



**ACT**  
Government  
Education and Training

# Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour

ACT Government Response

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2015

This publication is subject to copyright. Except as permitted under the *Copyright Act 2003*, no part of it may in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, microcopying, photocopying, recording or otherwise) be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted without prior written permission. Enquiries should be addressed to the Territory Records Office, ACT Government, GPO Box 158 Canberra City ACT 2601.

First published November 2015

Website – [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)

Produced by: ACT Government Publishing Services

## Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues accessible to as many people as possible. If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format – such as large print and audio – please call the Canberra Blind Society on (02) 6247 4580.

If English is not your first language and you require the translating and interpreting service, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450. If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require assistance, please call the National Relay Service on 133 677.

Inquiries about this publication should be directed to:

ACT Education and Training Directorate

GPO Box 158

Canberra ACT 2601

Australia

Email: [DET.media@act.gov.au](mailto:DET.media@act.gov.au)

Phone: (02) 6207 3723

Produced for the ACT Education and Training Directorate.

Publication No 15/1328

# MINISTER'S FOREWORD

The Australian Capital Territory has one of the best education systems in the nation. We believe all children and young people have the right to a high quality education so they can flourish and become the best they can be. We have more than 70,000 students in our public, Catholic and Independent Schools. We also have more than 7,500 teachers, learning support assistants and related school staff who work tirelessly every day to provide that quality education.

All Canberrans are rightly proud of our schools, public, Independent and Catholic. Each one of them promotes both excellence and inclusion. Our education system is constantly working on improvement and reform on every measure – learning, teaching, evaluation, innovation, and supporting students, teachers and families. As new challenges emerge, we must evolve to meet them. All schools continuously change to reflect contemporary practice.

In April this year I announced an Expert Panel to undertake a Review of Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour in Schools. The terms of reference were to review policy and practice in ACT schools with reference to contemporary best practice. This was to be done through extensive community consultation.

I would like to thank the members of the Expert Panel, Emeritus Professor Anthony Shaddock, Dr Sue Packer AM, FRACP and Mr Alasdair Roy for their hard work and commitment in undertaking this review and producing the report. The ACT Government agrees with all recommendations made in the report and will use them to strengthen existing practice and policy.

The Expert Panel undertook a comprehensive review of existing arrangements, involving open consultation with teachers, school leaders and other school staff, parents and carers, students, support organisations, education and care experts and other community members.

I gratefully recognise the input of all individuals and organisations who contributed their knowledge and experiences to the Expert Panel. I am confident that your voices resonate throughout the report and are reflected in the recommendations.

I would also like to thank the Catholic Education Office and Association of Independent Schools ACT for the collaborative way they have engaged in the development of this Government response. Their contribution to educational excellence in the ACT is greatly valued.

The Review rightly draws attention to the commitment, expertise and good practice that is evident in many schools; that 'the ACT has strong government and non-government school systems and ACT students achieve outstanding results on many measures'. We can and will build on these strong foundations through acknowledging and accepting opportunities to improve and taking a positive future focus that continues to place students at the centre.

It is clear that all schools, in all jurisdictions, are increasingly dealing with students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. Across the ACT, almost 3,000 students – four percent of total enrolments – are identified as special needs enrolments. The ACT Government currently invests approximately \$70 million in supporting students and teachers in meeting this challenge.

I am very pleased to provide to the ACT community the Expert Panel Review of Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour in Schools and the ACT Government response. I look forward to reporting on the progress made in building on the existing foundations to improve systems and supports for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training



# PREAMBLE

Access to high quality education is a right of all children and young people and as a community, we aspire to provide them with an excellent foundation for their future endeavours, to contribute to a fair and safe community and feel proud of their achievements.

The Expert Panel report recognises that the ACT has strong school systems and achieves outstanding results on many measures. It recognises the positive work of schools, school leaders and teachers and the challenge faced by schools in supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. The Panel recognises this is a challenge faced by all jurisdictions, not just the ACT.

Schools are informed by best practice and national reform agendas, such as the implementation of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the Australian Curriculum, Initial Teacher Education reforms and the Empowering Local Decision Making National Partnership. There is already a strong platform on which to build. The recommendations of the Expert Panel provide direction for further opportunities to improve.

The report contains 50 recommendations relating to the key themes of: students at the centre of our work; policies and procedures; communication; Positive Behaviour Supports; understanding of restrictive practice; professional learning; buildings and spaces; and cross sectoral collaboration. It provides an opportunity to strengthen the capability of educational organisations, schools, teachers and support staff to build on existing good practice and respond to students effectively.

All recommendations have been accepted and viewed as an opportunity for reflection and development. The ACT Government's response to the Expert Panel's recommendations will be evidenced through:

- greater connection of schools to their communities;
- supports and programs that meet the needs of students and staff;
- an increased investment in teachers and quality teaching practices;
- physical environments that facilitate good outcomes;
- more accessible, best practice policies consistently implemented; and
- improved accountability and open communication.

The response to the recommendations is the result of collaboration across Government and between Government and non-Government education providers. The Education and Training Directorate (ETD), Catholic Education Office (CE) and Association of Independent Schools ACT (AIS) have considered each recommendation and acknowledge a strong desire to build on existing reforms, improvements and initiatives in so far as that is practical and possible. As an independent governing body representing 18 independent schools that are separate and autonomous entities, AIS notes all the recommendations and the ACT Government response. CE agrees with all recommendations and notes that they have in place a range of policies and programs specific to their schools.

The ACT Government appreciates the input of both organisations and the ongoing partnerships that strengthen ACT schools and communities. ETD will share resources, professional learning and identify further opportunities to work together to implement recommendations from the Review.

ETD, as the public and largest provider of education in the ACT, will take leadership of delivering responses to the Review, articulated in this document. ETD's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan Education Capital: Leading the Nation articulates a vision for every child, young person and adult in the ACT to benefit from a high quality, accessible

education, childcare and training system and for every student to learn, thrive and be equipped with the skills and attitudes to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. Our work is strengthened through the partnerships we build with students, their families and the community more broadly. Everyone has a stake and a contribution to make.

The ACT Government strongly agrees with the Panel that 'issues posed by students with complex needs and challenging behaviour should not be problematised but instead seen as an opportunity, invitation and challenge to further exemplify the inclusive vision of the ACT and its schools'. The integration of the recommendations and findings of the Expert Panel into ACT schools' program of reform will improve outcomes for all students.

# INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

## Chapter 3: The Legal Context

**Recommendation 3.1: That the ACT Government, when responding to the recommendations of the Law Reform Advisory Council’s review of the Discrimination Act 1991, consider issues of consistency between Commonwealth and ACT discrimination law when applied in the context of education services.**

**Agreed.** The Law Reform Advisory Council (LRAC) provided its final report to the Attorney-General in March 2015. The Attorney-General has been considering the 68 recommendations and is expected to release the report by the end of 2015.

