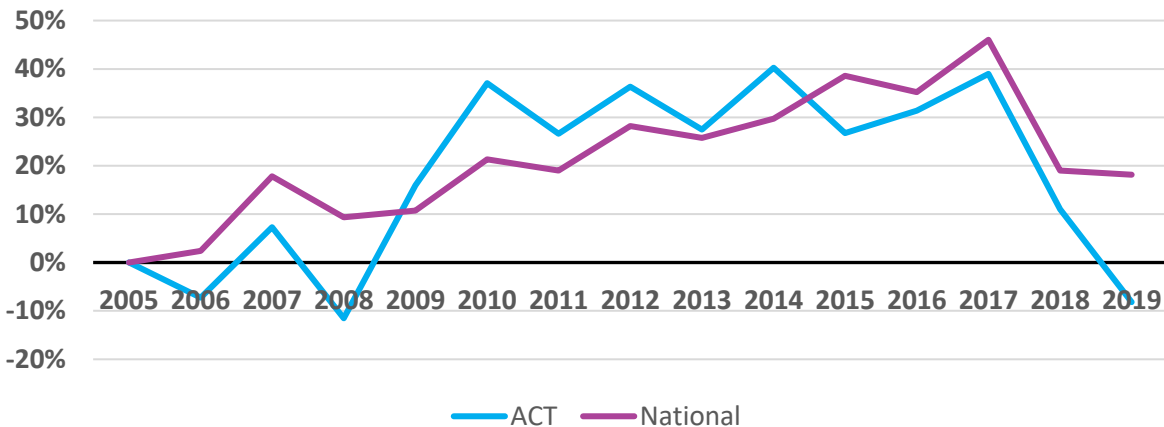
National projections over the next decade forecast strong overall growth in the demand for teachers, but a recent decline in the number of teaching graduates. This national trend has been even more pronounced in the ACT, with the ACT experiencing some of the highest growth in student enrolments whilst experiencing a larger decline in ACT ITE completions.

**ITE COMMENCEMENTS**

Nationally, ITE commencements increased by an average of 3.8% per year between 2005 and 2017, peaking at 35,463 in 2017. Commencements fell significantly by 18.5% in 2018, to 28,894, and again by 0.7% in 2019. Commencements in 2019 (28,694) were near 2011 levels.

ITE commencements in the ACT declined earlier and further than the national average. Commencements increased by an average of 3.3% per year between 2005 and 2017, peaking at 791 in 2014. ACT commencements fell by 20.2% in 2018 and a further 17.3% in 2019. Commencements in 2019 (518) were below 2005 levels, when the ACT population was nearly 100,000 less than present levels. The number of ITE commencements in NSW and Victoria are also trending downwards, which will impact the future supply of teachers in the ACT.

Figure 1: ACT and National ITE commencement growth since 2005<sup>10</sup>

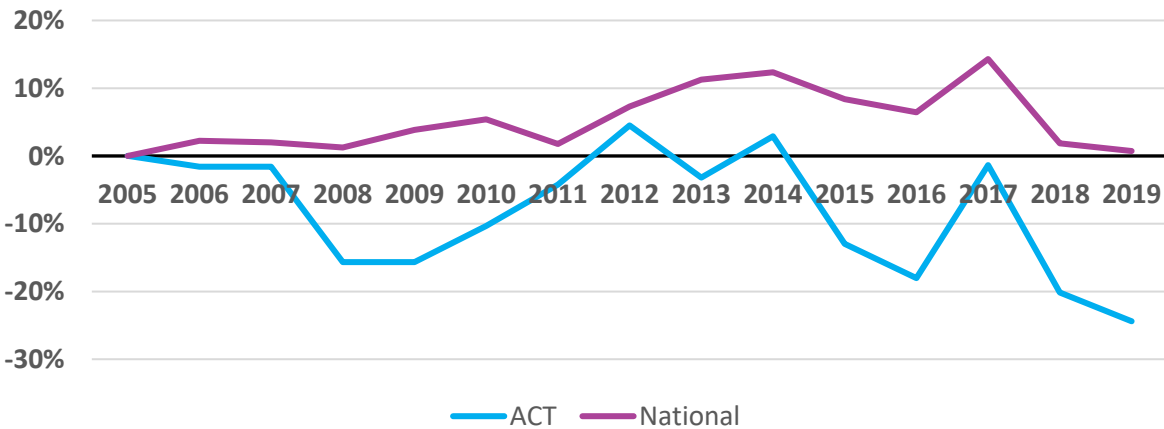


**ITE COMPLETIONS**

Nationally, the total number of students completing ITE is declining. Completions in 2019 (16,644) were 11.9% below the 2017 peak (18,890), and close to 2005 levels.

