

- 5.70. The Committee is pleased that the Directorate has sought to repurpose grants otherwise used to support the participation of multicultural organisations in the NMF for Australia Day and Canberra Day events. The Committee considers that the ACT Government should continue to explore opportunities to support multicultural organisations which may have missed opportunities due to the cancellation of the NMF, including through the redistribution of unspent funds on cultural activities and events.

#### **Recommendation 25**

The Committee recommends that ACT Government continue to provide support to multicultural groups who have missed out on opportunities due to the cancellation of the National Multicultural Festival.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Committee thanks Members of the Assembly and supporting officials who appeared at public hearings relating to the Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020–2021.

### Timeliness of responses: questions on notice and questions taken on notice

- 6.2. Pursuant to Standing Order 254D of the Legislative Assembly:
- responses to questions on notice must be provided within five business days of receipt of the question; and
  - responses to questions taken on notice during a hearing must be provided within five business days of the receipt of the uncorrected proof Hansard.
- 6.3. The Committee is concerned that several responses to questions on notice and questions taken on notice were not provided within five business days, in accordance with the standing orders. The committee is particularly concerned that responses to four questions on notice had not been received as of the date of this report. This was despite the Chair of the Committee writing to the responsible Minister seeking a response.
- 6.4. The Committee considers that that relevant information associated with inquiries must be supplied in a timely fashion, to assist Committee deliberations and to ensure relevant information can be put on the public record.

#### Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that ACT Government ensure that all response to questions on notice and questions taken on notice are provided in a timely fashion.

Mr Michael Petterson MLA  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

## Appendix A: Witnesses

### 24 February 2022

#### Executive

- **Mr Andrew Barr MLA**, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism

#### Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- **Ms Leesa Croke**, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Cabinet.
- **Ms Wilhelmina Blount**, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet
- **Mr Andrew Mehrton**, Executive Branch Manager, Social Policy Branch, Policy and Cabinet.

### 25 February 2022

#### Executive

- **Ms Yvette Berry MLA**, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women
- **Ms Tara Cheyne MLA**, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

#### Education Directorate

- **Ms Katy Haire**, Director-General
- **Ms Jane Simmons**, Deputy Director-General
- **Ms Nicole Moore**, A/g Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Reform
- **Mr David Matthews**, Executive Group Manager; Business Services Group
- **Ms Kate McMahon**, Executive Group Manager; Service Design and Delivery
- **Mr Sean Moysey**, Executive Branch Manager Early Childhood Regulation and Non-Government Schools
- **Mr Robert Gotts**, Executive Branch Manager; Analytics and Evaluation
- **Mr Martin Watson**, Executive Director, Office of Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- **Ms Coralie McAlister**, Chief Executive Officer, Teacher Quality Institute

#### Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director-General
- **Ms Jo Wood**, Deputy Director-General
- **Mr Joseph Borgese**, Executive Branch Manager, Finance and Budget, Corporate Services
- **Ms Maggie Drejer-White**, Executive Branch Manager, People Management Branch, Corporate Services

- **Ms Christine Murray**, Executive Group Manager; Inclusion and Participation
- **Ms Jessica Summerrell**, Executive Branch Manager; Social and Community Inclusion

## 28 February 2022

### Executive

- **Ms Emma Davison MLA**, Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health
- **Mr Chris Steel MLA**, Minister for Transport and City Services, Minister for Skills, Special Minister of State
- **Ms Yvette Berry MLA**, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women
- **Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA**, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health

### Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- **Mr Stuart Hocking PSM**, Under Treasurer
- **Ms Kareena Arthy**, Deputy Director-General, Economic Development
- **Mr Graham Tanton**, Executive Group Manager, Property and Shared Services
- **Mr Daniel Bailey**, Executive Group Manager, Operations
- **Mr Jonathan Kobus**, A/g Executive Group Manager, Policy and Strategy
- **Ms Josephine Anderson**, Executive Branch Manager, Skills Canberra
- **Ms Rebecca Kelley**, Executive Branch Manager, Sport and Recreation
- **Mr David Jeffrey**, Senior Director, Sport and Recreation

### Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director-General
- **Ms Jo Wood**, Deputy Director-General, Programs and Operations
- **Ms Anne-Maree Sabellico**, Deputy Director-General, Reform
- **Ms Jacinta Evans**, Executive Group Manager, Strategic Policy
- **Ms Helen Pappas**, Executive Group Manager, Children, Youth and Families
- **Ms Christine Murray**, Executive Group Manager; Inclusion and Participation
- **Ms Jessica Summerrell**, Executive Branch Manager; Social and Community Inclusion
- **Ms Sally Gibson**, Executive Branch Manager, Quality and Regulation
- **Ms Lisa Charles**, Executive Branch Manager, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
- **Mr Joseph Borgese**, Executive Branch Manager, Finance and Budget, Corporate Services
- **Ms Maggie Drejer-White**, Executive Branch Manager, People Management Branch, Corporate Services

- **Ms Ellen Dunne**, Executive Branch Manager - Office for Disability, Inclusion and Participation
- **Ms Janet Plater**, Executive Branch Manager, Children and Families, Children, Youth and Families
- **Ms Melanie Thompson**, Senior Manager, Child Development Service, Children, Youth and Families
- **Mr Gerard Nolan**, Centre Manager Gungahlin Child and Family Centre; Children, Youth and Families
- **Ms Tracey Harkness**, Senior Practitioner

### Canberra Institute of Technology

- **Ms Leanne Cover**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Mr Craig Sloan**, Board Chair
- **Ms Cheryl Steff**, Acting Executive Director, Corporate Services
- **Mr Andrew Whale**, Executive Director, Training and Education Services
- **Mr Greg Tong**, Senior Director, CIT Finance

### Major Projects Canberra

- **Mr Duncan Edghill**, Chief Projects Officer
- **Ms Rebecca Power**, Projects Director, CIT Campus Woden Project
- **Mr Shaun Strachan**, Deputy Chief Projects Officer
- **Mr Adrian Piani**, Executive Group Manager, Infrastructure Delivery Partners/Chief Engineer

### ACT Building Construction Industry Training Fund Authority

- **Mr Glenn Carter**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Mr Michael Young**, Chairman

## Appendix B: Questions on notice and taken on notice

### Questions on notice

No.	Date	Asked by (MLA)	Asked of (Directorate/Portfolio)	Subject	Response received
1	01/03/2022	Lee	Education	Tenders awarded by the Education Directorate	11/05/2022
2	01/03/2022	Lee	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Skills)	Tenders awarded by the Canberra Institute of Technology	11/03/2022
3	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Student equity; census of ACT public schools	21/04/2022
4	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Identification with school	21/04/2022
5	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Public high school and secondary college education	21/04/2022
6	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Disability education in ACT public schools	21/04/2022
7	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Student wellbeing; Safe and Supportive Schools; suspension data	21/04/2022
8	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Scrutiny of Auditor-General's reports	06/05/2022
9	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Auditor-General's report on teaching quality in ACT public schools	19/05/2022
10	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Workplace Health and Safety	<b>NOT RECEIVED</b>
11	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Workforce profile	21/04/2022
12	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Capital works	21/04/2022
13	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Government contracting	11/05/2022
14	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Investigation of complaints	<b>NOT RECEIVED</b>
15	02/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Contracts and performance measurement	21/04/2022
16	03/03/2022	Lawder	Education	Outdoor education	11/05/2022
17	03/03/2022	Castley	Community Services	Mental health services for non-government schools	16/03/2022

18	04/04/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Youth employment	17/03/2022
19	04/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Youth InterACT scholarships	17/03/2022
20	04/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Youth Week	17/03/2022
21	04/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Representation on the Youth Advisory Council	17/03/2022
22	07/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) assessments	<b>NOT RECEIVED</b>
23	07/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Capacity of Child and Family Centres	<b>NOT RECEIVED</b>
24	07/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs; Treaty Process	21/03/2022
25	07/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Information packs for culturally and linguistically diverse women	22/03/2022

## Questions taken on notice

No.	Date	Asked by (MLA)	Asked of (Directorate/Portfolio)	Subject	Response received
1	02/03/2022	Davis	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Social Policy)	Support available to intersex people through Canberra Hospital	Answered during hearing
2	02/03/2022	Lawder	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Social Policy)	Health policy scoping study	04/03/2022
3	11/03/2022	Davis	Education	Safe and Supportive Schools contact officers	21/04/2022
4	11/03/2022	Hanson	Education	Audit of Education Directorate procurement practices; scope of audit	17/05/2022
5	11/03/2022	Lee	Education	Audit of Education Directorate procurement practices; independent auditor	06/05/2022
6	11/03/2022	Davis	Education	Tharwa Preschool and Gordon Primary School	21/04/2022
7	11/03/2022	Davis	Education	Denial of enrolment to a preschool program	21/04/2022

8	11/03/2022	Davis	Education	Community use of Tharwa Preschool	21/04/2022
9	11/03/2022	Davis	Community Services	Youth InterACT grants; grants vs applications	Answered during hearing
10	11/03/2022	Davis	Community Services	Youth InterACT grant program; underspend and reallocation of funds	24/03/2022
11	11/03/2022	Davis	Community Services	Youth InterACT grant program; underspend and reallocation of funds	24/03/2022
12	11/03/2022	Davis	Community Services	Youth InterACT grant program; underspend and reallocation of funds	24/03/2022
13	11/03/2022	Kikkert	Community Services	Youth interchange program; case management	04/05/2022
14	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services (Multicultural Affairs)	Information packs for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women	07/04/2022
15	11/03/2022	Davis	Community Services (Multicultural Affairs)	Number of citizenship conferrals for 2021 relative to previous years	Answered during hearing
16	11/03/2022	Lawder	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Skills)	CIT Woden campus project funding	15/03/2022
17	11/03/2022	Lawder	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Skills)	CIT Woden campus project funding	15/03/2022
18	11/03/2022	Milligan	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Skills)	Certificate II Construction; 2021 numbers	24/03/2022
19	11/03/2022	Milligan	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Skills)	Certificate II Construction; public and private education providers	24/03/222



20	11/03/2022	Lawder	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Sports and Recreation)	ACT pool management satisfaction	18/03/2022
21	11/03/2022	Milligan	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Sports and Recreation)	Closure of Stromlo pool for maintenance	29/03/2022
22	11/03/2022	Lawder	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Sports and Recreation)	Elite sports programs	18/03/2022
23	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Gender Impact Analysis Tool	22/03/2022
24	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Procurement and gender equity	20/04/2022
25	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Procurement and gender equity	20/04/2022
26	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Procurement and gender equity	20/04/2022
27	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Awarding of contracts; whether there is a focus on gender equity within successful tenderers	Answered during hearing
28	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy targets	21/03/2022
29	11/03/2022	Lawder	Community Services	Additional detail on contracting outcomes	Answered during hearing
30	11/03/2022	Lawder	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Sports and Recreation)	Organisations receiving participation support from government	18/03/2022
31	11/03/2022	Davis	Chief Minister, Treasurer and Economic Development (Skills)	Construction sector training; apprenticeships	15/03/2022



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION**

(Reference: Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2020-2021)

**Members:**

**MR M PETTERSSON (Chair)**

**MR J DAVIS (Deputy Chair)**

**MS N LAWDER**

**PROOF TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

**FRIDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2022**

This is a **PROOF TRANSCRIPT** that is subject to suggested corrections by members and witnesses. The **FINAL TRANSCRIPT** will replace this transcript within 20 working days from the hearing date, subject to the receipt of corrections from members and witnesses.

**Secretary to the committee:**

**Mr J McAdam (Ph: 620 70524)**

**By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

## Privilege statement

The Assembly has authorised the recording, broadcasting and re-broadcasting of these proceedings.

All witnesses making submissions or giving evidence to committees of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT are protected by parliamentary privilege.

“Parliamentary privilege” means the special rights and immunities which belong to the Assembly, its committees and its members. These rights and immunities enable committees to operate effectively, and enable those involved in committee processes to do so without obstruction, or fear of prosecution.

Witnesses must tell the truth: giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter, and may be considered a contempt of the Assembly.

While the committee prefers to hear all evidence in public, it may take evidence in-camera if requested. Confidential evidence will be recorded and kept securely. It is within the power of the committee at a later date to publish or present all or part of that evidence to the Assembly; but any decision to publish or present in-camera evidence will not be taken without consulting with the person who gave the evidence.

*Amended 20 May 2013*

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**The committee met at 12.51 pm.**

Appearances:

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

Education Directorate

Haire, Ms Katy, Director-General

Matthews, Mr David, Executive Group Manager; Business Services Group

McMahon, Ms Kate, Executive Group Manager; Service Design and Delivery

Gotts, Mr Robert, Executive Branch Manager; Analytics and Evaluation

Watson, Mr Martin, Executive Director, Office of Board of Senior Secondary Studies

**THE CHAIR:** Welcome to the second public hearing of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion inquiry into annual reports for 2020-21. The committee wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. The committee wishes to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending or watching today's event.

In the proceedings today we will examine the annual reports for the Education Directorate in relation to schools and the Community Services directorate in relation to youth and multicultural affairs.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded, broadcast and web streamed live. When taking a question on notice, it would be useful if witnesses could use the words, "I will take that as a question taken on notice."

As there are no opening statements, I will lead in to questions. Minister, I was hoping that the committee could get an update on the progress of the government's plan to build new and improved schools in Gungahlin.