The Government will consider issues of consistency with discrimination law in other jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth, when developing its response to LRAC’s report. In particular, the Government will consider the context of education services as recommended by the Expert Panel.

**Recommendation 3.2: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop practical and readily accessible guidelines to enable school leaders and staff to understand and comply with their core legal obligations with respect to human rights, discrimination, work health and safety, and privacy; including how to reconcile potentially competing obligations.**

**Agreed.** ETD policies and related documents have been developed with regard to relevant legislative obligations. ETD is currently implementing an improved policy development framework that will enhance and strengthen policies, procedures and supporting documents across a range of areas including curriculum and student health and well being. As recommended by the Expert Panel, ETD considers that policy development and review work under the new policy framework will reflect the practical and readily accessible guidance needed for schools and staff including addressing relevant legislative obligations.

The new framework will include the introduction of a Policy Webpage on the ETD website from Term 1 2016, to reflect contemporary website management and provide a more logical and intuitive grouping of policies. Guidance for staff on the internal website will also be better organised to enable user friendly access. Policies will be structured in a new simplified policy template including reference to core legislation which will be considered in the development or review of policies. This work has a focus on supporting schools as well as facilitating ease of access to policies for parents and the community.

ETD will make available policies and guidelines developed for both CE and AIS.

CE is currently in the process of developing a Wellbeing presence on their intranet which will include the necessary guidelines. The work, health, and safety complaints and critical incident policies have been recently updated and professional learning has been provided to every Principal on the policies to support their implementation in schools.

## Chapter 4: The Policy Context

**Recommendation 4.1: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, review their policies and procedures with respect to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour to ensure that all schools have a comprehensive suite of relevant policies and procedures.**

**Agreed.** ETD's Safe and Supportive Schools Policy and Guidelines provide broad guidance for schools regarding students with complex needs and challenging behaviour including support for development of further materials at school level. In light of the Expert Panel's recommendations, the policy and guidelines will be reviewed to include the most contemporary advice for schools.

The new 'Respectful Behaviours, Respectful Schools' resource, a comprehensive package of guidance and support material for schools regarding behaviour support for all students, including those with complex needs and challenging behaviour will be available in 2016. ETD has sought permission from Tasmanian and Victorian Government Education Directorates to use their resources to support the development of explicit guidance materials for ACT public schools and will share these resources with CE and AIS.

CE is currently developing a Wellbeing Framework which will include policies and procedures in respect to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. CE will work in conjunction with ETD in the development of resources to support schools in meeting the needs of all students, particularly those with complex and challenging behaviour. CE will also seek permission to use material from other jurisdictions that will assist us in addressing the needs of students and supporting staff and students.

The AIS will support member schools to review relevant policies and procedures and will access the ETD resources to provide to ACT Independent Schools.

## Chapter 6: School Culture and Relationships

**Recommendation 6.1: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, encourage all school leaders to implement KidsMatter (for primary schools) and MindMatters (for high schools) as part of their overall strategy to support positive school culture, student wellbeing, and behaviour.**

**Agreed.** ETD, AIS and CE fully endorse KidsMatter and MindMatters as evidenced-based programs that are strength based with a focus on a whole school strategy. ETD has had a partnership with Beyond Blue since 2001. ETD actively promotes MindMatters and KidsMatter and 61 public schools (71%) are currently participating in the program. The program has recently been made available online to all schools nationally and reflects contemporary best practice in mental health supports for children and young people.

CE is in the process of recruiting a suitably qualified person to support the implementation and sustainability of KidsMatter and MindMatters in schools. KidsMatter and MindMatters are also actively promoted across all AIS member schools. AIS will continue to support these programs and identify other recognised programs appropriate for each independent school's context.

**Recommendation 6.2: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop and promote tools to assist all schools to meaningfully and regularly consult with all students about (a) their experiences at school; (b) decisions that affect them at school; and (c) the operation of the school.**

**Agreed.** ETD, CE and AIS acknowledge that student satisfaction is an important indicator of student engagement, leading to positive learning outcomes. ETD provides multiple avenues to express their satisfaction with their educational experience. A number of schools also promote and have active Student Parliaments, Representative Councils and Forums which provide a mechanism for students to participate in decision-making and initiating positive actions within their school. In high schools and colleges, students are often members of the School Board. ETD promotes the Engaging Schools Framework which emphasises student voice and participation across schools.

In addition to the Student Congress, the Minister for Education and Training will facilitate a cross-sectoral student forum in Youth Week 2016 with a focus on student voice in school decision making.

**Recommendation 6.3: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop and promote practical resources to assist all schools to effectively engage with parents/carers of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.**

**Agreed.** In 2015 ETD appointed a Director for Families and Students as a key contact for parents, students and the community to raise concerns in regards to the needs of individual students. Improving parent and carer engagement in students' learning is an ongoing priority for ETD, CE and independent schools.

The ACT Government has invested approximately \$293,900 from 2013/14 – 2015/16 to partner with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for a cross-sectoral project titled Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT. The project has seen the creation of a suite of resources for use by families, schools and communities across all sectors of schooling in the ACT – public, Catholic and independent. The resources support a shared understanding of what parental engagement is, why it matters, how it works, and how best to foster it. Additional resources as part of the project will be released in November 2015 and January 2016. The Directorate will investigate the potential to expand the resources for parental engagement to include the development of advice for parents/carers of students with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

CE identifies parent engagement as a key priority for 2016 and has incorporated parents into the Wellbeing and Inclusion Model. The parents/carers will be actively engaged in the case management approach promoted in the model.

**Recommendation 6.4: That ETD, CE, and AIS, negotiate a partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the Community Services Directorate to better meet the needs of students who live in out of home care, drawing on models such as the Victorian 'Out of Home Care Education Commitment'.**

**Agreed.** Community Services Directorate (CSD) will lead the development of the partnership agreement with ETD, CE and AIS. This agreement will build on the existing work between ETD and CSD to improve educational outcomes for students living in out of home care, including having a cross Directorate Steering Committee and working groups to support educational outcomes for students in out of home care. CE and AIS acknowledge that the partnership could be strengthened in this area and welcome the recommendation.