Except for 2017, there has been a steady decline in the number of ITE completions in the ACT since 2014. From 2015, the number of ITE completions in the ACT have been below 2005 levels, reaching a low of 285 completions in 2019 (see Figure 2). Preliminary data for 2020 and 2021 suggest that this declining trend is likely to have continued beyond 2019.

Figure 2: ACT and National ITE completion growth since 2005<sup>11</sup>



<sup>10</sup> [ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard](#)

<sup>11</sup> [ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard](#)



# TEACHER ATTRACTION AND RETENTION PLAN 2023-2028

ITE data for NSW and Victoria demonstrates that NSW ITE completions have experienced a similar decline since 2014, whilst Victorian ITE completions have largely plateaued. However, ITE commencements in Victoria have begun to decline since 2015, suggesting that Victoria may also be likely to experience a decline in ITE completions in the coming years.

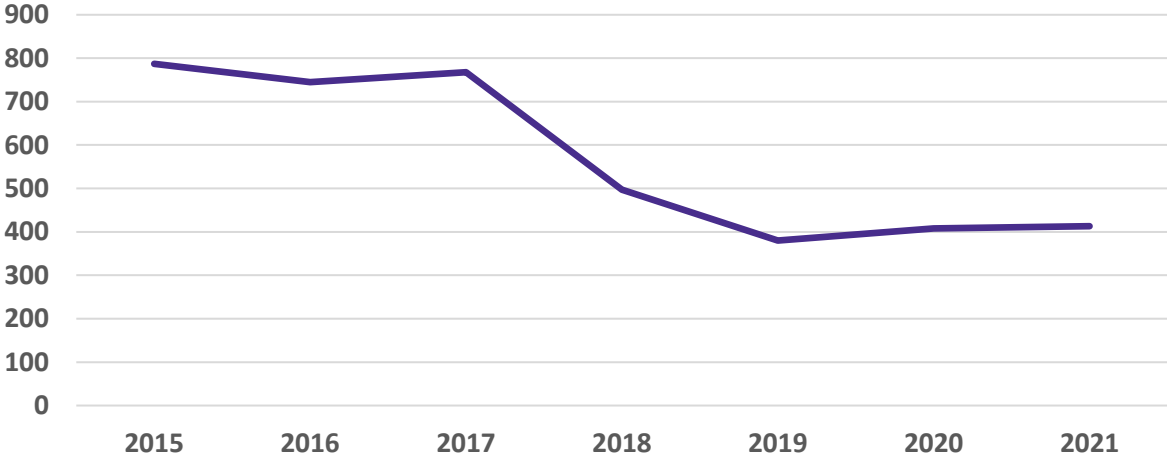
Collectively, this means that the Education Directorate’s traditional sources of teacher supply are declining.

## REGISTERED TEACHERS IN THE ACT

Every teacher in the ACT must be registered by the ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI). The total number of TQI registered teachers in the ACT grew from 7,656 to 8,237 between 2016 and 2021. This is a total growth of 7.6% and an average annual growth of 1.5%.

The number of newly registered teachers declined significantly in 2018 and 2019 and then stabilised at those lower levels. The number of new teacher registrations was around 48% lower in 2021 (413) compared to 2015 (787). The number of newly registered teachers included both ITE graduates registering in the ACT, as well as teachers moving to the ACT from interstate or overseas. Newly registered teachers in the ACT by year is a strong measure of ‘new supply’.

Figure 3: New TQI Teacher Registrations in ACT by Year<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup> [ACT Teacher Quality Institute Annual Reports](#)

# TEACHER SHORTAGE TASKFORCE REPORT

In mid-2021 the ACT Minister for Education and Youth Affairs established a joint Education Directorate and Australian Education Union (AEU) Teacher Shortage Taskforce to examine a range of workforce issues in the ACT public education system.