**Ms Berry:** Thanks very much, Chair. Gungahlin has the fastest population growth in the country, so we need to continue to grow our schools—not only grow our existing schools, but also grow new schools. The new primary school at Throsby opened for the first time from day 1, term 1, this year, which was very exciting for that community. We are also making expansions at Margaret Hendry and will build a new high school at Margaret Hendry later on as well. I can get actual dates and time frames from Mr Matthews, which might assist in that area, and particularly around some of the upgrades and improvements to our existing schools in Gungahlin. I will ask Mr Matthews to provide a little more detail for the committee.

**Mr Matthews:** The minister outlined some of the key projects that we are embarking on in the Gungahlin region. We continue to build new schools, as well as expanding

## PROOF

and improving the infrastructure in existing schools. I had the pleasure, with this committee, of visiting Amaroo School this week, for example, where we—*Interruption in sound recording*—in the high school setting, which was a range of classroom and specialist facilities. That was opened for the beginning—*Interruption in sound recording*—school year. That was an example of some modern high school infrastructure which is available in the Gungahlin community.

The committee also visited the Margaret Hendry School, and a new area of that school that had been completed for this year, which was a multipurpose and learning space that—*Interruption in sound recording*—students in that community.

In addition to the 90th school, which opened up at Throsby this year for 2022, there are a couple of other major construction projects that have been funded by the government and are in various stages of redevelopment, whether it be the procurement process contracting phase or in the construction phase. The minister has referred to a new high school in the suburb of Taylor, which will be adjacent to the current Margaret Hendry School—another 600 places at Margaret Hendry School in terms of additional primary school capacity. The government has also funded a new high school at Kenny in east Gungahlin to meet the growing needs of that part of the city.

We have focused on the Gungahlin region as part of this answer, but the government continues to invest in infrastructure across the city and will be opening up a new high school in Molonglo, the Evelyn Scott high school, from next year, and continuing to introduce both temporary and fixed infrastructure improvements over coming years.

**THE CHAIR:** I was hoping for a little more detail on some of those projects. Could you give me a project update on Taylor high school? How is that project progressing?

**Mr Matthews:** That is progressing to the point where we have just completed contract negotiations with the successful tenderer. The successful tenderer will be responsible for delivering both the Taylor high school program and the primary school expansion at Margaret Hendry. The Margaret Hendry expansion is due for completion at the beginning of the 2023 school year, and the high school component for the 2024 school year. Soon we will be making an announcement around that successful tenderer and commencing those works, which, of course, have already been subject to some design work through the master planning of that site.

When the government originally built the Margaret Hendry School, it invested in nearby sporting infrastructure as well, to provide important community infrastructure in the suburb of Taylor, as well as some recreation and outdoor sporting space for those particular schools. We are very well placed to deliver those projects once the contractual arrangements have been finalised and the successful contractor begins their program of work.

**THE CHAIR:** Could I have a project update on Kenny high school?

**Mr Matthews:** The update on the Kenny high school is that, again, we have taken possession of that site and initial works have commenced on that site. It is on Old Well Station Road. It will be, again, a new high school for the region. The works include not only the construction of the high school itself but also some related road

## PROOF

work. We are also engaging with some conservation work associated with the neighbouring nature reserve. There is also some work with the EPA regarding the nearby Mitchell Resource Management Centre.

There are a number of particular elements to that project. That project has already experienced some delays, associated primarily with weather. A large portion of our projects have been very impacted by a delay of more than 100 days, due to weather, given the very wet summer that we have all experienced, and that you will all know about. That project was initially due for completion prior to the commencement of the 2023 school year. We can confirm that we will not be able to meet that particular date. We are currently looking at the program options for that, to bring that project online as soon as possible.

**THE CHAIR:** The expansion of the Franklin School: is that finished yet?

**Mr Matthews:** I will just check my notes, and add to it if I need to; essentially, yes. The infrastructure, of course, with Franklin is an expansion of that school community. It is providing additional learning space capacity, and it is being supported through relocatable learning units during that particular construction phase. My understanding is that the 450-place refurbishment has been handed over to the school for use early in 2022.

**MS LAWDER:** This week we have heard reports in the press about the Auditor-General's report on procurement processes for Campbell Primary School. I raise this as a supplementary because we have just been speaking about various procurement processes. Minister, as the minister responsible for this directorate, when were you first made aware of these probity issues, and why—

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Lawder, this is not a supplementary to the line of questioning.

**MS LAWDER:** We are speaking about procurement processes.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Lawder, I am the chair, and I do not think it is in line. Are there any supplementaries on this one?

**MS LEE:** I have one, Chair. You talked about the new Kenny high school. Do you have a determination of the priority enrolment area for that school?

**Mr Matthews:** We have not yet finalised the priority enrolment area for Kenny because enrolments have not yet opened for that high school. We have been reviewing all of the neighbouring priority enrolment implications for neighbouring schools, such as Harrison School, which is nearby. We would be expecting, for example, a large portion of the children at the Throsby School to be going to east Gungahlin high. In short, we are doing that work, but we have not finalised that yet because enrolments have not opened for that high school.

**MR DAVIS:** I want to talk about the Safe and Supportive Schools policy. It is particularly relevant, given what we have seen out of federal parliament in the last few weeks. Thank you, Minister, for getting on the front foot and promoting that so actively in recent days. It has been appreciated by a lot of people. I understand that

## PROOF

each school is required to have at least two Safe and Supportive School contact officers. Can you clarify whether these roles are voluntary, extracurricular work for existing staff or if they are stand-alone, separate roles in schools?

**Ms Berry:** Thank you very much, Mr Davis, for that question. Of course, it is about making sure that our schools are as inclusive as possible for all young people, and particularly LGBTIQ+ young people, to ensure that they feel welcomed and safe within their school communities. That is why the ACT continued to work with Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT to make sure that we had the right tools in place, not only for young people but for parents and teachers as well, to support each other.

When we introduced or continued the program here in the ACT, it was at a really challenging time for young people, and we wanted to make sure that they felt safe and loved within our school communities. We committed to the Safe and Supportive Schools program, which is a program of tools which are available to be accessed by each school community, including non-government schools, and it is available online. We also have a really strong relationship with SHFPACT to make sure that, when opportunities arise or when that is required in schools, we can bring in extra resources to support young people, teachers and parents that might need that extra support or tools to understand what is going on in their school communities.

You are right; it is a very challenging time for LGBTIQ+ young people, particularly with the conversations that are happening nationally, and the impact that it has on them. I am particularly concerned about our trans young people, and the impact that the conversations around access to sport might be having on those young people.

I will ask Ms McMahon to respond specifically to those questions that Mr Davis asked around capacity within schools to deliver on those programs.

**Ms McMahon:** I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. The contact officers that you were asking about are available in every school. We have two contact officers, one male identified, and one female identified officer in each of our schools, and they provide a service to our students. They are a connection point for kids to come and talk through any issues that they may be having and provide links to resources for not only students but also our teaching staff. They are voluntary positions. They receive training from our central office and a range of supports, one of which is the Safe and Inclusive Schools supports program.

With all of our teachers, not only do they have their teaching responsibilities, but also they have whole-school responsibilities that they take on. The Safe and Inclusive officer, the SASSCO officer, is a position that teachers would volunteer to be a part of, because they would be passionate about providing that service to our students. A number of our larger schools will have more than two officers, especially our schools that have a primary and a secondary setting. They would have potentially four officers in those settings.

**MR DAVIS:** Just to clarify, every single school right now has two officers?

**Ms McMahon:** That is correct. That is what they should have; one male identified and one female identified officer in each of our settings.

## PROOF

**MR DAVIS:** Importantly, if you were a young person in a school community questioning or challenged by sexuality and gender identity questions, how would you know which teachers they are, and where and when it is appropriate to connect with them?

**Ms McMahon:** From my experience in leading schools, we would always, at the beginning of a school year, identify who those officers are for our students. You do that in a range of different ways. It might be through notifications to school communities, depending on how they organise those, either online or verbally at an assembly. Lists of staff and what their responsibilities are would be published in a newsletter or published within their school setting. Schools also make available school psychologists. Psychologists would also know who the SASSCO officers are.

**MR DAVIS:** How are these officers trained? Specifically, is that training, which I assume they are offered in some form, in any way relevant to the ongoing professional development of teachers?

**Ms McMahon:** Yes, certainly. The training used to be done in person over a number of days, and teachers would be released from their duties to attend central training for that service. Because we have not been able to do as much in-person training, we have shifted a lot of that training to an online platform, and teachers need to engage in that training to be able to become those officers. That training can be recognised through the Teacher Quality Institute and is part of their record of professional learning that they need to fulfill on a yearly basis for their TQI qualifications or certification.

**MR DAVIS:** I appreciate that this question may need to be taken on notice: could we get the exact number of teachers across our system that have done that training and what percentage that makes of teachers in our system?

**Ms McMahon:** Certainly; I will take that one on notice.

**Ms Berry:** Mr Davis, that might be a point-in-time group of data; obviously, that will change and grow as teachers access training. I remind the committee that many of our schools also celebrate Wear It Purple Day and IDAHOBIT. That is a really great opportunity for young people and teachers to see within their school communities where those supports might lie or where those different little community groups have popped up in our school communities. I know that you have visited Caroline Chisholm high school, which has a particularly strong and active group of young people who support not only each other but also others who might need additional support, or just a group to hang out with. Those kinds of activities are really important for our schools in the ACT, to make sure that we are not just talking about these things or having supports online or whatever, but that we actually show, by being very present in the school communities, that those supports are there.

**MR DAVIS:** It was Calwell that I had the privilege of visiting, but they are south side schools, so they are all good.

**Ms Berry:** Calwell; you are absolutely right.



## PROOF

**MS LAWDER:** As the minister responsible for the Education Directorate, when were you first made aware that the procurement process for the Campbell Primary School modernisation project lacked probity, and why weren't tenderers dealt with fairly, impartially or consistently?

**Ms Berry:** I think it would be around the time that the Auditor-General's report came out. The government will respond to the Auditor-General's report. As far as I am aware, there was nothing wrong that was done, and the procurement processes were followed. However, the Auditor-General has recommended that those processes can be tightened up. The government will consider those processes. I understand that Minister Steel, who is responsible for that area of work, will be taking that particular recommendation by the Auditor-General into account. The government, as I said, will respond to that report in due course.

**MS LAWDER:** In terms of ensuring that tenders were fair, impartial and consistent, what processes were in place, and why wasn't a red flag raised when the top two or so tenders were assessed over and over again? It seemed a bit like you were trying to get a specific result.

**Ms Berry:** Ms Lawder, as you would know, and as all committee members would know, ministers are very much at arm's length on procurement processes. With respect to whatever was occurring in that space, that is not something that ministers in the ACT government, as appropriate, would involve themselves in. I will ask Ms Katy Haire to provide you with a bit more detail on the process for procurement for school upgrades and school builds in the ACT, so that you can understand clearly the processes that are involved when procuring that work on behalf of the Education Directorate and on behalf of government.

**MS LAWDER:** That would be great, although do not forget that you are the minister responsible overall.

**Ms Berry:** It would be entirely inappropriate, Ms Lawder, for a minister to interfere in any procurement process.

**MS LAWDER:** I am not suggesting that you interfere; I am merely saying that the buck stops with you, eventually.

**Ms Berry:** Yes, and the Auditor-General has provided a report, and the government will respond to that report on procurement processes in the ACT government, as appropriate.

**Ms Haire:** Just to follow on from the minister's comments about the Auditor-General's report, the protocol with Auditor-General's reports is that the minister is informed of the process but has no visibility of the content until it is tabled in the Legislative Assembly. I am just confirming that that is the process. In terms of the processes for tenders for major infrastructure projects, I will ask Mr Matthews to take you through that, Ms Lawder.

**Mr Matthews:** Chair, I should also acknowledge that I have read and understood the privilege statement. I did not do that earlier.

## PROOF

Your questions go to the conduct of the actual procurement process. The Auditor-General's report fully documents the conduct of the Campbell Primary School procurement. It also describes that what occurs is that a tender evaluation team is constructed to undertake an assessment of tenderers against an evaluation plan. All public servants are responsible for making sure that their decisions are fair and free, and are covered by the Public Sector Management Act in terms of their obligations as public servants to act with probity and fairness.

The way that the tender processes work in a construction environment is that, as part of the assessment, a range of technical reports are produced, including advice on the designs, the sustainability and the finances of individual projects. All of those contribute to being inputs into the decision that the tender evaluation team makes by way of a recommendation to a delegate. The delegate is then responsible for taking the decision under the Financial Management Act and satisfying themselves of the outcome and the overall value for money and best interests of the territory being supported with the preferred outcome.

Those processes in relation to this were documented, and the Auditor-General has, obviously, made a number of recommendations around how those processes can be strengthened to support confidence in the procurement being undertaken by the government, and the government will respond.

**MS LAWDER:** Mr Matthews, you said that was well documented; but the Auditor-General's report said that those processes were characterised by "informal, uncontrolled and poorly documented" communication. That seems quite at odds with your statement that that was well documented. We are talking about large amounts of public money here, and there appears to be quite a breakdown in roles and responsibilities, and their definitions.

**Ms Berry:** As I said, the government will respond to the Auditor-General's report in due course. I have asked Mr Matthews to provide information on the process, generally around procurement for schools and upgrades for schools in the ACT. I think he has done that. If there is something in more detail that you would like to know about how that occurs, then that might be useful for the committee. The government will respond to the Auditor-General's report in due course, and that responsibility will lie with Minister Chris Steel.