## Chapter 7: Settings and Placements

**Recommendation 7.1: That the ACT Government, in consultation with ETD, the Community Services Directorate, and ACT Health, develop and implement a range of options to ensure that primary school students with very challenging behaviours are able to access an appropriate educational setting (or combination of settings), that provides them with appropriate behavioural support and therapeutic intervention.**

**Agreed.** The ACT Government is committed to whole-of-government approaches which enhance educational and developmental outcomes for children. There are currently a number of evidence-based programs being jointly delivered by CSD, Health and ETD in primary schools including neuropsychological approaches to behaviour and therapeutic supports to enhance educational outcomes for all students. For example, in September 2012 the ACT Government committed \$3.05 million over four years to establish Melaleuca Place to support children recovering from abuse and neglect. The focus of Melaleuca Place is to provide high quality trauma-informed therapeutic services to children aged 0-12 years who are current clients of the statutory services.

Programs from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Child and Family Centres, therapy services and health supports are all delivered collaboratively in schools to ensure students with a range of complex needs are able to receive appropriate education in mainstream schools. Another example is a new initiative being established known as Primary school aged early mental health. This CAMHS led program targets 5-12 year old children with emerging mental illness/disorders. It will work in partnership with ETD and the Child and Family Centres.

**Recommendation 7.2: That ETD consult stakeholders and develop and publish a policy and procedure regarding the placement of students in Learning Support Units and Centres, covering issues including: timing, eligibility criteria, and rights of review of placement decisions.**

**Agreed.** ETD will review the currently available procedures to ensure they include timing, eligibility criteria, and rights of review of placement decisions. ETD will consult stakeholders to ensure clarity of the documentation and promote to families and staff.

**Recommendation 7.3: That the Centralised Placement Panel provide information about the profile and needs of prospective students to the relevant ACT Public School Principal, and consult with schools before reaching a decision to place a student in a Learning Support Unit.**

**Agreed.** The Centralised Placement Panel works collaboratively to provide a best fit for each student and, where appropriate, discuss possible placements with schools prior to a final decision. ETD acknowledges the importance of working collaboratively with schools in line with the Directorate's legislative obligations under the Disability Education Standards 2005 and the Privacy Act 1988. Schools must ensure the opportunities and choices for students with disability in relation to admission or enrolment in school or to a particular program are not inadvertently restricted.

**Recommendation 7.4: That ETD publish information about support and education options for students at risk in the ACT Public School system, including the location of programs, operational philosophy, curriculum offered, criteria for enrolment, and referral process.**

**Agreed.** ETD will publish information about support and education options for all students on the Directorate website and provide this information to Access Canberra. ETD will also work with parents and citizens peak bodies and other key stakeholders to ensure that information they provide to the community and schools on alternative education programs is updated to include location of programs, operational philosophy, curriculum offered, criteria for enrolment, and referral process.

**Recommendation 7.5: That ETD develop and implement a coherent strategy for the provision of alternative education programs and/or other flexible learning options, for students at risk of disengaging from secondary school. This strategy should ensure that, if required, such students have access to an appropriate alternative education program throughout their secondary schooling, building on the positive features of the Achievement Centres and Connect10 programs.**

**Agreed.** ETD recognises the importance of having an explicit strategy for students at risk of disengagement from secondary school and has reviewed the existing strategy for provision of alternative education programs, in particular Achievement Centres and Connect 10 settings. ETD has already planned consultations with stakeholders in Term 4 2015 to update its approach.

## Chapter 8: Physical Environment and Infrastructure of Schools

**Recommendation 8.1: That ETD, CE and each Independent School, ensure that all existing schools have safe, calming/sensory spaces that are appropriate to meet the needs of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.**

**Agreed.** The ACT Government requires all schools to have infrastructure suitable to the provision of inclusive educational programs. ACT public schools will be provided further guidance to ensure that designated calming/sensory spaces are in line with the Directorate's Safe and Supportive Schools policy.

CE schools will review and assess their current spaces with a view to incorporate such environments within their context if they do not currently exist. A CE school has recently officially opened its Sensory Garden which is an example of best practice in relation to the provision of safe, calming sensory spaces. This is identified as a pilot project.

AIS notes the recommendation and will support member schools to review current provision for calming/sensory spaces.

**Recommendation 8.2: That ETD, CE and each Independent School, ensure that the design briefs for all new schools follow principles of universal design, and include an appropriate range of learning areas and facilities to meet the needs of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. These may include flexible classroom areas with adjacent small group learning spaces, and inclusive playgrounds, as well as safe, calming/sensory spaces.**

**Agreed.** ETD, CE and AIS accept the recommendation. The ACT Education and Training Directorate Functional Brief for the construction of ACT Public Schools 2015 is based on the principles of universal design. This functional brief will be finalised prior to the release of the tender for the design and construction of the Preschool – Year 6 school in North Gungahlin in early – mid 2016. ETD will share elements of universal design with CE and AIS.

Resource Management Services within CE are aware of current philosophy related to learning spaces and have developed student responsive spaces through the Building Education Revolution (BER) and the ongoing Block Grant Authority (BGA) grants which provide flexible classroom areas with adjacent small group learning areas. Resource Management Services will work in conjunction with Religious Education and Curriculum Services to create a design brief to incorporate the safe calming sensory spaces where possible in new building projects. CE has and will continue to access the advice of professionals when reviewing the impact of these spaces on student sensory needs.

## Chapter 9: Supporting Student Behaviour

**Recommendation 9.1: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, (a) endorse School-Wide Positive Behavioural Support; (b) resource and support schools to implement the program for a minimum of three years; and (c) evaluate the success of the program.**

**Agreed.** ETD has negotiated with NSW to implement the Positive Behaviour Support in Schools program in 2016. The program will be evaluated and reported on following the first year of implementation. ETD will share the proposed program and outcomes with CE and AIS.

CE will endorse School Wide Positive Behaviour Support and analyse ways that they can resource and support schools to implement the program over the next three years, acknowledging this may need to be a budgetary focus for CE in 2017.

AIS notes that member schools may have very similar approaches to that of Positive Behavioural Support as the theoretical foundation of this program is to create learning environments that are perceived by the student to be safe, welcoming and engaging. AIS will work with member schools to inform them of Positive Behavioural Support. Should individual schools wish to adopt the Positive Behavioural Support model, they could use the available resource support to implement the program for a minimum of three years.

## Chapter 10: Targeted Services and Supports

**Recommendation 10.1: That ETD increase the number of psychologists/school counsellors (or other professionals with complementary expertise) within schools to meet the ratio of 1:500 students recommended by the Australian Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools Association.**

**Agreed in principle.** ETD has recently increased the ratio of school psychologists to students to a level that compares favourably across all Australian schools. ETD notes the Expert Panel's advice that 'rather than simply recruiting psychologists, it may be helpful to complement existing numbers of psychologists with social workers and other allied health professionals'. In 2016 ETD will consider options for strengthening multidisciplinary teams who complement the work of school psychologists.