The Teacher Shortage Taskforce provided *the [Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report](#)* to the Minister in August 2022, outlining its findings and 20 recommendations. The report includes a detailed analysis of the scope and extent of teacher shortages in ACT public schools. This positions the ACT as nation-leading in our shared understanding of teaching workforce challenges and our ongoing commitment to address workforce challenges, working closely, collaboratively, and productively with the workforce.

Key findings of the *Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report* include:

- Demand for teachers in the ACT will continue to grow and recruitment will be increasingly challenging in the context of a national teacher shortage and ongoing impact of COVID-19.
- It is important to have a future-focused approach to workforce planning and develop incentives and initiatives for the ACT Public Schools to be the education system of choice for teachers, both graduate and experienced.
- The current casual relief model no longer meets the day-to-day staffing requirements in schools, and teacher absences are expected to increase due to COVID-19 transmissions.
- There is a need to develop a model that will increase teacher availability to cover unplanned absences and support schools in the day-to-day management of their operations.
- Given the national teacher shortage and ongoing impact of COVID-19 in our schools and broader community, there is a critical need to ensure that we continue to retain our current teaching workforce.

The ACT Government highly values the teaching profession and wants to ensure that ACT public schools are great places to learn and great places to work.

The Government understands that day to day working conditions are the most important factor in teacher satisfaction and retention.

Following the release of the Final Report, the Minister accepted all recommendations and agreed to their implementation over coming years in a partnership between the Education Directorate and the AEU.

This includes establishing a Sustainable Workload Management Committee to undertake a review of the core role of a teacher, current pressures on teacher workloads, and implement strategies to maximise teaching time. This will include a review of duties that may be undertaken by staff other than teachers.

Through the implementation of these recommendations and the *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement*, we aim to make the Education Directorate an employer of choice by offering nation-leading teacher salaries and working conditions.

# FUNDING

The projected additional teachers required for 2023-2028 will be fully funded by the ACT's student enrolment-based funding, as outlined in the current and future ACT Budget papers. While school funding is mostly used for staff salaries, it is not allocated on a teacher FTE basis, providing schools the ability to determine a staffing profile that best meets the individual needs of the school, students and its community.

All ACT public schools are well-resourced with funding levels that exceed the national Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). The ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia that meets the minimum funding requirements as set out by the SRS.

Under the SRS, the ACT Government is required to fund 80% of public school costs, while the Commonwealth is required to fund 20%. The ACT Government currently funds schools at approximately 90% of the SRS.

Available funding is then distributed to ACT public schools through a needs-based funding model known as the Student Resource Allocation (SRA).

The SRA is a student needs-based school funding model. The following key components are reflected in each school's SRA Statement:

Core Allocation:

- per student funding;
- stages of schooling; and
- base funding.

Loading Allocations:

- students with a low socio-economic status background;
- students with English as an additional language or dialect;
- Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Student Support (Cultural Integrity); and
- students with disability.

This ensures that every ACT school is funded to meet the unique characteristics of their school community.

The Education budget is indexed annually at 3% and additional funding is also provided for increasing school enrolments. The forward estimates in the ACT Budget Papers outline the future funding commitments.

The precise number of teachers required each year (based on enrolments) and the agreed salary levels through the Enterprise Bargaining process, will determine the cost of recruiting the projected number of additional teachers.

## MEASURING PROGRESS AND ANNUAL REPORTING

This Plan includes projections of teacher workforce requirements for the ACT public education system for the period 2023-2028.

As these projections are based on expected system growth and staff turnover over a five-year period, they represent a point in time analysis and will be subject to change over the period.

The Education Directorate will continue to mature its workforce planning capability to deliver increased insight into workforce supply and demand, as well as identifying teacher specialisation supply and demand to further refine future workforce strategies.

Based on a teacher workforce projections methodology that has been agreed between the Education Directorate and the AEU, an annual target will be established each year, with reporting on the outcome to be detailed in the Education Directorate's Annual Report for the life of the Plan.

As necessary, future year projections will be updated to consider new data and to reflect any changes in policy settings that affect the number of teachers that are required.

This information will also be publicly available on the Education Directorate's website at: <https://www.education.act.gov.au/>



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

February 2023