**MS LAWDER:** Absolutely; we would expect nothing different, but are you refusing to answer further questions on this topic from a committee of the Assembly at this time?

**Ms Berry:** Ms Lawder, I did not say that I was refusing or that any of us were refusing; I was merely pointing out that Mr Matthews was responding to your questions.

**MS LAWDER:** Sure; that is why I asked them.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, have you read the Auditor-General's report?

## PROOF

**Ms Berry:** Yes, I have read the Auditor-General's report. I do not have it with me at the moment and I cannot respond to each page in detail.

**MR HANSON:** I am not going to ask you to but, having read that report, can you tell me what actions you have taken and the directorate has taken to make sure that this will not happen again and, indeed, is not happening across the board with other procurements?

**Ms Berry:** Yes. As I said, the government will respond to the report in due course. Of course the ACT government and every directorate of the government want to ensure that there is appropriate probity and transparency around all the work that we do, and we take very seriously the recommendations of the Auditor-General in reports such as this one. We will continue to ensure, as a government, that—

**MR HANSON:** But what are you doing? You are not actually giving me specific actions. What are you actually doing? You have read this report, you are aware of the problems, therefore, within this procurement. What are you doing to make sure that this is not systemic within the directorate and will not happen again?

**Ms Berry:** Thank you very much again for your question. The Education Directorate, specifically, is always ensuring that it has appropriate probity, transparency and governance around all the work that it does and will continue to do that.

**MR HANSON:** But that is not what the Auditor-General said and that is not what the Integrity Commissioner is saying. You are saying one thing—that we always make sure that this is happening—but what is very clear from what the Auditor-General said is that there was a breakdown here. I want to know what you are doing to make sure that this does not happen again. It is a reasonable question.

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, before you respond—Mr Hanson, this is an online hearing. It would be helpful to everyone if you could let the minister finish her answer before interjecting. Ms Berry.

**Ms Berry:** Thank you, Chair. As I said, the Education Directorate is always wanting to ensure that it has appropriate governance and transparency around all the work that it does. I will ask Ms Haire to talk through some of the work that has been happening in that space.

**Ms Haire:** I should have said earlier that I have read and noted the privilege statement too. Apologies for that.

As the minister said, the government will provide its formal response to the Legislative Assembly. What I am about to speak about does not pre-empt the government's decisions in any way. The Education Directorate takes all reports from the Auditor-General very seriously and, in particular, as a learning organisation, where a report identifies where there could be improvements in the process, we are determined to learn from those and to take action.

The report was received in December 2021, as you are aware. We have commenced a process, alongside our colleagues in Major Projects Canberra, to look at a range of

## PROOF

process improvements, which I will list for you: firstly, looking at how we can improve communication protocols, the role of probity advisers and change management processes; secondly, looking at improving protocols and practices for record-keeping; thirdly, reviewing protocols for communication tenderers and stakeholders; and lastly, identifying areas for training and professional development. We are also looking at the role of probity advisers in all major projects since we received the report. They are immediate actions which do not pre-empt the government's response to the six recommendations that are in the Auditor-General's report.

**MS LEE:** Minister, can I take you back to a statement that you mentioned in your previous answer to Ms Lawder's question, because I think it is extraordinary that you have stated that there is nothing wrong with the procurement process except that the Auditor-General has made some recommendations to tighten the process. It is just extraordinary that you are able to portray it in that way when it is a scathing report by the Auditor-General. It was serious enough that the Integrity Commissioner has sought broad, public input on reasonable, suspected corruption in the ACT government procurement processes.

Do you think that, despite the fact that you are standing by "the government will respond", your words just now in that answer are, indeed, despite what you say, pre-empting the government's response?

**Ms Berry:** I do not really appreciate being verballed in the committee in such a way. What I suggested was that the process that was—

**MS LEE:** Is that not what you said?

**Ms Berry:** The process that was followed was the procurement process in place. However, the Auditor-General has identified that there are issues with that process around probity and has suggested that that process needs to be checked. I have not said that those are the exact words in the Auditor-General's report, but in the recommendation that is generally what the Auditor-General is suggesting.

The ACT government is taking that recommendation seriously and will respond in due course. The Education Directorate has already, as Ms Haire has pointed out, put a number of additional processes in place which do not pre-empt the ACT government's response but, as you know with Auditor-General's reports, the ACT government responds in due course.

**MS LEE:** And when will that be, minister?

**Ms Berry:** Not before a committee hearing but when it is required to, which I believe is a four-month period from the time that the report was tabled. I can say that that will definitely be the case and, if you have more questions around procurement generally, those are the kinds of things that you might need to ask of Minister Steel through his responsibilities in Major Projects Canberra. As Ms Haire has pointed out, the Education Directorate has already put in a number of additional measures to ensure that we are responding in a way for the Education Directorate to ensure that there is improved governance and transparency around the work that they do around procurement.

## PROOF

**MS LEE:** In relation to this specific Auditor-General's report that was tabled in December, did the Education Directorate refer the matter—it was a pretty serious matter—to the Integrity Commission?

**Ms Haire:** No, we did not.

**MS LEE:** Why was that? What was the reason for that decision?

**Ms Haire:** We did not consider that it was a requirement. We did not consider it met the requirements for a referral to the Integrity Commission.

**MS LEE:** The Auditor-General's report which found that the procurement process lacked probity, that tenderers were not dealt with fairly, impartially and consistently, and raised alarm about the lack of note-keeping even—you did not consider that to meet the bar to even just refer it to the Integrity Commission?

**Ms Haire:** No, we did not at that time.

**MS LEE:** What is the bar?

**Ms Haire:** I do not have the Integrity Commission information in front of me, I am afraid. I would have to check the exact words for you but I think it relates to "serious misconduct and corruption". I think they are the words but I would have to come back and check that for you. Apologies.

**MS LEE:** What is the process that is in place within the Education Directorate to make sure that it is assessed appropriately so that any delegate is able to look at issues that come up like this and is able to make a judgement call about whether it is to be referred to the Integrity Commission?

**Ms Haire:** I might ask Mr Matthews to speak to that, because there is a whole-of-government process that relates to that, that every directorate follows, which is called the disclosure process. I will ask Mr Matthews to describe that to you.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Matthews, before you begin—members, we have been on this line of questioning for a substantial period of time at this point. I will give you a few more minutes and then we will need to move on. Mr Matthews.

**Mr Matthews:** One further bit of context I would like to add is that we were certainly aware that the way this Auditor-General's audit was initiated was through a disclosure to the Auditor-General. Through the course of the audit and subsequently, we did understand that the Integrity Commission had line of sight of this particular matter. Obviously our role as public servants was to engage with and fully cooperate with the Auditor-General, which we did, and we made available all relevant documentation that was requested and made available all relevant staff to participate and give sworn evidence. Everybody that was requested to do so by the Auditor-General willingly participated and all documents that were requested were willingly provided.

Ultimately, the conduct of the Integrity Commission and the requirements for referral

## PROOF

are a judgement call for individuals to determine whether they understand the threshold to be met regarding corruption and serious misconduct, as Ms Haire has outlined.

I am in no way downplaying the seriousness of the Auditor-General's report and the issues that were raised. The report highlights a range of process failings and improvements and there are six recommendations that are directed at Major Projects Canberra, as the minister has mentioned, which provide a whole-of-government focus to process improvement regarding the conduct of procurement activities. We have also initiated the steps that Ms Haire talked about

Just very briefly, I can advise that, in the recent procurement that I have already referred to today for the Margaret Hendry school expansion and the high school, I am the delegate for that process and I commissioned independent probity advice for that tender evaluation panel, which involved that panel being briefed about probity issues and the independent probity adviser actually being involved with or sitting in and observing the conduct of that tender evaluation team's deliberations and providing advice to me as a delegate on the integrity or probity of that process—to give you a real-time example of the measures that have been introduced with the latest major procurement process that the directorate has undertaken.

Ultimately, after the committee's report has been tabled and the government response occurs, the directorate is fully aware that other entities, including the Integrity Commission, are likely to want to undertake their own reviews of or investigation into this matter—and of course they are free to do so. As is the case with the Auditor-General's reports, the directorate and individuals will fully cooperate with those.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, the Integrity Commissioner has put out a press release and made comments about concerns that this may be endemic. What steps have you taken to make sure that what has happened here in this instance has not happened previously? Have you commenced an audit of previous procurement processes to make sure that this is not something that has happened on a regular basis within the directorate? If it has happened once, has it happened before and, if so, how many times, and what steps are you taking now to review that?

**Ms Berry:** I will ask Ms Haire to respond to that because these kinds of procurement processes are within the Education Directorate's remit. I will ask Ms Haire to respond to that.

**MR HANSON:** Before you do, minister, if something has gone wrong within your directorate, you are the minister, have you not then said, "Hang on, do we make sure that we are squeaky-clean on all the other procurements."? Would not you issue a directive or something like that or not?

**Ms Berry:** We have definitely, as Ms Haire has noted, made some adjustments to the way those processes work within the Education Directorate. I think that is a fair question that you have asked. I understand the Integrity Commissioner has suggested that he is considering an investigation around procurement across the ACT government. As Mr Matthews said, if that is the case, then of course we will comply

## PROOF

with it. That would be the Integrity Commissioner doing the job that they are supposed to do. We welcome that.

It is the same with Auditor-General's reports and suggestions that they make. We always appreciate recommendations where directorates, including the Education Directorate can do things better and improve on the work that it does. I will ask Ms Haire to respond to the specifics of your question.

**Ms Haire:** I will just note that the statement from the Integrity Commission was released, I believe, on Wednesday morning; so we have only, like everybody else, just become aware of that. We will take the necessary steps to consider the implications for us and of course, as Mr Matthews has said, cooperate fully with any requests for information. More importantly, as I have already outlined, what we have done already is identify the steps to improve our internal processes immediately without pre-empting the government's response to the Auditor-General's report.

We are also working closely with our colleagues across government, not just with Major Projects Canberra but also with Procurement ACT who are undertaking a process of continuous improvement in procurement practice, which includes professional learning, with learning modules including probity and procurement; training sessions; and the development of a procurement capability framework. A probity and procurement guide was published in January 2021 and further advice on procurement was released in January.

**MR HANSON:** That is good work and I am glad to hear that is happening. My question specifically then is: looking at previous procurements, the Education Directorate has spent a lot of money on refurbishments and on new schools. I am looking back retrospectively over a period of time, be it three years, five years or however long it is, to make sure that there are no other incidents of this. Surely you are not going to wait until the Integrity Commissioner comes knocking on the door? You have been alerted to a breakdown within your own directorate. Are you not now going to look at whether this has happened in other procurements or are you going to sort of wait for that knock on the door?

**Ms Berry:** No. As Ms Haire has pointed out, there have been a number of changes made within the Education Directorate, which she has described in a lot of detail to you. The ACT government, through Major Projects Canberra, will respond to the Auditor-General's report as well, and the Education Directorate will be making sure that previous procurement processes do meet with the ACT government's general direction around procurement, as it occurs, in its response to the Auditor-General's report.

Following the Auditor-General's report I think we have already done a lot of work in improving those for future projects. But I do not think there is any issue with the Education Directorate looking at previous procurement to ensure that they meet with the current procurement guidelines and then seeking to make improvements if there are more, following the ACT government's response in April.

**MR HANSON:** So you are going to be conducting some form of audit of previous procurements then; is that what you are saying?

## PROOF

**Ms Berry:** Definitely. I think it is appropriate for the Education Directorate to have a look at that. I do not think there is any issue with that. As Ms Haire said, the Education Directorate is a learning organisation and is always there for continuous improvement in all its work, not just within our schools in teaching, but also in how the Education Directorate conducts—

**MR HANSON:** And in consideration of those previous procurements, have you considered then what time frame you are going to look back over and the procurements over what amount? What is the dollar amount for a procurement to be looked at, and retrospectively over what period?

**Ms Berry:** I think I will take those suggestions of yours on notice. There has been no kind of detailed decision-making around time frames and the like that you have described in those suggestions. I think I might just take your suggestions on board and the Education Directorate will consider a way forward.

**MS LEE:** Minister, will you commit to getting an independent—

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Lee, members, it has been 10 minutes since I interjected about this line of questioning and the length. I must insist that we move down the line of members. Mr Hanson with a substantive question.

**MR HANSON:** Still on Campbell Primary School, looking at the impact on the students of what has happened, a number of parents have come forward and raised significant concerns about the impact on students there, their wellbeing, their ability to learn, cramped classrooms, the library being used as a classroom, outside playtime being reduced—and if I can quote from one of the parents, “I think students and teachers at Campbell deserve better”—and the treatment that they are getting from the ACT government. There are complaints about the directorate not getting back to parents who have made a complaint. How do you respond to that? There is a real problem with the way this procurement was done, but then it seems that this is dragging on and is disrupting and disadvantaging kids. What are you doing to mitigate that?

**Ms Berry:** Any school upgrade does provide disruption to the school community, absolutely, and I completely understand the concerns that parents and young people and teachers may be experiencing at Campbell Primary School. I remember when my children were in primary school during an upgrade—an expansion of MacGregor Primary School actually—we went through similar kinds of processes. I do understand and completely empathise with that school community about the disruption that these kinds of construction projects can cause.

They are also opportunities for young people and teachers to use the experience as a learning experience as well. But I do know that it has been quite a stressful period and quite frustrating for that parent community.

**MR HANSON:** But what are you doing to mitigate the effect? What you just said there is, “Other kids have been through this: so they have got to suck it up and use it as a learning experience.”