**Recommendation 10.2: That CE monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Wellbeing and Inclusion Team Program currently being introduced in Catholic Schools.**

**Agreed.** The Case Management approach through the Wellbeing Inclusion Team and Student School Engagement Team strategy will have external evaluations at each stage of its implementation. The CE Inclusion and Wellbeing

team will monitor and evaluate the outcomes of Wellbeing projects in schools through close mentoring, discussion and data collection. CE will report on successful projects and will provide opportunities for schools to share best practice.

**Recommendation 10.3: That ETD ensure that the NSETs are sufficiently resourced and supported to allow them to (a) provide ongoing coaching to teachers within the classroom setting to assist with the support of students with very challenging behaviours; (b) respond proactively and in a timely way to meet identified needs; and (c) develop a high level of expertise in relation to the support and management of students with very challenging behaviours, and obtain specialist consultant advice where required.**

**Agreed.** ETD has commenced a structural change to NSET governance to strengthen the role and outcomes of the teams. In addition, from 2016 ETD will consider the configuration of its multidisciplinary teams, provide further professional learning and facilitate the development of relationships with specialist consultant advisors from both the government and non-government sectors to further strengthen this model.

ETD is currently reviewing supporting materials, policies and guidelines which will support the development of expertise in relation to students with challenging behaviours. ETD has appointed a Director for Families and Students to assist families with students with complex needs and challenging behaviours to access further assistance when required.

**Recommendation 10.4: That ETD resource and establish within each NSET a Learning Difficulties Partner position with specialised expertise in assessing and responding to students with learning difficulties.**

**Agreed.** ETD will establish an identified member of the team as Learning Difficulties Partner who will provide specialised expertise to assist schools in responding to students with learning difficulties, including gifted students who present with one or more specific learning difficulties, to ensure they reach their full academic potential.

**Recommendation 10.5: That ETD develop a mechanism to allow each NSET, in circumstances where a student with complex needs and challenging behaviour does not meet criteria for SCAN funding, to obtain funding for additional staffing or other services assessed by the NSET as necessary to adequately support that student.**

**Agreed.** ETD is committed to the support of every student and has a comprehensive approach to supporting students and staff when individual challenges arise. NSET staff collaborate to build capacity of school staff through coaching, plan development and skills demonstration in schools. If additional resources are required to support the implementation of individual behaviour support plans there is a mechanism for this to occur. Resources can also be provided for school developed programs in the case that several students need support.

**Recommendation 10.6: That ETD collect and analyse data on student outcomes, and school, student and parent/carer satisfaction, with respect to the NSET program, and that this data be used to monitor and improve the effectiveness of ETD's overall strategy with respect to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.**

**Agreed.** ETD has commenced a structural change to NSET governance and is currently reviewing and updating NSET procedures, including the development and implementation of consistent data collection and analysis.

This will ensure the information collected is relevant and provides NSET with specific information to guide and evaluate practice. The new Director of Regulation and Compliance will be consulted on the reporting of data gathered by NSET.

**Recommendation 10.7: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, commit to the professionalisation of LSAs and ensure that by 2018 (a) all LSAs hold, or are in the process of obtaining, at least a Certificate IV in School Age Education & Care or equivalent; and (b) all LSAs working in a Learning Support Unit or specialist school hold, or are in the process of obtaining, at least a Certificate IV in Education Support or equivalent.**

**Agreed in principle.** ETD is committed to the continuing professional development of all staff and values the contribution of LSAs in supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. ETD is currently undertaking a review of the school assistant classification where job expectations, complexities and training/qualification requirements are being considered. ETD will encourage maximum participation by staff in a range of professional learning.

CE will liaise with training providers on delivering Certificate IV training programs to maximise the number of Learning Support Assistants with relevant qualifications. CE will also review the role of the LSA in relation to responding to students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. In conjunction with this review, CE will explore opportunities for supporting the wellbeing of LSAs who work closely with students that have complex needs.

AIS notes the recommendation and will work with the other sectors to explore strategic options for workforce planning.

## Chapter II: Protecting Student and Staff Safety

**Recommendation 11.1: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop practical guidelines on the appropriate use of voluntary withdrawal spaces, seclusion, and physical restraint.**

**Agreed.** ETD has developed Safe and Supportive Schools Policy and guidelines, which will be updated in light of this recommendation. The policy will include an outline of responsibilities regarding the use of withdrawal spaces and restrictive practices such as seclusion and physical restraint.

Comprehensive guidance on strategies to meet student needs and prevent escalating behaviour is currently provided in the ETD 'Safe and Supportive Schools: Behaviour Support Guide'. The 'Respectful Behaviour, Respectful Schools' resource will provide schools with comprehensive guidance for supporting the development of positive behaviour in all students. It will also include (but not be limited to) specific guidance regarding: the appropriate use of withdrawal spaces as part of behaviour support plans; appropriate and inappropriate use of restrictive practices; and the decision making process involved in determining the use of restrictive practices such as seclusion and physical restraint.

ETD will share these resources with CE and AIS and will collaborate to develop future resources to support all students.

ETD notes that in 2015, \$615,000 was allocated to schools to support the implementation of Social Emotional Learning approaches in schools. Many students affected by trauma have complex needs and Social Emotional

Learning approaches in schools will support behavioural regulation and should help reduce the incidence of challenging behaviours.

CE acknowledges that the development of guidelines on the appropriate use of voluntary spaces, seclusion and physical restraints will be priority policy issues for 2016. CE has a policy Restraint of Students which relates to physical restraint and is currently working on formulating guidelines for schools in relation to the use of restrictive practices. This work is informed by the Care, Welfare, Safety and Security principles provided through Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. The focus of these guidelines will be to support teachers in identifying precipitating factors and early warning signs so that there is a focus on prevention and the provision of the least restrictive environment. The guidelines will also support the maintenance of a workplace culture in which all staff feel supported and understand the place of voluntary withdrawal spaces, seclusion, and physical restraint.

**Recommendation 11.2: That ETD and CE establish procedures that (a) enable ETD and CE to approve and monitor any behaviour support plans that propose the use of restrictive practices for an individual student; (b) require member schools to report each occasion of the use of restrictive practices to a nominated officer within ETD or CE; and (c) monitor the use of restrictive practices and identify trends in order to inform service improvement.**

**That each Independent School establish procedures that enable any behaviour support plans that propose the use of restrictive practices to be approved by the school leadership or management.**

**Agreed.** ETD has developed Safe and Supportive Schools Policy and guidelines, which will be updated in light of this recommendation. The policy requires schools to submit to the School Network Leader any behaviour support plan proposing the use of restrictive practices for an individual student. Schools will also be required to report each occasion of the use of restrictive practices. The Director of Compliance and Regulation will have a role in monitoring and identifying trends.