## PROOF

**Ms Berry:** If you had not interrupted I could have completed my answer to your question. I actually met with the parents from the school yesterday to hear from them directly about their concerns and have committed to go and visit the school to better understand some of the issues that they have raised. I was able to visit the school during the project's construction period, but I am going to go back to the school and visit with the school and then directly respond to the parent community and the school community about the concerns that they have raised. That is our plan going forward.

Thank you very much for your question. I have appreciated very much having the opportunity to hear directly from some of the parents from the school about the impact that the construction has had and have committed to meet back with them and talk about a way forward. Perhaps I could get Mr Matthews to talk through some of the time frames that we are talking about here, moving forward.

**Mr Matthews:** I did make a visit to the school yesterday and spoke with the principal, and the principal took me around to all parts of the school—both the new areas that are currently being constructed and the current school—and showed me how it was being used, and was able to show me the amazing efforts of the school staff to maximise the learning experience for their students during these construction works.

We really do understand that the school community wants the work to be finished and they want their school back. They want the completed result. We are working towards a timetable that the new construction and the landscaping work will be finished for the beginning of term 2 this year so that, after the school holidays, the school community will be able to occupy their new learning communities and also additional outdoor space.

Then we will work with the community around the other parts of the school site, including the removal of the relocatable learning units that were put on site during the construction phase, and also looking at what other enhancements we can make, particularly to the outdoor facilities that the school has requested us to look at.

**MR HANSON:** Parents have been raising these issues for months and then it takes an article in the *Canberra Times* before you go out to the school and the minister meets with the parents. Why is the Education Directorate so unresponsive to parents? They have been complaining and I quote, "The directorate has not responded to many of our emails, so it is really disappointing." All of a sudden, once it is in the media, there is this flurry of activity. Why have you and the directorate and the minister taken so long to respond to the parents?

**Mr Matthews:** With respect, there has been ongoing communication with the school and with the principal. Of course we are responsive to concerns that are expressed. If the school community are saying that they need more information or they do not know what is going on, of course we will redouble our efforts to make sure that we can address those concerns. We very much are in the last phase of a very difficult and prolonged project, and we do appreciate the frustration that comes with that.

It might be worthwhile to briefly mention that one of the reasons why this project has been extended is that the project was initiated when the government acted very

## PROOF

quickly to demolish the junior school building which had friable asbestos in it, and made a very quick decision to take action to provide temporary learning space for the school community and to act quickly to demolish that building and to relocate students.

It was then always going to have a time lag associated with the next phase of getting the resources and undertaking the construction project to essentially replace that school infrastructure, and that is really what has occurred since the beginning of 2021 when the contractors have been on site. We are very confident that overall, at the end of this project, the school community will have much-improved school infrastructure.

We do appreciate the impact on the school community during the construction phase, certainly exacerbated by COVID. That is actually more than a general statement. We have had periods where there were confirmed COVID cases on site on this particular project that resulted in it having to stop and, as I have mentioned, more than 100 days of rain delay. We very much appreciate that, given the combined impact of all that stuff, the community is really looking for a very clear exit and a very clear understanding of what the end outcome will look like for them. That is how we are engaging with them.

**MS LAWDER:** You mentioned, Mr Matthews, that there had been some COVID in the school and that had impacted on the construction a bit, but we also read in the article yesterday that children have had their outside playtime limited, I think to 30 minutes, with half the school using the playground at one time and the other half the other time because the construction is taking up a significant amount of space. In terms of the mental and physical health of children and the fact that you would presume that playing outside may be even more COVID safe than being inside the classroom, have you done any thinking about or any work on the impact on children of having that outside time shortened to 30 minutes?

**Mr Matthews:** Ms Lawder, I can confirm that I spoke about the break times with the principal when I was at the school yesterday. What the principal confirmed was that her decision was based on the overall management of the school. Campbell Primary School previously had longer breaks than other equivalent primary schools, so the decision to shorten the breaks was a school decision. In terms of the phasing of break times for different cohorts, that is a very normal practice across all of our schools, so it is not, in fact, very common that all parts of the school community have their breaks at the same time. It is very regular that that can be phased. We definitely appreciate, though, that the reduction in outdoor space has affected this school community.

It does have a nearby oval, a very large oval, as well as some neighbouring tennis courts and some other outdoor play space. In saying that, I am absolutely acknowledging that the school have lost some of their outdoor spaces during this construction and they will be very happy to get them back at the end of the project, but there have been outdoor facilities and the ability for children to play outside.

**MS LAWDER:** Just finally, if I may, one last question. It was also, I think, discussed in that article that some classes moved into the library. The library went to the staffroom. At a time when teachers have absolutely stepped up and done a heroic job under difficult circumstances, where is the staffroom now for the teachers at Campbell Primary School?

## PROOF

**Mr Matthews:** It is true that the year 5/6 cohort is using what was the former library and the library has relocated to what was the staffroom. That space is currently being shared by staff and the library facilities. I would emphasise as well, Ms Lawder, and for the committee, that the way that libraries are operating during COVID is quite different because of the cohorting arrangements that exist within schools. In order to manage COVID, we are keeping cohorts separated. In fact, many schools are adopting a takeaway service, if you like, in the way that they are using their library, where books are going into the learning areas and classroom areas. So the traditional use of the library has also been affected by the cohorting arrangements. The advice that I got from the principal was certainly that it is not ideal for that to occur but that it was satisfactory for the current circumstances.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** A new line of questioning, Ms Lee?

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Chair.

**Ms Berry:** Sorry, Chair, before Ms Lee goes to her question—

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, Minister.

**Ms Berry:** I just wanted to clarify: Mr Hanson suggested that we had met with the parents only after the *Canberra Times* article, but that was actually not the case. The meeting had been arranged prior to the *Canberra Times* article, after receiving correspondence from the parents from the school.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Ms Lee.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, I welcome your commitment to undertaking an audit in relation to whether any other procurements within your directorate have had issues. Will you commit to ensuring that it is an independent auditor that undertakes this audit?

**Ms Berry:** Ms Lee, I will take that on notice because the suggestions from Mr Hanson around what the Education Directorate might look at have not been confirmed yet. We will just look into that, and then I can provide some more information about what the audit might look like.

**MS LEE:** Okay. If that is the case, will you commit to publishing the terms of reference or the ambit of the audit publicly?

**Ms Berry:** Ms Lee, it might be appropriate to wait until after the government has responded to the Auditor-General's report before the Education Directorate firms up a position on considering previous procurement processes, because in the ACT government response there might be other suggestions or other actions that would include more broad responses, rather than just the Education Directorate. If you could just bear with us for the time being, then I can provide some more information.

## PROOF

**MS LEE:** Okay. Just so that I understand, and for the benefit of the committee, when you said previously that you thought it was an appropriate step for the Education Directorate to undertake an audit, you are now clarifying that answer to say “subject to the government’s response to the Auditor-General’s report”?

**Ms Berry:** Only in the case that there might be something else that we do not want to add on later and attach to an audit process—that it might be broader than just the Education Directorate. I think it might be appropriate to wait. We have said we are going to do an audit process. As to what that will look like, we will wait for the government to respond to the Auditor-General’s report more fully, because it is really an all-of-government Auditor-General’s report, although it was focusing on this particular procurement process at Campbell. So if you could just bear with us for a little bit longer on that one, then we can provide some more detail.

**MS LEE:** All right. Thank you, Minister. Given the findings of the Auditor-General’s report about the decisions that were made by the delegate in this case, what has happened to that delegate in terms of either disciplinary action or referral of that delegate to the Integrity Commission?

**Ms Berry:** Mr Matthews, can I ask you to provide some information there, if we have any?

**Mr Matthews:** Minister and Ms Lee, it would be inappropriate to canvass what action or otherwise would be taken in relation to an individual associated with a finding—

**MS LEE:** With all due respect, Mr Matthews, we are talking about a scathing Auditor-General’s report. It has been tabled; it is public. It is serious enough that the Integrity Commission has commented. I am not asking you to name the individual; I am not asking you to go into specifics; I am specifically asking what is happening. I think the public have every right to know, when a scathing report like this comes out, what is going to happen to the delegate who has made that decision.

**Mr Matthews:** Obviously, we would not want to pre-empt the outcome either, Ms Lee, in terms of any subsequent process, but I can advise that we have engaged with relevant agencies on the implications of the audit report. I am not in a position to be any more specific around the outcomes for any individual public servant.

**MS LEE:** So, from the directorate perspective, you have not taken any disciplinary action against the delegate; is that right?

**Mr Matthews:** Ms Lee, in terms of disciplinary action, I am happy to explain to the committee what is involved with that, according to the EBA, and how that process would work. Of course, that is fundamentally based on the principle of natural justice and procedural fairness. That would involve a properly constituted process; the ability for all parties to be afforded that natural justice, to give any evidence or supporting information; and, again, for that matter to be provided, through the appropriate HR processes, for final decision. So it is pre-emptive and would be pre-emptive to foreshadow the outcome of any process.

**MS LEE:** I am not asking you to foreshadow the outcome; I am asking what action

## PROOF

has been taken. You have just given a very good outline of the generic process that is involved under the EBA. I am asking where it is up to in this instance.

**Mr Matthews:** I refer to my earlier answer, Ms Lee: that we have engaged with the appropriate external agencies on that. I am not in a position to talk about that any further.

**MS LAWDER:** Could I just make the point, Mr Matthews, that surely the tenderers in that procurement process thought they would have natural justice and procedural fairness as well?

**Mr Matthews:** Absolutely, Ms Lawder, and that is, in part, what the Auditor-General report itself provided them; it provided them with the opportunity to have the process fully examined and also to participate in that process, and they did. The tenderer that you are referring to had the opportunity to contribute to that process and make comment in the final report, and they did so.

**MS LEE:** Yes, but they missed out on the tender, didn't they? Mr Matthews, can I just confirm that you are now refusing to answer any further questions about the process and what action has been or is being taken?

**Mr Matthews:** In relation to an individual—

**MS LEE:** I have never asked you to name the individual; I have asked whether there has been any disciplinary action taken or whether any is being taken.

**MR DAVIS:** Chair, I am just noting the time. We have spent over an hour on this subject. Ms Lee has now asked the same question three times and I think Mr Matthews answered. I have a number of questions that—

**MS LEE:** I just wanted to confirm that he is now refusing to take any more questions. Is that right? You are just refusing to answer them?

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Davis, I share your concern as well. We have been on this topic for about 50 minutes now.

**MS LEE:** And I am happy to wrap up, Chair. I am just confirming that he is now refusing to answer those questions. Is that right?

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Lee, you are a visitor in this committee. You are here by leave. I am the chair. I am running this meeting. It is time for a new line of questioning.

Minister, the annual report noted that, due to NAPLAN testing not occurring in 2020, there are no performance data or other measures of success available to parents, students or teachers for that year. Are there any plans to address this issue if NAPLAN is disrupted in the future?

**Ms Berry:** Thank you, Mr Pettersson. Yes, NAPLAN was obviously interrupted by COVID. It was a decision by education ministers nationally that NAPLAN not go ahead at that time. That is something that would be considered again by education

## PROOF

ministers if it was the case that having a national standardised test like NAPLAN occur would create inequality of outcomes. That will be considered closer to a time when we know where each state and territory is sitting as far as its response to COVID goes. Perhaps I can ask Mr Gotts to provide some more information about that plan more generally.

**Ms Haire:** Thank you, Minister. Sorry, Mr Gotts. I just wanted to note, Mr Pettersson, that NAPLAN is not the only way in which we understand students' learning; nor is it the prime way in which we assess the growth and learning of our students. In the ACT we have continuous formative assessment, which is a significant element of the teaching and learning approach that we take on board. We have professional learning communities of teachers who share their information, discuss learning data and plan together to ensure that children are learning.

While NAPLAN, as the minister often says, is a point-in-time indicator, it is certainly not the prime source of information for teaching and learning. However, as Mr Gotts will set out, NAPLAN did take place last year. Discussions are going on, with the expectation that NAPLAN will occur this year, subject to the pandemic of course. However, we do not rely solely on the NAPLAN data in order to understand how our children are learning. In fact, I am very proud of the approaches that our teachers take every day to personalise their learning. When Mr Gotts has finished, you might like to hear from Ms Kate McMahan in more detail about the way we support teachers to work together to assess and personalise the learning for children in the ACT.

**Mr Gotts:** Thank you, Ms Haire. Before going on, I will just note that I have read the privilege statement and understand it.

I will confine my comments to your questions in relation to the conduct of NAPLAN. As Ms Haire said, it did go ahead last year. The ACT is wholly online for the conduct of NAPLAN and has been since the start of NAPLAN online. We are currently quite deep in consultations and preparations for the conduct of NAPLAN in 2022. That process kicked off before the end of last calendar year. We have a committee that involves the non-government sector, as well as us, that meets regularly to prepare for the conduct of NAPLAN.

Naturally, as part of that, we take account of things that might disrupt NAPLAN, be they low-level disruptions all the way up to a very significant disruption. That is, again, part of the planning this year. So far we are not seeing anything that suggests that NAPLAN will not go ahead this year, but we have one eye on the future and we cannot be absolutely certain, so we are preparing for anything. Thank you.

**Ms Haire:** Ms McMahan, did you want to speak a bit more about the other ways in which we assess children's learning outside of the NAPLAN process?

**Ms McMahan:** Certainly, Ms Haire. There are a range of different strategies that our teachers will employ on a regular basis to understand students' growth and learning, and their next steps in learning. Formative assessment is the strongest tool that we use when we look at how a child is developing and what they need for their learning. We do lots of whole class formative assessment and we do individualised formative assessment for students so that we are able to determine what they need to learn, to

## PROOF

take that next step in learning.

Teachers plan together in their teaching teams, whether that is in a faculty or whether it is in a year level teaching team, to understand the strategies that they are using and their success with students so that students are making the significant progress that they need to be making. That can be with teacher-designed assessment tools. It can be also with some commercially available assessment tools, some of which our schools use through ACER. The Australian Council for Educational Research develops a whole lot of resources, performance assessment tests, and also lots of reading assessments and mathematics assessments. It really does depend on the program that the schools are putting in place at the time.

All of our assessment is so that we can monitor and gauge how students are learning and what we need to do, as teachers, to improve that learning and take those next steps. All of that learning is then reported through to parents, utilising the achievement standards of the Australian curriculum. We report to parents formally, twice a year, in a written format, using those achievement standards and an A to E scale, and we provide written commentary to parents about students' progress. Schools will also have a range of other ways of communicating students' learning, whether that is on a daily basis, through applications like Seesaw to share learning, or whether it is through parent-teacher or three-way conferences that our schools hold on a regular basis.

**THE CHAIR:** Wonderful. In the annual report, your strategic objectives are outlined for measuring student growth. None of those forms of measurement have made their way into the annual report. The strategic objectives have just kind of been written off for the year, saying, "Without NAPLAN we do not have a good answer." Is there a way that other forms of assessment or measurement could have made it into the annual report?

**Ms Haire:** Thank you, Mr Pettersson. As Mr Gotts said, we do not have results for a number of the measures because of NAPLAN not going ahead in 2020. But it did go ahead in 2021, so those measures will be reported against in 2021. However, I think what you are saying may well have struck a note with Minister Berry, who has championed, through the education ministers' meeting, developing a national formative assessment tool where we might ultimately have a different approach to having nationally comparable assessment of students. That is a project that has been underway for a number of years. I do not know if you want to speak about that briefly, Mr Gotts?

The other point is that, in terms of the annual report, the measures were already in place and our report reflects the published measures. In the future we may well look to broaden those measures to include other tools such as a national online formative assessment system, when it is developed.

**Mr Gotts:** Thank you, Ms Haire. Just to provide some additional detail, one of the strategic indicators was not affected by COVID, in the sense that it did go ahead. That was the indicator on student identification. It is in there as a lead indicator on the basis of improvements in the strength of a student's identification with their school, a sense of belonging, as it were. It is a lead indicator for better engagement in school et cetera.

## PROOF

So that indicator did go ahead. The headline figure shifted from 60 per cent of students reporting a very strong identification with their school up to 66 per cent.

That was a very large increase. Given that the survey was conducted very shortly after students went back from a period of remote learning in 2020, it is possible that what we were seeing was a reflection of students understanding the value that being physically at school had in their lives. It was a burst of joyfulness, as it were, at being back at school, if I can use that non-technical term. So that is the indicator that did go ahead.

**THE CHAIR:** All right.

**MR DAVIS:** There has been a lot of conversation nationally and locally about the value of NAPLAN. What is standing in the way of the ACT, should we choose to, scrapping NAPLAN altogether and using some of these other testing and performance measures that Ms McMahon has explained?

**Ms Berry:** Thank you, Mr Davis. It is part of our funding agreement with the federal government that NAPLAN is conducted annually. Believe me, I have asked that question a number of times—how that could possibly occur and whether we could develop our own formative assessment tool which would give us the information that we need that supports children in their learning, gives teachers the data that they need and advises parents about how their children are performing, beyond the narrow margins that NAPLAN considers.

However, as Ms Haire said, there is work continuing on the development of a formative assessment tool that goes more broadly beyond maths and numeracy and English and literacy, which would make a difference to young people's learning and teachers being able to have that really important informative data. As Ms McMahon said, teachers know their students best and they are continually assessing in a range of different ways. The best way to understand a child's learning within a school is for the parent to engage with the teacher, and to understand that the young person can broaden their horizon in a range of different ways, beyond just the point-in-time test that NAPLAN is.

**MR DAVIS:** Thank you, Minister. I have another quick supplementary on that, probably from the directorate level. Do our teachers value NAPLAN? I guess I am interested in getting some feedback from the staff directly on whether there are teachers across our system that actually do value this as one of their many ways to measure student performance, or whether, on the whole, teachers are not huge fans? I am curious about what feedback you have received from the educators.

**Ms Haire:** Thank you, Mr Davis. There are certainly different views in the teaching profession. The one thing we could say for certain is that I have not ever met a teacher who thinks that NAPLAN is the be-all and end-all of assessment. In fact, more would perhaps think otherwise.

In addition to being part of a project to develop a national online formative assessment tool, the ACT has been part of a project, alongside our colleagues in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, to look at how the existing NAPLAN could be



## PROOF

improved. That involved consultation with the workforce to get their views about how it could be made more effective and more meaningful.

We certainly know that there are strong views from some industrial representatives that techniques such as formative assessment are much more effective than a point-in-time, one day of the year assessment. I might ask Ms McMahon if she has any other reflections on that, or if that has pretty much summarised the case.

**Ms McMahon:** Ms Haire, that has probably summarised it. I think NAPLAN can be used as one piece of information alongside a range of other tools and pieces of information that schools and teachers use, and that parents use as well. I think you have probably summed it up really well, Ms Haire.

**Ms Berry:** Mr Davis, I can supplement that. The perspective from teachers and from some parents who have provided feedback to me is that the data is one useful tool, as Ms McMahon said, for teachers to use. The most disagreeable thing that I have feedback from school communities about is the whole kind of circus and palaver around NAPLAN results and the pitting of schools against each other, based on that very, very narrow assessment tool.

For me, that has been the most important part of my work in trying to evolve NAPLAN into a more modern tool that actually goes beyond that narrow margin and provides some good, positive feedback, rather than the whole reporting circus around it, which leads to some inequality within our school communities because of the way that they are reported on. For me, that has been the main issue, really. That is what I hear from the community, teachers and parents as well—that that is probably their main concern with how NAPLAN is reported on online.

**MR HANSON:** Regarding the Auditor-General's report into performance information in ACT public schools, I think page 88 of that report had a survey of principals, and only 10 per cent of principals did not agree with the statement that NAPLAN data is useful in supporting their decision-making. So I assume that it is useful, if that is what the principals are saying.

**Ms Berry:** That is right. One of many, Mr Hanson.

**MR HANSON:** Sure. On “one of many”, there are other measures. The annual report goes to ATAR results, students getting ATARs of 60 or above and 90 or above. I notice that when you compare 2019-20 and 2020-21, there has been a decline in both of those. ATARs seem to be sliding backwards. Then there is a big disparity, and that blows out for boys, when you break it down on gender lines. Could you explain why ATAR results are seemingly getting worse in this annual report, compared to previously, and why the gender gap?

**Ms Berry:** Thank you, Mr Hanson. I will ask Mr Watson to provide some advice on that question. Thank you, Mr Watson.

**Mr Watson:** I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. Thank you for the question. There are a range of annual variations in data in senior secondary that occur over time. At the moment it would be very difficult to ascertain specifically why those

## PROOF

annual variations have occurred. Our role here is, for the most part, to track and report on the data that comes from schools. I can say, though, that in the context of the last two years, overall, the maintenance of outcomes in years 11 and 12 in schools around ATARs has actually been outstanding, the way the schools have responded in engaging students and keeping them on.

It is interesting that, when you look at the whole picture of the ATAR distribution, there are slight variations from a gender perspective at different levels, but overall, in fact, there is a reversal of that difference in terms of girls and boys. There are a range of factors, I presume, that go into that. At this stage, it has not been our role to analyse that in depth, but it is something that we and the directorate are vigilant about in looking at that. For instance, in the other percentage bands there is a higher degree of females who are working across that.

The other thing that I would say is that, overall, for the entire cohort of students in the context of ATAR nationally, the outcomes are outstanding, and we know that—

**MR HANSON:** There has been a decline; right? There has been a decline between the previous reporting period and this reporting period. Is there anything beyond COVID to explain that, or do you put it down to COVID?

**Mr Watson:** I would reserve judgement on whether it is COVID or not. I do not think it would be prudent for me to lay everything in the way of COVID.

**MR HANSON:** Who is looking at what the causal factors are, then? If it is not all down to COVID and there has been a decline, is there someone in the directorate that is saying, “Let’s look at what the other causes may be”? Is anyone doing that?

**Mr Watson:** That is not within my auspice or the auspice of the board.

**MR HANSON:** Whose auspice is it, then?

**Mr Watson:** The education sectors within the whole jurisdiction have responsibility for the educational programs within their own schools. Our role is to support them in that in any way that we can, obviously through the curriculum and assessments.

**MR HANSON:** Yes. I will go back to the minister or someone else, then. If it is not you, Mr Watson, who is it that is looking at that data to say, “Okay; there has been a slip. It is not all down to COVID; there is an issue here”? Is anyone looking at the cause of that issue?

**Ms Haire:** Mr Hanson, I will pass to Mr Gotts to make some comments about the approach that we take to measuring performance in the ACT and the indicators that we look at. I think the results that you are referring to at this point do not constitute a trend. The indicators that we do look at, which generally go to learning gain and equity in particular, are the focuses that we take in our evaluation work. Mr Gotts?

**Mr Gotts:** Thanks, Ms Haire. I will not go to the specifics of one year after another with regard to ATAR, because there are a lot of different factors that can make a difference between one year and the next. As Ms Haire said, it does not represent a

## PROOF

trend, so one needs to step back a little when looking at it. With regard to doing just that, stepping back, we look at what are the different causal factors that can have an influence on educational outcomes. There are many of these. A large number of them sit within the school gate and the classroom. They relate to teachers and how teachers carry out their roles. They relate to leadership in schools. They relate to the climate, if you like, of a school. There are also factors that contribute to educational outcomes that are associated with the students themselves.

It is generally and commonly understood that a student's background can have a significant influence on their educational outcome. So we look at that and take that into account. That also includes questions like student wellbeing. The extent to which a student's wellbeing varies over their educational journey or at any one time can have an influence on outcomes as well.

**MR HANSON:** I actually was not after a generic explanation. I was after an explanation about that gap in that particular year. If you do not have one, that is great. The other question I have is: specifically, when you look at NAPLAN, when you look at ATAR, across the board, in pretty much every year level and in almost every subject, boys are not doing as well as girls academically in ACT schools. That could be more broadly as well, I guess, not looking at the data nationally. Has anyone looked at that as an issue, examined what that gender gap is and what is being done about it?

**Mr Gotts:** My area certainly looks at all of the data in relation to, say, NAPLAN, and we disaggregate it by different groups, including by boys and girls. We look to see where those differences are. The causal factors behind them can be a bit more complex, so I have not got a ready-made answer on those. They can include things like the extent to which students treat a test as high stakes. For example, the minister—

**MR HANSON:** Yes, but why is there a gender difference in that? Why would boys see it differently? If you have looked at that data, you would see what I have seen, which is that when it comes to ATAR, when it comes to NAPLAN, boys seem to be falling behind, and certainly in the data on ATAR it is getting worse. Have you noticed that, and have you got any specific responses that are about closing the academic gender gap?

**Mr Gotts:** The closing the gap elements of it belong elsewhere. I look at the gap and try to determine from the data what might be the causal factors that contribute to any gap in any area, whether it is between boys or girls or any other combination.

**MR DAVIS:** Minister, in response to the very first question I asked you in this term of the Assembly, you committed to keeping the Tharwa Preschool open. Could you please talk me through the work that the directorate is doing to ensure that this commitment is sustainable into the long term?

**Ms Berry:** Thank you, Mr Davis. I think Mr Matthews might be able to provide some information there or, Mr Matthews, do you know who else in the directorate can provide that information?

## PROOF

**Mr Matthews:** Minister and Mr Davis, I might pass to my colleagues in the early childhood area. In general, the way that preschool enrolments work is that they are demand driven. What we look for is the enrolments that are being requested from parents and where their preferences are—where they would like to go to preschool. There is no doubt that with Tharwa there is always a question of: “How do we get a sustainable preschool group operating?” That is really very much the driver of how we can support that community and how we can offer that preschool service in Tharwa.

It is not so much a question, for example, about the asset or even whether we are trying to rationalise those programs, as such. It is really a question of: do we have enough children year on year to make viable preschool programs? And we want parents to feel comfortable and to access the programs that they would like to access. Tharwa does have a relationship with Charles Conder School. Of course, we want to support families to have a very clear pathway to a local priority enrolment area school. In short, Mr Davis, I want to assure you that that option of Tharwa Preschool is still on the table. It will be included in the upcoming enrolment period. Essentially, the formation of those groups is determined very much on a demand basis.

**MR DAVIS:** Okay. Could I just ask some clarifying questions on that, then? The Tharwa Preschool is in the priority enrolment area of the Charles Conder Primary School; is that right?

**Mr Matthews:** That is my understanding. My colleagues will correct me if I am wrong. But, yes, that is my clear understanding.

**MR DAVIS:** In terms of workshopping how to ensure that the preschool service at Tharwa remains viable, is there any relationship between the Tharwa Preschool and the Gordon Primary School?