Guideline B of the Interim Safe and Supportive Schools Policy provides broad guidance to schools regarding the decision making process surrounding the use of restrictive practices. Further guidance will be provided to schools in the 'Respectful Behaviour, Respectful Schools' resource currently being developed by ETD.

CE agrees to develop a systematic and strategic approach to collating and monitoring behaviour and safety plans which will align with the ETD proposal in relation to restrictive practices. CE will formalise a system to report and monitor the use of restrictive practices.

AIS notes that where such procedures are not in place already, the AIS will support member schools to establish such procedures.

**Recommendation 11.3: That the ACT Government implement a whole-of-government approach, and develop a legislative framework, to regulate the use and independent oversight of restrictive practices in all ACT schools, and other relevant settings.**

**Agreed.** The ACT Government will implement a whole-of-government approach and a legislative framework for restrictive practises in all ACT schools and other relevant settings. The Directors-General of Community Services and Education and Training Directorates are convening a steering committee to develop a legislative model for restrictive practices oversight in the ACT. The Steering Committee will comprise representatives from relevant Directorates, Disability Services Commissioner and a disability human rights' expert.

**Recommendation 11.4: That ETD (a) amend the Exemption Certificate policy and procedures to require all Exemption Certificates to be subject to regular review (for example, every six months) to ensure that the exemption remains necessary; and (b) monitor the basis for the exemption of students, and the proportion of students subject to exemption who have a disability.**

**Agreed.** Exemption Certificates are only granted for a maximum of six months to facilitate regular review. Applications for Exemption Certificates are assessed to ensure the best interests of the student are taken into account and professional support for the exemption is verified. ETD will analyse this data, including noting the proportion of students with disability and other identified cohorts. The Director of Regulation and Compliance will have a role in monitoring this data.

**Recommendation 11.5: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, provide alternative options to out-of-school suspension where appropriate and possible, including in-school suspensions with temporary additional staffing or support.**

**Agreed.** ETD notes that public schools use a range of strategies to support students, including alternative arrangements for suspension. The positive outcomes of these strategies are supported by a decrease of almost 30 per cent in the number of students in out of school suspension over the past three years.

In CE schools the Wellbeing Framework will provide guidelines on identifying and implementing appropriate strength based responses to the behaviours displayed by students. Schools will be encouraged to adopt alternative options to out of school suspension. CE acknowledges the impact in-school suspension has on both students and staff and welcomes the opportunity to explore other options.

AIS notes that ACT Independent School Boards and school leadership teams make decisions about how best to utilise their resources to meet the needs of their student community.

**Recommendation 11.6: That ETD monitor and publicly report the proportion of suspensions, transfers and exclusions that are applied to students with a disability and to students in out of home care.**

**Agreed in principle.** ETD notes the challenge of reporting on relatively small numbers of students without identifying individuals, particularly from specific groups such as disability or in out of home care. ETD will examine options for high level reporting of proportions of suspensions, transfers and exclusions. This data will be monitored by the Director of Regulation and Compliance.

**Recommendation 11.7: That the ACT Government seek an amendment to the Education Act 2004 (ACT) to require Catholic and Independent Schools to report data of suspensions and exclusions of students, including the proportion of students with a disability and students in out of home care, to the Registrar of Non-Government Schools.**

**Agreed in principle.** ETD is committed to transparency of reporting and will consult with CE and AIS to determine if this level of reporting can be achieved.

Catholic schools currently report suspension to the CEO and only the Director of the CEO has the authority to exclude a student. CE has processes for the collection and monitoring of suspension data. CE and AIS have an agreement to report to the Minister for Education the number and nature of critical incidents that occur in CE and AIS schools.

## Chapter 12: Effective Collaboration Among Agencies

**Recommendation 12.1: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School (a) develop and implement a case management framework for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour; and (b) support all schools to identify or recruit suitably qualified staff to act as case managers, including, for example, social workers, welfare officers, and/or community development workers.**

**Agreed.** The ACT Government Human Services Blueprint adopts case management tools to support coordination of complex needs. In addition, ETD recognises the benefits of supporting children and families with complex needs and challenging behaviour through the use of a case management framework. ETD is currently running professional learning for schools regarding case management frameworks in education. The course aims to enhance the skills of teachers and school leaders, including providing information on how to coordinate and run case conferences.

ETD's existing NSET model provides staff to facilitate case management with students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. ETD is strengthening the capability of the Network Student Engagement Teams through the inclusion of allied health professionals with case management expertise. This will further assist schools to support students with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

CE has introduced a case management framework that provides support at a whole school and/or student level. The principal or school staff complete an e-form to refer the whole school or student issue to the Wellbeing and Inclusion (WIT) Team. The WIT meets and decides on the appropriate action. They establish a Student School Engagement Team (SSET team), managed by a CE Officer, to deliver support within the school. This team will comprise targeted support agents who will respond in a multidisciplinary way. The multidisciplinary team may include one of the following: Psychologist, Autism, Hearing, Transition Consultants, Teaching and Learning Behaviour Officers, Counsellors, Allied Health Specialists. The Principal is notified by the Case Manager of the personnel involved in the SSET team. The SSET team including school staff establish and implement the plan of support which will be regularly reviewed and altered through the case management process.

AIS notes that if schools are interested in exploring this recommendation it would be necessary to verify the resource support available for implementation.

**Recommendation 12.2: That ETD and the Community Services Directorate develop a protocol to allow for the timely referral of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour, and their families, to the Strengthening Families Program.**

**Agreed.** ETD and CSD continue to work in partnership through the Strengthening Families Program to support families with complex needs engaged with multiple support agencies. ETD recognises the importance of this model in supporting coordinated service provision.

The Strengthening Families Program, which currently has the capacity to support 50 families at a time, has an existing referral process which is outlined in the 'Better Services – Request for Support' form. ETD NSET are aware of the referral process and engage with Strengthening Families as needed. ETD will promote the Strengthening Families Program to school principals and develop procedures for schools to identify families that would benefit from the program and make referrals through the NSET.

**Recommendation 12.3: That ETD, CE, AIS, the Community Services Directorate, and ACT Health, collaboratively develop mechanisms to ensure that service provision with respect to children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour, and their families, is offered in a strategic and client focused manner and demonstrates effective communication among all parties.**

**Agreed.** ETD, CSD and ACT Health work collaboratively within the Human Services Blueprint and other collaborations to ensure that service provision with respect to children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour, and their families, is offered in a strategic and client focused manner. The ACT Government has recently invested \$16 million into the development of strategic and client centred services for children in out of home care through A Step Up For Our Kids, including additional programs to assist children to remain with their parents through the Strengthening High Risk Families domain.

CE and AIS welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively on client services in this area. CE commits to informing parents/carers about this initiative through the parent/carer networks.

**Recommendation 12.4: That ETD publicly release the report on the evaluation of the Early Childhood Schools and Koori Preschools once completed.**

**Agreed.** The evaluation of Early Childhood Schools commenced in April 2015 following changes to the original scope brought about by the transfer of early intervention services to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) at the end of 2014. The review is currently scheduled for completion by the end of January 2016. ETD will publicly release the report on the evaluation of the Early Childhood Schools and Koori Preschool Programs along with the ETD response to the report.

**Recommendation 12.5: That ETD investigate the feasibility of a 'Schools as a Hub' project to assist schools in key areas of social disadvantage to develop multiagency outreach services on site, and consider establishing pilot sites using existing P-10 schools.**

**Agreed.** The ACT Government agrees to investigate the feasibility of schools as part of the community project in key areas of social disadvantage. A hub model of services with schools as the centre is compatible with the Engaging Schools Framework which outlines the importance of enriching connections with communities to support engagement with all students and the Better Services approach to collaborative service offerings.

Many ACT public schools already work in collaboration with government and non-government service providers to support their communities and strong relationships exist between Child and Family Centres and local schools. Programs and services provided in schools include early intervention and disability service providers; community services parenting programs run in schools; and breakfast programs run by community service providers. ETD and CSD will collaborate to determine the feasibility of a cross-directorate model of service.

The ETD website provides information on the range of facilities available for community use.

**Recommendation 12.6: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop guidelines which regulate access to schools by NDIS service providers.**

**Agreed.** ETD is working with families and schools to consider models of service provision consistent with the principles of NDIS with regard to the impact of service providers on education delivery. The management of NDIS providers accessing school sites fits clearly within ETD's existing Working with Children and Young People-

Volunteers and Visitors (Interim) policy, as these providers fit the definition of a ‘visitor’ under this policy: People from the wider community who provide services directly to students or in support of students for financial gain through a sponsoring or employing organisation, or are self-employed.

To supplement the existing policy, ETD has developed additional materials to guide schools in managing requests from NDIS providers to access their sites. These materials were developed in consultation with a representative group of principals and have been shared with CE and AIS.

Whether it is a volunteer, an NDIS provider or another type of visitor, schools need to ensure relevant induction and training regarding Directorate policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Visitors, Confidentiality Undertaking, Insurance Arrangements for Visitors, Working with Vulnerable People, and relevant school-based processes or policies.

ETD notes that the requirement to regulate access to schools is interpreted as manage in this recommendation.

The decision to allow NDIS providers onto CE school sites will ultimately be the responsibility of the principal and be guided by the Visitors to Schools, Work Health and Safety, Legal Responsibility and Authority and Child Protection policies. In addition CE will develop specific protocols to guide schools regarding the access by NDIS providers to school sites. AIS will where appropriate work with member schools to support the development of guidelines related to NDIS providers in schools.

**Recommendation 12.7: That ETD evaluate the Pilot Projects currently being undertaken at Black Mountain and Cranleigh Schools, and, if suitable, consider developing an ongoing program of therapy specialists at key school sites across the ACT.**

**Agreed.** The ACT Government recognises the importance of therapy specialist services in supporting schools to meet the needs of students with a range of needs, including those with complex and challenging behaviour. Therapy ACT and ETD will evaluate the results of the pilot project at Black Mountain and Cranleigh schools following the completion of the pilot in November 2015. A summary of the pilot project will be available to the public.

## **Chapter 13: Professional Learning to Meet Diverse Student Needs**

**Recommendation 13.1: That ETD, CE, and AIS, liaise with the Australian Catholic University (Canberra Campus) and the University of Canberra to review and improve the theoretical and practical relevance of teacher education units with respect to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.**

**Agreed in principle.** The Teacher Quality Institute (TQI), as the ACT accrediting authority for teacher education, will lead the recommended review of teacher education units in relation to the teaching of students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. For initial teacher education programs, the Institute will seek to include the review, with any recommended program improvements, in the annual reporting which TQI requires of universities for accreditation of initial teacher education programs. The first review will be conducted at the end of 2016 with the report provided to the Minister in early 2017.

**Recommendation 13.2: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, ensure that the program of induction for all permanent and temporary teachers includes components on the teaching of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.**

**Agreed.** The Government expends significant resources to support new educators and to induct staff in general. The key elements of induction are integrated into schools' existing practices, as in-school support programs are the most powerful way to induct staff. Acknowledging that induction into schools occurs over three phases, Pre-Commencement, Laying Foundations and Sustained Professional Growth, an on-line training module will be developed for all teachers prior to commencing with the Directorate in 2016 recruitment. This module will join a suite of key training materials which is revisited each year with all members of staff and made available to CE and AIS.

This work can be supported by the TQI induction to the profession of all new ACT teachers which commences during initial teacher education programs.

CE will seek partnerships with ETD and/or online disability professional learning modules (OLT) in the development of an on-line training module to induct all new teachers in responding to the complex needs of students. AIS will work with and support member schools in this area where appropriate.

**Recommendation 13.3: That ETD immediately review the qualifications, experience and professional learning needs of all staff working in Learning Support Units and Centres, and ensure that these staff have access to appropriate and ongoing professional learning, further study and networking opportunities that are most relevant to their settings, their students and their personal professional needs.**

**Agreed.** ETD believes that workforce capability is best developed through the engagement of relevant professional learning opportunities. In ETD professional learning is a key component of the core work of teachers, with every school integrating high quality professional opportunities, related to evidence-based effective teaching and learning strategies.

ETD will consult with staff representatives to conduct an audit of qualifications and professional learning needs of all staff working in LSUs, LSCs and LSUAs to ensure professional learning programs are planned, purposeful and well delivered during normal hours of attendance. TQI can provide qualification data and completed professional learning data to support the ETD audit.

Professional learning programs for staff in these settings will provide a mixture of off-site courses, site based learning, and individual supervision and mentoring. It is important to note that professional learning programs offered in ACT public schools are designed to be suitable for accreditation, and teacher identified professional learning is suitable for TQI teacher registration purposes.

**Recommendation 13.4: That ETD, CE, and AIS, cooperate to (a) make available to all member schools existing online learning modules in: autism spectrum disorder; dyslexia and significant reading difficulties; motor coordination difficulties; speech, language and communication needs; understanding and managing behaviour; understanding hearing loss; and/or other courses as identified by member schools; and (b) ensure that these learning modules are complemented by follow-up support including face to face assistance, workshops and coaching components.**

**Agreed.** In 2016 ETD will continue to resource all of the seven TQI accredited OLT and associated coaching components. This learning will be delivered through NSET as both as individual and school based programs. ETD will make the resources available to all government and non-government schools.