**Mr Matthews:** There is a pretty close relationship with all of the primary schools in your electorate and in that part of the city, Mr Davis. We definitely want to make sure that families feel connected to their local schools and we certainly encourage collaboration between those different primary schools. I am not aware of the number of preschool programs that we have operating in Gordon. We could either take that on notice or perhaps one of my colleagues might be able to answer that. Again, it really comes down to a child-by-child placement situation when we are talking about these relatively small numbers. But we would encourage partnerships between those schools and finding the right outcome for each individual family.

**MR DAVIS:** Has there been any instance over the course of the last year where a student has been denied enrolment to a preschool program at either Charles Conder Primary or Gordon Primary that you are aware of?

**Mr Matthews:** I think we would have to take that on notice. My only other bit to that answer, Mr Davis, is that obviously it is a question of the numbers of those individual programs. They do have a maximum number of children that can participate. If there were any instances where children were unable to be enrolled, that would be the most likely factor.

## PROOF

**MR DAVIS:** I suppose what I am getting at, Mr Matthews, is that, in instances where families are making an effort to enrol preschool age children at either Charles Conder or Gordon Primary School, I would like to know, to the question of the viability of the Tharwa Preschool program long term: are those schools actively introducing the Tharwa Preschool program to those parents as an option?

**Mr Matthews:** We can provide some further information on that, Mr Davis. Essentially, the preschool enrolment process is managed at a directorate level. Obviously the parents indicate their interest in having their children enrolled in preschool and their preferences around where they would like that to occur, and that is where there can be some engagement and dialogue with those families. It is not the role of those schools per se to be recommending Tharwa, although, again, we do appreciate that those schools have a close relationship. I am sure that, when they are meeting with individual families, each of those schools would be trying to find the best outcome for that individual child.

**MR DAVIS:** My last question goes to the viability of that program. Is the directorate doing any work with the broader Tharwa community to reimagine, I suppose, how that asset could be utilised by the community, particularly outside of preschool hours?

**Mr Matthews:** I would have to take any community engagement on notice as well, Mr Davis. There are some particular challenges with that asset, as you are aware, in terms of its location. It is one of the assets where we have some planning in place regarding bushfires and extreme weather, for example. We have plans regarding how we can safely manage students and staff that are working at that site. From our perspective, though, it remains an important facility in that community. If there are ideas from that community about how to optimise its use, then we will be always happy to engage with them. But obviously its primary purpose is to provide preschool programs, where that is required by the local community.

**MR DAVIS:** Great. Thank you.

**MS LAWDER:** Mr Matthews, to summarise, did you say you cannot guarantee the ongoing viability of Tharwa Preschool because it is dependent on enrolments?

**Mr Matthews:** I believe I did not say that, but to clarify—

**MS LAWDER:** What did you say?

**Mr Matthews:** What I did say was that obviously a viable preschool program is dependent on a minimum number of students and this is a year-by-year assessment that occurs around enrolment. For example, if one family wanted to enrol in Tharwa Preschool and that would have difficulties in running an appropriate program for that child, that would be where we would normally be wanting to engage with that family to look at what options are available for them. Year by year, the number of preschool programs that are in operation depends on parental enrolments and parental preferences and that, in any given year, there may be a demand issue with the actual Tharwa program that, as I have said, we would address through individual engagement with families.

## PROOF

**MS LAWDER:** What is an optimal number for running the Tharwa Preschool? At what point might you decide not to keep it open because of the number of enrolments?

**Mr Matthews:** Some of my colleagues may have an answer to that but my experience with that is if we are looking at enrolments of fewer than six, for example, we have to look at making sure that we can consider can we meet the needs of each of those individual children and can we staff that program appropriately. But there is no hard rule on that question. It comes down to providing a quality offering and the needs of the individual children.

**MS LAWDER:** Just work with me. For example, if there was a very low number one year but you knew there were some other younger children coming through, would you try to keep the school open for that really difficult year in order to accommodate an upcoming cohort?

**Mr Matthews:** Just to be very clear, the school is always open. It is always available for preschool programs. To use your example, there could be a situation where a program does not operate one year but can operate the next year, based on cohort demands. That is how that would occur, and that is a good example of how the demand on those places may fluctuate on a year-by-year basis. But I would want to emphasise that the school remains open and the offering remains as part of our overall preschool program.

**MS LAWDER:** I want to ask about the current state of COVID cases in our ACT government schools, both for teachers and among students.

**Ms Berry:** The information that you are asking for around COVID cases in schools is publicly available. I have the latest numbers here. For the week ending Sunday, 20 February 2022, there were 1,001 cases of COVID-19 reported in 120 ACT schools, and that data includes both public and non-government schools from years K to 12.

**MS LAWDER:** Continuing on, we hear from time to time about teacher numbers in schools being below their full complement, even before COVID cases are taken into consideration. Can you update us on how many teachers have contracted COVID so far this school year and the impact that that has had on scheduling, especially where it may have caused split classes, and the impact on children's learning?

**Ms Berry:** I think what we can start with is providing advice on how the Education Directorate and schools are managing school communities where there are shortages of staff. There are different scenarios in place that are responded to, based on those different scenarios. I can ask Ms Haire to provide a bit more advice on that.

**Ms Haire:** Just as an opening kind of contextual comment, at the start of school going back we probably had some fears that due to the Omicron outbreak we may be in a situation where we would have so many teachers away that we may not be able to staff some of our schools. I am really happy to say that that has not been the case at any point so far in term 1 of 2022. And that is, we believe, a result of the really strong public health social measures that we have got in place within our schools, which includes very, very clear advice about nobody coming to school or work if they are exhibiting any symptoms whatsoever.

## PROOF

We have got the cohorting that was mentioned earlier, to ensure that there is not mixing between different groups of children, and we also have physical distancing and cohorting among the staff. In addition, we have got mask-wearing by teachers and also by secondary-age students. We have got the mandatory vaccination of all primary teachers and early childhood teachers. That is just part of the suite of measures that we have put in place to ensure that we kept our staff and students safe so that people could teach and learn in our ACT schools.

But we did also put in place, as the minister said, a range of scenarios should we reach the situation where there were more teachers unavailable because of illness. The first level is where there was only the average rate of absenteeism. However, we believed that there could be some instances where we had a higher rate of absenteeism and, to prepare for that, we established a central casual staffing pool, which we have on occasion drawn on over the last two weeks in particular. I will ask Mr Matthews to speak about that a little more in a moment.

What we have been able to do, due to the planning that we put in place, is support schools where they have had instances of teachers being away due to COVID, or for other reasons, so that we have not had what has happened in a couple of cases interstate where they have had to close a school or a class because they have not had any teachers. Mr Matthews, did you want to speak a little more about the arrangements for the centralised pool that we use in certain circumstances to support schools?

**Mr Matthews:** Yes. As part of an engagement with our school principals, the advice that they gave us was that they needed to be able to have some staffing support on fairly short notice due to any instances where staff members were required to isolate due to either having COVID or being a household contact. We have engaged with our casual relief pool and engaged with them to identify whether they would make themselves available to the schools that needed them. In exchange, what we have done is offered them secure work for a period so that they are available and can be deployed to where they are needed. There are currently 32 staff that are in that pool, and each of those staff works in a particular sector of schooling—primary, high school or college—and can work in a particular part of the ACT.

We are really happy to report that that has been a very useful buffer for our schools. On the occasions where they have had some additional staff absences, we have been able to deploy those staff to those schools and assist them to continue to operate as normally as possible. We have not, as Ms Haire was stating, had any situations where we have had to significantly alter the school operations since the beginning of term 1 due to staff shortages. Of course schools have been affected at different times by having positive cases reported to the school and people having to stay away from the school.

We really want to pay credit to our principals and to our school communities for how they have managed to work their way through some of the ups and downs of managing COVID in term 1. The directorate will continue to engage with our principals and also with our unions to make sure that we can continue to appropriately staff our schools.

## PROOF

**MR HANSON:** On the issue of COVID and masks, I note that the ACT is going to continue on with masks in high school. New South Wales is getting rid of masks in all years and then Victoria is just going to keep them for years 1 to 3, I understand. Who has made the decision to keep masks in schools, particularly in high school where the majority of students are vaccinated and I think it is mandatory for all teachers?

**Ms Berry:** Those decisions are made on advice by the Chief Health Officer. But I can ask Ms Haire to explain some of the reasoning behind that.

**Ms Haire:** Attachment 1, parts 1 and 2 of the current health directions, which are the public health restricted activities emergency directions 2022 No 2, sets out that all early childhood education care settings and schools must operate in accordance with the health guidelines for schools and early childhood education and care. Within those guidelines the parent authority is the direction from the CHO. She has mandated that early childhood and schools must comply with the schools and early childhood guidelines and she has considered that masks should continue as they currently are.

As I said earlier—and I might ask Ms Simmons to provide some examples of this—what the health guidelines for schools and early childhood set up is a suite of measures which, taken together, create a safe environment. Masks are not the only part of it. As you said, Mr Hanson, the mandatory vaccination of primary teachers and the availability of vaccination for children now from the age of five is another part of it, and the cohorting that we have talked about. In particular, our colleagues in Health would emphasise that the most important thing is people not coming to school or work if they have shown any symptoms and also the enhanced ventilation and outdoor learning. It is that suite of measures that provides the safe environment that has so far seen us through.

**MR HANSON:** I am happy not to go to the suite of measures. We have discussed that previously in committee, and I understand them and certainly support them. I suppose what I am trying to get my head across is why our neighbouring states are saying that it is not required but we are saying it is required. I accept that it is the Chief Health Officer who is going to make the health directions but I assume that, as you watch school students and teachers in Queanbeyan take their masks off and we keep ours on, there have been some questions on that. Do you anticipate how long that is going to go on for, or is that indefinite?

**Ms Haire:** I believe, in an interview on Wednesday, the Chief Health Officer said that she was going to look again at the guidelines I referred to for term 2, and I think she also indicated that she meets regularly with the chief health officers from Victoria and New South Wales. But those are really questions for her, not for us. As I have set out, this comes from the health directions.

**MS LAWDER:** The minister said earlier that the information on the number of COVID cases in ACT schools was publicly available. Could you help me out about where I would find that?

**Ms Berry:** Yes, it is on the Education ACT website.



## PROOF

**MR HANSON:** We have heard significant reports of teacher shortages, including the union's document that was put out last year that led to the task force being established. But in questioning in the Assembly the minister said, "I think there is only one vacancy."

**Ms Berry:** There was, that is true, yes.

**MR HANSON:** I am trying to get my head across how, on the one side, people are saying there is this chronic shortage of teachers but, on the other side, you are saying there is only one vacancy. Are there not enough positions for teachers, or what is the issue? I am not talking about the shorter term COVID issues, I am talking about the longer term concerns that have been raised by the union.

**Ms Berry:** I think your question was, "At the start of term 1 how many vacancies were there?" There was one permanent position vacant at the start of term 1, day 1 of this year. I think the Australian Education Union is identifying an issue that is confronting the rest of the country as well as the ACT, around new teachers entering and staying within the sector and what we can do to ensure that we have the appropriate number of relief teachers and appropriate number of teachers beginning as career teachers within our school community.

I think those were the issues that the Australian Education Union was alluding to, and that is why the Education Directorate has set up the task force, alongside the Education Union, to understand better what will the future be for ensuring that we have an appropriate number of teachers to ensure that we have schools staffed all the time, but also ensuring that we have the number of relief staff within our schools on any one day or week as well. I think there is a bit of a nuance around the response to the question that you asked, and I will get Ms Haire to respond to some of that as at today.

**Ms Haire:** The data from Tuesday, 22 February is still that there is one permanent vacancy in the ACT teaching force and there are 35 temporary vacancies. However, as the minister has said, we are working very closely in the task force with the AEU on a range of issues which go to ensuring that we have capacity to cover unplanned vacancies. In the time that the task force has been in place, we have completed 14 separate actions, from looking at the new educator program and how we might improve that to looking at a survey of our new educators. We have been working closely on how we convert current casual staff into ongoing positions and so on.

As the minister said, the task force is probably less focused on the specific issue of the vacancies and is looking at a range of issues around how we ensure that we have a secure, ongoing workforce in the context of a national teacher shortage and looking ahead in particular to ensure that we have the workforce that we need for growing Canberra in the future. It is looking both at some immediate solutions and also at medium- and long-term approaches.

**MR HANSON:** Have you looked at the issue of funding? When I look at the ROGS report, table 4A.14, Australian, state and territory government recurrent expenditure per student, over the decade the ACT is the only jurisdiction that has cut funding. All the other jurisdictions have increased funding. Is that a contributing factor here?

## PROOF

**Ms Berry:** There is quite a bit of detail in that question to respond to. It relates to the student resourcing standard. In the ACT our public schools have always been funded and continue to be funded above the student resourcing standard. Other states and territories are moving up towards the student resourcing standard where it had not previously been the case. There has been a program of ensuring equality of funding on that student resourcing standard across the country. I can ask Mr Matthews again to provide a little more detail about the student resourcing standard in the ACT and how that is being applied.

**Mr Matthews:** The minister has correctly identified that there is a national requirement and, in fact, a set of national agreements which outline how school funding occurs and what the contribution is of the commonwealth and the state governments for both public and private schools.

**MR HANSON:** Can you just confirm then for me, while you go on, that we, the ACT government, in real terms cut funding by 3.3 per cent over the decade and the federal government increased funding to public schools by 43 per cent? Can you just confirm that?