CE currently has a 100 per cent completion rate of the OLT professional learning modules. As teachers value this mode of learning CE will continue to resource the online modules into the future. This learning will be delivered through a blended learning approach incorporating some face to face and online learning. CE is currently in conversation with representatives from OLT to design and develop a further course specific to the needs of the Archdiocese.

**Recommendation 13.5: That ETD, CE and AIS, (a) develop, and liaise with the Teacher Quality Institute to accredit, a suite of professional learning options relevant to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. This would include, but not be limited to, modules on: de-escalation and safe use of restraint; trauma; autism spectrum disorder; mental health; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and/or learning difficulties; and (b) establish mechanisms to monitor staff and school participation in these programs.**

**Agreed.** The ETD, CE and AIS will develop a suite of professional learning programs for staff in schools, which will explicitly address teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. Programs will be flexible enough to cater to teachers at various career stages. The package of professional learning will provide a mixture of off-site courses, site based learning, and individual supervision and mentoring.

The TQI through its regulatory and quality assurance role will work collaboratively with teacher employers and professional learning providers to accredit relevant professional learning, developed to the required standard. TQI will provide data on program participation and evaluation feedback to employers and recognised providers.

**Recommendation 13.6: That ETD and CE develop and implement a formal program of professional supervision to support staff working with students with complex needs and challenging behaviour, with priority for those staff who work in Learning Support Units and Centres.**

**Agreed.** ETD believes that all staff benefit from professional supervision and support and acknowledges that staff working with students demonstrating challenging behaviour and/or complex needs may need additional support. This is an ongoing part of the current procedures in the school, conducted by school leadership teams. In addition, ETD has introduced Executive Teacher Professional Practice positions who are experts in contemporary teaching and learning practice. Mentoring and supervision is a core component of this role. Additional support for staff in public schools can be accessed through the NSET.

Allied health professionals are required to meet professional registration requirements through clinical supervision. Individual staff are responsible for meeting these requirements, which are supported by ETD as a mechanism for ensuring currency of practice and expertise.

CE will provide support to schools through the Wellbeing Inclusion Team and SSET Model where resourcing is provided on a needs basis. CE is identifying this as support rather than supervisory role in the first instance.

**Recommendation 13.7: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, (a) prioritise scholarships and sabbaticals for school leaders and teachers to undertake formal study in relation to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour; (b) create opportunities for school leaders and teachers to visit and see in action practices in schools with a reputation for creative and resourceful approaches to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour; and (c) create opportunities for these school leaders and teachers to become mentors and facilitators within networks, sectors, and schools.**

**Agreed.** Within the existing scholarship program ETD will prioritise opportunities for formal study in supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. The introduction of the school-based Disability Education Coordinator role and establishment of Professional Learning Communities through the ACT Government's participation in the More Support for Students with Disability National Partnership has provided an effective mechanism for teachers to share knowledge, expertise and resources to support students with disability. ETD will build on these initiatives by creating broader opportunities for school leaders and teachers to become mentors and facilitators and for school visits to see best practice in action. ETD will also work with the TQI to target support for students with complex needs and challenging behaviours through the Institute's cross-sectoral face to face and online networks, Master Class programs and professional learning register that will continue in 2016.

CE provides extensive opportunities for staff to access support to undertake professional learning including Scholarship Programs which provide financial support to staff undergoing postgraduate studies. The Wellbeing and Inclusion Team will provide mentoring and targeted professional learning. CE schools have access to apply for a Wellbeing grant and access to school based funds to support staff to undertake professional learning in dealing with students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. Courses are provided through the Professional Learning Calendar and those identified through the Wellbeing and Inclusion Case Management Model.

## Chapter 14: Funding

**Recommendation 14.1: That ETD (a) undertake an urgent review of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) model, with particular attention to the: appropriateness of the current eligibility criteria for SCAN funding; adequacy of funding; the effectiveness of the appraisal process, and its impact on parents, carers and students; and (b) in undertaking this review, consult with school leaders, teachers, parents, carers and students, as well as the Disability Education Reference Group, CE and AIS.**

**Agreed.** Work has already commenced in relation to future school funding models under the National Education Reform Agreement, to which the ACT is a signatory. This work will continue in 2016, including a review of funding related to disability.

The Directorate will continue its work with other jurisdictions on improvement through activity associated with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability and through collaboration on professional learning strategies and tools.

## Chapter 15: Leadership and System Issues

**Recommendation 15.1: That ETD and CE, and each Independent School, make clear in their strategic plans a) how their student-centred vision and principles are operationalised with respect to priorities, targets and indicators; and b) how the various components, services and programs that they provide contribute to the implementation of their student-centred vision.**

**Agreed.** The Directorate will integrate this recommendation into the School Improvement approach for public schools in 2016.

CE will examine how this recommendation can be incorporated into the annual reporting requirements. CE has recently published their Principles of Pedagogy which are based on a student centred approach to teaching

and learning. The document reinforces the CE philosophical position that each child belongs and through the provision of positive educational environments students gain a sense of self-worth and achievement.

AIS notes that strategic plans are developed by the governing body of a school to best set the directions and priorities, and reinforce the culture of schools. The office of AIS will, where appropriate, work with and support schools in their consideration of this recommendation.

**Recommendation: 15.2: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, complement the reporting of students' academic performance with reports on student progress towards the personal and social-emotional goals listed in school's vision statements and strategic plans.**

**Agreed.** ETD is currently finalising the revised Reporting Student Achievement (Preschool to Year 12) Policy. The policy includes the introduction of a common reporting template for all schools for end of semester written reports, which will be implemented in all ACT public schools in 2016 for students in Kindergarten to Year 10. In addition to academic achievement, the policy and common templates require schools to report on student engagement with learning areas, work habits, personal and social capabilities, strengths, areas for development, suggested strategies for improving student learning and where applicable, the level of additional support provided for students to access the learning program. The reporting policy and associated templates will be available to CE and independent schools to support their response to this recommendation.

CE will be reviewing the reporting templates and analysing how students' social and emotional goals can best be incorporated effectively into the reporting documentation.

Each ACT independent school develops reporting formats which best reflect the ethos and culture of the individual school. An individual student's progress in personal development and goals would be considered to be an integral part of the responsibility in reporting to parents in schools. AIS will, where appropriate, work with member schools as they consider this recommendation.

**Recommendation 15.3: That ETD, CE, and AIS co-fund a tertiary institution, or other relevant research institute, to undertake a longitudinal study on post-school outcomes for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.**

**Agreed in principle.** ETD, CE and AIS are open to an approach to support or facilitate research from tertiary institutions. In 2015, ETD commenced collection of longitudinal data on post school outcomes for students who had left public, Catholic and independent schools and will consider possible partnerships for analysis of this data.

CE acknowledges the advantage of collecting data to ensure continuous improvement in this area. CE would be willing to engage in further conversation around a longitudinal study on post-school outcomes. CE recommends that other agencies that provide post school option programs such as National Disability Insurance Agency are approached as potential partners in this process.

**Recommendation 15.4: That ETD undertake an evaluation of the post school outcomes of graduates of the two senior specialist schools, and special units in mainstream high-schools and colleges, by following up recent graduates, their parents/carers and others where appropriate, and consider any implications for program development at these schools.**

**Agreed.** ETD collects information on employment and study outcomes for school leavers and graduates from both ACT public and non-government schools, including students with a disability. The School Leaver Survey data is collected to improve strategies at schools to ensure that students progress to meaningful outcomes after leaving school. The Directorate will work with the two senior Specialist Schools to consider implications for program development.

**Recommendation 15.5: That ETD support innovation in ACT schools through the establishment of a ‘Challenge Funding’ program to provide tangible support for cross-sector collaborations involving students, parents/carers and/or others to stimulate, evaluate and share innovative and hopeful approaches for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour in all ACT schools.**

**Agreed in principle.** The ACT Government supports innovation in ACT public schools particularly through the move to school empowerment. This model encourages schools to respond to the needs of their students and provides flexible funding arrangements for principals and school boards to engage in new collaborations or innovative approaches.

The ACT Government has also established an innovative trial fostering collaboration in West Belconnen under the Better Services initiative. Local schools, businesses and community service providers are working together to meet the needs of their community and a pooled funding arrangement is a feature of this model. The West Belconnen trial will be evaluated and an assessment of broader application made in 2016.

**Recommendation 15.6: That the Minister for Education and Training establish an appropriately constituted advisory group to consider progress reports from ETD, CE and AIS on their response to, and implementation of, the recommendations of this Expert Panel report. ETD, CE and AIS should provide progress reports annually to the advisory group for three years, with the first reports to be provided in November 2016.**

**Agreed.** The Minister for Education will provide the Report and Government Response to the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The Minister will also appoint an oversight group to provide quarterly reports on implementation until December 2016. The Minister will review the need for the oversight group to have an ongoing role at this time.

# Useful Links

This document includes references to legislation, programs and policies related to the support of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. Links to further information are included below.

## **Australian Government Department of Education and Training**

[www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au)

The following link leads to information on a range of frameworks, legislation and resources including: **The National Safe Schools Framework** and links to State and Territory policies.

<https://www.education.gov.au/student-resilience-and-wellbeing>

## ***Disability Standards for Education 2005***

<https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education>

## **Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability**

[www.education.gov.au/what-nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability](http://www.education.gov.au/what-nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability)

## **Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership**

[www.aitsl.edu.au](http://www.aitsl.edu.au)

Australian Professional Standard for Principals  
Standard and Australian Professional Standard for Teachers

## **Australian Curriculum**

[www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/)

## **Initial Teacher Education Reform**

[www.aitsl.edu.au/initial-teacher-education](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/initial-teacher-education)

## **National Partnership on Empowering Local Schools**

<http://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/education.aspx>

## ***Privacy Act 1988***

[www.comlaw.gov.au/](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/)

## **National Education Reform Agreement**

[www.coag.gov.au/node/501](http://www.coag.gov.au/node/501)

## **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

<http://www.ndis.gov.au/>

## ACT Government

### **The Canberra Plan: Towards our Second Century**

[www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/canberraplan](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/canberraplan)

### **Access Canberra**

[www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/](http://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/)

### **Law Reform Advisory Council**

[www.justice.act.gov.au/](http://www.justice.act.gov.au/)

### **Community Services Directorate**

Child and Family Centres

Therapy Services

Early intervention mental health services

Melaluca House (Trauma Recovery Centre)

[www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs)

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

<http://health.act.gov.au/our-services/mental-health/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs>

### **Better Services**

Strengthening Families

Better Services – Request for support form

[www.betterservices.act.gov.au/home](http://www.betterservices.act.gov.au/home)

### **ACT Government Human Services Blueprint**

Information about the Blueprint can be found under the ‘Quick Links’ section of the CSD website.

[www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

### **Teacher Quality Institute**

[www.tqi.act.edu.au/](http://www.tqi.act.edu.au/)

## ACT Education and Training Directorate

The ETD main website provides links to information on ETD’s programs, policies and resources for families.

Follow quick links to find more information about learning difficulties, Gifted and Talented Education, parental engagement and more.

[www.det.gov.au](http://www.det.gov.au)

### **Learning Difficulties Support s and Factsheets**

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching\\_and\\_learning/learning-difficulties](http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/learning-difficulties)

### **2014-2017 Strategic Plan Education Capital: Leading the Nation**

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z)

### **Education and Training Directorate Policy Website**

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/policy\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z)

### **Safe and Supportive Schools Policy and Guidelines**

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z)

### **Director for Families and Students**

[www.det.act.gov.au/contact\\_us](http://www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us)  
[familiesandstudents@act.gov.au](mailto:familiesandstudents@act.gov.au)

### **Central Placement Panel**

[www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/34370/StudentsWithADisability.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/34370/StudentsWithADisability.pdf)

### **Exemption Certificates**

Information regarding exemption certificates can be found in the suite of policy and procedures under 'Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance)' in the Education and Training Directorate's publication and policy A-Z guide.

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/policy\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z)

### **Working with Children and Young People – Volunteers and Visitors (Interim) policy**

Working with Children and young people code of Conduct for Volunteers and Visitors

Insurance Arrangements for Volunteers

Insurance Arrangements for Visitors

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z)

### **Working with Vulnerable People**

[www.det.act.gov.au/working-with-vulnerable-people](http://www.det.act.gov.au/working-with-vulnerable-people)

### **Association of Independent Schools of the ACT**

<http://ais.act.edu.au/>

### **Catholic Education Information and Policy**

<http://cg.catholic.edu.au/>

### **ACT Block Grant Authority**

Providing grants for flexible classroom areas

<http://actbga.org.au/>

## **Australian States and Territories**

### **Respectful Behaviours, Respectful Schools (Tasmania)**

<http://tas-education.org/doe/respectful-schools/Respectful-Schools-Respectful-Behaviour.pdf>

### **Victoria State Government Education Policy and Resources**

[www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### **Positive Behaviour Support in Schools**

Information about the PBS model and the use of the model in NSW schools

[www.pbis.org/](http://www.pbis.org/)

[www.pbl.schools.nsw.edu.au/](http://www.pbl.schools.nsw.edu.au/)

### **KidsMatter and MindMatters**

[www.kidsmatter.edu.au/](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/)

[www.mindmatters.edu.au/](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/)

### **Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth**

<https://www.aracy.org.au/>