**Mr Matthews:** I do not have the ROGS report in front of me but I just want to, I guess, illustrate my point that the funding mix is changing, as you have described. Under the national agreements the commonwealth is increasing their funding contribution for public schools and the ACT is required to meet that 80-20 split by 80 per cent funding for public schools and 20 per cent funding for the non-government schools

The ACT government, as is evidenced in the budget papers and in our financial reports, continues to increase its actual investment in education year on year. That is reflective of our growing system, and the growing system is also one of the key drivers of the staffing issues.

**MR HANSON:** But in real terms it is a reduction in 3.3 per cent. Why did the ACT sign up to an agreement that would result in a reduction in real-term funding?

**Mr Matthews:** What I can comment is that it is a national agreement that all states and territories have entered into.

**MR HANSON:** Yes, but the ACT was the first jurisdiction to sign up to that and signed up to a deal that sees a reduction from the ACT government in real-term funding. Why did we decide to, in real terms, cut ACT funding to schools?

**Mr Matthews:** As the minister said, the ACT government actually exceeds the SRS requirements for funding of both government and non-government schools. The ACT schools, apart from those in the Northern Territory, which has got very specific circumstances, are the best funded in the country. So there is an acknowledgement about the value in investing in education in the ACT that is reflected in the allocations in the ACT budget. There is a national funding set of arrangements which the territory participates in to make sure that each level of government is making their appropriate contribution.

## PROOF

**MR HANSON:** In your view, Mr Matthews, there is no correlation between the ACT government cutting funding in real terms over the last decade and the chronic teacher shortages that have been identified by the union? There is no correlation between those two?

**THE CHAIR:** If I could interrupt, you have got one more supplementary, Mr Hanson. I would like to get through another line of intended questioning before we close.

**MR HANSON:** I am happy to move on. I am not sure I will get an answer to that.

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, the affiliated schools partnership facilitates ACT teachers to undertake a masters of education degree. I understand that part of this program asks teachers to run a research project. Could you give us some examples of these projects and how they have been implemented in schools?

**Ms Berry:** Thanks for that question. I should just say that the affiliated schools program is pretty much the only kind in the country. Other state and territory systems are quite envious of our relationship with the University of Canberra and the ability to be able to provide opportunities to do those research projects through our affiliated schools work and the work that we can do across our schools to support beginning teachers in starting their careers and supporting them with a chance to start working in the classroom in front of young students, and to really try out the craft and try out the things that they have learned at university in a practical way, in delivering the how, not just the what, for delivery in our schools as far as the profession is concerned. I can ask Ms McMahon to provide some examples of some of the research projects that have been conducted in our school communities.

**Ms McMahon:** The affiliated schools program has a range of different research elements to it, one of which is the research that is conducted by our masters of education students undertaking the capital region masters program. We also have school-based masters programs. A small team in schools will undertake a project called teachers as researchers. They will be matched with a university researcher and they will undertake some professional learning about how to conduct research and then do individualised research projects as a small team in their schools.

There is a range of projects that they have undertaken in the last year or so, those schools in the affiliated schools program, an example of which would be looking at personalised learning and how they document student learning. That was a project undertaken at Ainslie. Bonython Primary looked at personalised learning and growing student capacity to judge their own learning. Dickson College looked at personalised learning and moving from summative school reports to a formative model. It sort of links back to some of the conversations that we were having earlier.

The other element of research that can be undertaken through the affiliated schools is commissioned research that we ask the university lecturers to undertake, and that is much more substantial research. That program aligns to the future of education goals and also the strategic planning for the directorate.

Those research projects can be a small project, a medium- or a longer-term project,

## PROOF

anything from six months to three years. They are undertaken in collaboration with our schools but really are led by academic researchers from the University of Canberra and quite often from other universities across Australia.

Examples of some of those research programs would be implementing personalised wellbeing learning at a particular primary school and looking at a wellbeing pedagogy and how that professional learning helps drive action research; looking at the impact of digital pedagogy, how we teach using computers as a tool, and what that looked like in a number of schools before, during and after the first lockdown that we had. Another one is to build cultural integrity using Country as teacher and assessing the impacts of teacher engagement with new pedagogies of Indigenous knowledge and being. Another one that we have been doing—and it is just about finished—is looking at transition programs for young children, moving from early childhood services into schools and how we can co-design, with families and early childhood educators, practices of inclusive, play-based learning.

We have a range of different programs that spread over different levels, a top-down and a bottom-up approach to our research, so that we are really looking at how we can influence not only the professional learning of our teachers but also the school-improvement practices that we have. It is a very rich program that articulates into our schools' individual plans for their school improvement journey, but it also helps our professionals in gaining much better understanding of what they are doing and their practices within our own settings.

**THE CHAIR:** It sounds like wonderful work. Unfortunately, we have run out of time for this session. Minister, thank you for being here, as well as your Education officials. I suspect we will need to adjourn while you switch your officials over.

**Ms Berry:** Do you want us to adjourn and dial back in?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, let us do that. The committee will suspend briefly and we will come back as soon as we can.

**Short suspension.**

PROOF

## 1. 2022-23 BUDGET INITIATIVES

Recurrent		
1.1.	Improving Digital Access for School Staff Members	Sam Seton
1.2.	Implementing the Education Amendment Bill 2022	Deb Efthymiades
1.3.	Renewal of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Certification	Coralie McAlister
1.4.	Embedding a Safety Culture in ACT Public Schools	Kate McMahon
1.5.	Equitable Enrolment Adjustment	David Matthews
1.6.	Support for Aboriginal Languages and Cultures	Sam Seton
1.7.	Equity of Access in Public Education – Delivering Four-Year Old Preschool	Deb Efthymiades
1.8.	Expanding Cleaning Services in ACT Public Schools	David Matthews
Capital		
1.9.	Majura Primary School Modernisation	David Matthews
1.10.	Upgrading and Increasing School Capacity – Modular Learning Centres	David Matthews
1.11.	Investing in Gungahlin - Expansion of Margaret Hendry Primary School and Construction of the New Taylor High School	David Matthews
1.12.	Development of the Whitlam Primary School and Early Childhood Education and Care	David Matthews
1.13.	Planning for Increasing College Capacity in Canberra's North	David Matthews
1.14.	COVID-19 Response – Improved Ventilation at Schools	David Matthews
2. SAFE@SCHOOLS TASKFORCE		
2.1.	WorkSafe ACT and ACT Schools QTB	Kate McMahon
2.2.	Dickson College QTB	Kate McMahon
2.3.	Managing Violence in ACT Schools QTB	Kate McMahon
2.4.	Calwell High School Special Purpose Review and Prohibition Notices QTB	Mark Huxley / Kate McMahon
3. COVID-19 RESPONSE		
3.1.	EDU COVID-19 response and exposure management QTB	Jane Simmons
3.2.	Remote Learning QTB	Jane Simmons
3.3.	Staff wellbeing QTB	Jane Simmons
3.4.	Workload Reduction Strategy QTB	Jane Simmons
3.5.	Managing Workforce Shortages QTB	Mark Huxley/ David Matthews
3.6.	Macgregor Primary School QTB	Mark Huxley
3.7.	Ventilation in Schools in response to COVID-19 QTB	David Matthews
4. BUSINESS SERVICES		
4.1.	Workforce FTE – Budget vs Actual	David Matthews
4.2.	Teacher Shortage Taskforce QTB	David Matthews

4.3.	School Maintenance QTB	David Matthews
4.4.	School Cleaning QTB	David Matthews
4.5.	School Funding – Commonwealth Schooling Resourcing Standards QTB	David Matthews

## 5. SYSTEM POLICY AND REFORM

5.1.	ACT Education Statistic Summary July 2022	
5.2.	Population and Growth	Deb Efthymiades
5.3.	Enrolment Forecasting and Future Demand	Deb Efthymiades
5.4.	Enrolment Policy Demand Management	Deb Efthymiades
5.5.	Planning Responses to meet Growth	Deb Efthymiades
5.6.	Enrolments and Appeals	Deb Efthymiades

## 6. SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

6.1.	Suspension Data QTB	Sam Seton
6.2.	Inquiry into the ACT Auditor General's report No 6 of 2021 - Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools	Sam Seton
6.3.	eSafety QTB	Sam Seton

## 7. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7.1.	Witness List 2022 Hearings
7.2.	Privilege Statement
7.3.	FOL22/593 QON Summary Annual Report Hearings – February/March 2022
7.4.	FILE2022/25 Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion, Report 4: Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21
7.5.	FILE2022/619 2020-21 Annual Report Hearings Proof Transcript - 25 Feb 2022

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – IMPROVING DIGITAL ACCESS FOR SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS

Investing in public education – Improving digital access for school staff members	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	1,604	1,678	1,756	1,836	<b>6,874</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>1,678</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>6,874</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will provide laptop devices to all teachers, casual relief teachers and administration staff based in ACT public schools.
- This \$6.8 million initiative builds on the Government’s ongoing commitment towards increasing digital access for school-based staff.
- This initiative is addressing the gap to ensure equitable allocation of devices and enable all school staff to perform their role efficiently and effectively.
- The Directorate has begun working on the required number of devices and program delivery to schools. The first order of devices to school-based staff will occur in September 2022. Devices will then be provided to schools/staff on an ongoing basis.

Cleared as complete and accurate: XX/XX/2020

Cleared for public release by: Choose an item.

Contact Officer name:

Lead Directorate:

TRIM Ref:

Choose directorate:

Ext:

Ext:



# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT 2022

Investing in public education – Education Amendment Act 2022	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	324	493	639	647	2,103
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>2,103</b>
FTE	2	3	4	4	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will operationalise key reforms in the *Education Amendment Bill 2022* to enable early identification of vulnerable students and clarify and streamline non-government school registration.
- A Student Movement Register, a regulatory framework for non-government schools and a Registration Standards Advisory Board will be established.
- These measures equate to \$2.1 million in spending over the forward estimates.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – RENEWAL OF HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED AND LEAD TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Investing in public education – Renewal of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Certification	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue	3	4	3	1	11
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will introduce a fee to apply to Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) who wish to renew their HALT certification after 10 years.
- The certification of the first cohort of nationally certified HALTs in the ACT is due to expire in 2022 after 10 years. A fee for HALT certification after 10 years is being introduced to enable continued certification of these teachers by Teacher Quality Institute.

### Additional Initiative Information

- Certification as a HALT in the ACT is part of a nationally recognised quality assurance framework. In accordance with the *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010* (the Act) the ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) is to determine standards, including assessment and certification standards for the teaching profession in the ACT.
- As the certifying authority in the ACT, the TQI certifies teachers against the standards within the nationally consistent framework for certification.
- Since the ACT pilot of the national process for certification of teachers in 2012, the certification application process has been conducted in each calendar year.
- Certification is granted for five years from the date of certification. The application fee for certification is \$1,300, payable in three instalments at submission of Module 1, 2 and 3 of the certification process. The application fee reflects the time taken by two assessors to assess teachers against the standards.
- After five years with certification, certified teachers who meet the eligibility criteria can apply to renew their HALT certification at a cost of \$300 for a period of a further five years. This involves only one assessor assessing fewer elements in a more truncated process.
- The renewal of certification at ten years returns to a more comprehensive assessment by two assessors with more elements in the process at a cost of \$650.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – EMBEDDING A SAFETY CULTURE IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Investing in public education – Embedding a safety culture within ACT public schools	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	1,141	0	0	0	1,141
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,141</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,141</b>
FTE	3	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- To ensure schools remain safe and supportive workplaces for students and staff, the ACT Government is providing funding to establish the Safe@School Taskforce.
- This \$1.14 million investment will lead a system-wide transformation that will improve the safety and wellbeing of our students and the workforce in ACT public schools.
- The Taskforce will be supported by an advisory group, comprising representatives from the ACT Principals' Association, ACT Policing, Australian Education Union (ACT Branch), ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association, and work health and safety experts from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.
- Initially, the Safe@School Taskforce will coordinate a series of reviews across the public school system to provide a snapshot of how processes and practices that support safe systems are operating in ACT public schools.
- These reviews will inform and support the rollout of improved safety systems across all ACT public schools, and coordinate data analysis and reporting to assist with the delivery of appropriate safety supports for schools and students.

### Additional Initiative Information

- The taskforce builds on the 2021-22 Budget initiative, Investing in public education – Reducing violence in schools, which provided additional support for the management of occupational violence in ACT public schools.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – EQUITABLE ENROLMENT ADJUSTMENT

Investing in public education – Equitable enrolment adjustment	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	3,008	0	0	0	3,008
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>3,008</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,008</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Initiative Description

- The ACT Government will continue to provide support for the growth in students with additional needs enrolled in ACT public schools. The funding will support increased enrolments of students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse background and students with lower socio-economic status in the ACT public school system.
- The Government will fund the equivalent of 24 new full-time learning professionals and support staff to support growth in students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse background and students with lower socio-economic status in the ACT school system.
- Funding of \$3 million has been allocated for the initiative in the 2022/23 Financial Year.
- This initiative builds on the Government's ongoing commitment to provide a high quality education to all children in the ACT who wish to attend an ACT public school.

### Background/Key Deliverables

- The initiative will be implemented immediately through the Student Resource Allocation model. This is an existing system in place to govern funds that specifically target students with additional need.
- Funding will predominantly be expended on teaching resources and supports for these students to achieve their educational goals.
- This takes place through access to specialist schools, specific classes or units in mainstream schools, and participation in mainstream classes with the support to access the educational programs offered by the schools.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Investing in public education – Support for Aboriginal Languages and cultures	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	150	150	150	150	600
Offset – Expenses	-150	-150	-150	-150	-600
<b>1. Net cost of services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2. FTE</b>	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- The Ngunnawal People are working hard to reawaken their language and the Education Directorate is mindful that the Ngunnawal People should maintain control and be the first teachers of their language.
- The Government will provide a grant to the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to promote the integration and understanding of local Ngunnawal language and culture into ACT public schools.
- The initiative will build staff and student understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures, including Ngunnawal language and culture, and support the delivery of the Australian Curriculum.
- This announcement builds on the commitments the Government has made in the Future of Education Strategy.
- The ACT Government has been working towards embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages and cultures into the public school system as part of its commitment to Cultural Integrity, and the Education Directorate's actions under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028.
- The focus of this work is to ensure classrooms are places where all students feel safe to develop their identities, interests, and aspirations. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, this means developing education programs with them and facilitating greater student agency.

### Additional Initiative Information

- The objective of this initiative is to ensure that the ACT Government is well positioned to meet its commitment outlined in the Future of Education by building cultural integrity, safety, connection and belonging, and ensuring schools are responsive to the impact of approximately 230 years of history on contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices.
- It provides an opportunity to further the ACT's journey towards cultural integrity in ACT public schools with impacts across the broader community.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/07/2022  
 Cleared for public release by: Director-General  
 Contact Officer name: FOL22/1767  
 Lead Directorate: Education  
 TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

## Election Commitment/Parliamentary Agreement

The *ACT Parliamentary and Governing Agreement* commits the ACT Government to “continue to implement our *Future of Education Strategy*, which prioritises equity and inclusion”. *Strengthening Cultural Integrity – Aboriginal Languages and Cultures in the Public School System* is a 2020 election commitment (LAB025) that is linked to another election commitment from the same period, *Healing and Reconciliation Fund* (LAB019).

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – DELIVERING FOUR YEAR-OLD PRESCHOOL

Investing in public education – Delivering four-year old preschool	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	1,569	1,811	2,112	1,133	6,625
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>1,811</b>	<b>2,112</b>	<b>1,133</b>	<b>6,625</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government provides 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year of free education for all four-year-old children living in Canberra.
- The ACT Government will continue to offer 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year of free public preschool in the current service delivery model.
- This initiative builds on the Phase One initiatives of *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*.

### Background/additional Initiative Information

- Around 78% of eligible four year-olds access public preschools in the ACT and it is recognised as one of the best models in delivering educational outcomes for children in Australia.
- Public preschools are delivered at a total cost of around \$37 million per year, with the ACT Government contributing approximately \$27.3 million of this amount towards delivering this free universal service.
- In late 2021, the Minister for Early Childhood Development signed the new Preschool Reform Agreement 2022 – 2025 (PRA) on behalf of the ACT.
- The PRA replaces the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (NP UAECE) which was subject to many short-term extensions by the Australian Government and provided no long-term funding certainty for jurisdictions.
- The PRA provides longer term funding certainty through a four-year agreement, with the ACT to receive \$38.6 million over this period. The Commonwealth is contributing \$9.7 million per year based on 2021 funding levels; however, this amount is not indexed for future cost increases, resulting in a funding shortfall of \$1.5 million for the Territory over the life of the PRA compared to the NP UAECE.
- This shortfall is exacerbated by the requirement for the ACT to direct around \$1.475 million per year (\$5.9 million over the life of the agreement) away from government-run preschools to the non-government sector. This is a new approach as previously 100% of the funding under the NP UAECE was directed to government-run preschools.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- In practice, the funding shortfall for ACT Government preschools is approximately \$2 million per year and \$7.363 million over the life of the agreement. It is noted that the PRA assigns funding in calendar years rather than financial years. Over the next four years, the funding shortfall will therefore be \$6.625 million.



# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION – EXPANDING CLEANING SERVICES IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Investing in public education – Expanding cleaning services in ACT public schools	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	4,261	4,310	4,361	4,414	17,346
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>4,261</b>	<b>4,310</b>	<b>4,361</b>	<b>4,414</b>	<b>17,346</b>
FTE	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will strengthen the capacity of the ACT Public Schools' Cleaning Service to ensure the provision of adequate and safe school cleaning services and hygienic learning and work environments for students and school staff.
- This initiative, \$17.38 million over four years, builds on the Government's decision in the 2019-20 Budget to in-source ACT public school cleaning services and directly employ 275 school cleaners within the Education Directorate.
- The ACT School Cleaning Service will immediately recruit to ensure the provision of adequate and safe school cleaning services and hygienic learning and work environments for students and school staff.

### Background

- The ACT School Cleaning Service has been in operation since 2020.
- Implementation of the additional resources would allow for the allocation of hours to identified sites (special, primary and preschools), supervisors and coordinators.
- This will directly contribute to realising the full benefits of an insourced cleaning workforce and will lead to improved outcomes – both cleaning and floor maintenance – providing for improved learning and work spaces in ACT Government Schools.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## NEW AND EXPANDED SCHOOLS – MAJURA PRIMARY SCHOOL MODERNISATION

New and expanded schools – Majura Primary School modernisation	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital – EDU	841	7,521	14,588	12,501	35,451
Capital – MPC	34	285	565	483	1,367
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>7,806</b>	<b>15,153</b>	<b>12,984</b>	<b>36,818</b>
Depreciation	0	0	174	325	499
Expenses	0	378	472	344	1,194
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>1,693</b>
<b>FTE</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>-</b>

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will invest more than \$39 million over the next five years to modernise Majura Primary School, including increasing the school's capacity by up to 300 places. This will see an increase from 900 students to 1200 students.
- In addition to increased capacity, this funding will also see existing classrooms at Majura Primary School upgraded with more modern facilities.
- The Project will redevelop and modernise the school and refurbish the ageing permanent classrooms with contemporary facilities designed to deliver modern pedagogy.
- This initiative is part of the Government's commitment to meeting enrolment growth by permanently expanding schools in the Inner North area.
- Modernisation of Majura Primary School is expected to be completed in late 2025.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## NEW AND EXPANDED SCHOOLS – UPGRADING AND INCREASING SCHOOL CAPACITY

New and expanded schools – upgrading and increasing school capacity	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital – EDU	7,692				
Capital – MPC	308	0	0	0	8,000
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,000</b>
Depreciation	200	400	400	400	1,400
Expenses	0	100	200	200	500
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>1,900</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will continue to increase school capacity through the installation of three new Modular Learning Centres (MLCs), and re-use of eight existing MLCs, across ACT public schools to meet projected enrolment growth and classroom needs.
- Investing in flexible, high-quality MLCs allows the ACT Government to meet changing demand across the ACT public school system.
- This initiative builds on the 22 MLCs across 18 schools funded through the 2021-22 Budget and the August 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update.
- The project is due to be completed in June 2023.

### Election Commitment/Parliamentary Agreement

- The initiative is in accordance with the Government's 2020 Election Commitments and the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement priorities for planning and delivery of new and expanded schools to meet the growing enrolment demand at public schools.

### Key Deliverables

- Funding covers the installation of three new MLCs, including the provision of all associated works and to relocate and re-use seven existing MLCs currently located at other schools.
- The associated works include works to uplift, transport and refit and refurbish the existing MLCs, undertake any works to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, such as the National Construction Code and any other compliance works, and remediate the site at the school from which the MLCs were sourced.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## NEW AND EXPANDED SCHOOLS – INVESTING IN GUNGAHLIN

New and expanded schools – Investing in Gungahlin	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital - EDU	0	14,808	0	0	14,808
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,808</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,808</b>
Depreciation	0	148	296	296	740
Expenses	1,351	4,185	5,883	6,880	18,299
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,351</b>	<b>4,333</b>	<b>6,179</b>	<b>7,176</b>	<b>19,039</b>
FTE	5	16	23	23	-

### Key Information

- The ACT Government will provide additional funding to meet the construction costs of expanding the Margaret Hendry School by 600 places and constructing a new public high school in Taylor which will have a permanent capacity of 800 places.
- Margaret Hendry School's new learning spaces, due for completion in time for the 2023 school year, will feature general learning settings, specialist learning settings including food technology, Science Technology Engineering Art and Maths (STEAM), and small group programs.
- Due to open in 2024, the new high school in Taylor will offer general and specialist learning areas, small group programs, a library and an interactive learning centre. Sport and recreation spaces for students and the community will include a double gymnasium/hall, performing arts spaces and hardcourts.
- This initiative builds on the Government's 2021-22 Budget investment of \$118 million for the expansion of Margaret Hendry School and construction of the new high school in Taylor and is part of the Government's commitment to meeting enrolment growth in greenfield suburbs.

### Election Commitment/Parliamentary Agreement

This initiative is in line with the 2020 Election Commitments by the ACT Labor Party to deliver an 800 places high school in Gungahlin with a scheduled opening in 2024.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## NEW AND EXPANDED SCHOOLS – DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHITLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE

New and expanded schools - Development of the Whitlam Primary School and Early Childhood Education Centre	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital – EDU	2,102	13,925	28,477	24,427	68,931
Capital – MPC	90	594	1,215	1,042	2,941
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>14,519</b>	<b>29,692</b>	<b>25,469</b>	<b>71,872</b>
Depreciation	0	0	768	1,535	2,303
Expenses	0	593	2,763	4,269	7,625
<b>1. Net cost of services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>3,531</b>	<b>5,804</b>	<b>9,928</b>
<b>2. FTE</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>

### Key Information

- The Government will construct a new public primary school (P-6) with a capacity for up to 800 students and an early childhood education centre and care setting with a 130 place capacity in the new suburb of Whitlam.
- The school is scheduled to be open by 2025 and will have a total capital cost of \$76.750 million, including \$4.878 million of capital funding in 2026-27.
- This new school will service the growing suburb of Whitlam, providing residents with a high-quality public school close to where they live.

### Additional Initiative Information

- This new school will service the growing suburb of Whitlam, providing these residents with a high-quality public school close to where they live. Molonglo's third school is scheduled to be open in time for the 2025 school year. Design and planning work on the new school is continuing.
- The P-6 component is expected to have capacity for around 800 primary school student places in permanent construction installations; and
- Delivery of an ECEC facility – This will provide the school with a 'wraparound' service model capability for children and families and will further expand the ECEC and P-6 integrated model that is being implemented through the Franklin School Expansion. The day care facility will be sized to accommodate 130 places and will be integrated with the preschool facility in the P-6 component of the school.

### Election Commitment/Parliamentary Agreement

The ACT Parliamentary and Governing Agreement commits the Government to *“Continue to implement our Future of Education Strategy, which prioritises equity and inclusion”*. The initiative will deliver on the *Future of Education Strategy* and the election commitment outlining a public priority to progress planning for new school capacity in Molonglo.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## NEW AND EXPANDED SCHOOLS – PLANNING FOR INCREASING COLLEGE CAPACITY IN CANBERRA’S NORTH

New and expanded schools - Planning for Increasing College Capacity in Canberra's North	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital - EDU	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Offset – Capital - EDU	-1,000	0	0	0	-1,000
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committing one million to undertaking master planning and preliminary design works for a second college in Gungahlin in 2022-23.
- This funding will be used to explore the feasibility of a possible and preferred Education owned site next to the Gold Creek School senior campus in Nicholls, and consultation with the Gungahlin community.
- In the meantime, Gungahlin College is experiencing significant enrolment growth and capacity pressure with additional enrolments expected in 2023. Conversations and planning are ongoing with the school to ensure sufficient capacity is available in 2023 and ahead of delivering a longer term college solution. This includes timetabling efforts (including a 9<sup>th</sup> line) for subjects with high demand such as hospitality, reconfiguring class scheduling and use of classroom spaces as well as investigating use of additional spaces within the broader building footprint.

### Additional Initiative Information

- North Canberra, encompassing Gungahlin and the Inner North, is one of the fastest growing areas of Canberra with a significant number of land releases and residential development projects either having been completed, underway or in the development pipeline.

### Key Milestones/Timeframe for Completion

- The detailed Business Cases for the project will come forward in a future budget process.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## COVID-19 RESPONSE – IMPROVED VENTILATION AT SCHOOLS

Refer to **Brief 4.07 (Ventilation in Schools)** for further information

COVID-19 Response – Improved ventilation at schools	Education and life-long learning				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital - EDU	3,568	0	0	0	3,568
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>3,568</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,568</b>
FTE	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Information

- The Government will finalise the installation of shade structures and ventilation improvements in 2022-23 to support COVID-safe public school environments.
- These activities were originally to be funded from the COVID-19 Response Fund in 2021-22 however full delivery was not possible in 2021-22.
- The unspent funds of \$3.568m is currently committed with the delivery of the activities expected to be completed in the first half of 2022-23.

### Key Deliverables

- Funding includes \$1.783 million to finalise ventilation projects and \$1.785m to complete the installation of shade structures at identified school sites.
- Both projects are expected to be finalised by 31 December 2022.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## WORKSAFE ACT AND ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Talking points

- The Education Directorate acknowledges the important role Worksafe ACT plays in ensuring workplaces are safe as possible. The Directorate is committed to engaging with Worksafe where any opportunities for safety improvements are identified.
- The ACT Government has committed \$1.14m to a newly established taskforce within the Education Directorate to lead and manage a comprehensive response to ongoing legislative compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.
- This taskforce will also develop strategies for ensuring the Directorate has a stronger safety culture.

### WorkSafe ACT Matters

- Following recent attendance by Inspectors on ACT Public Schools sites, WorkSafe ACT issued **Improvement Notices** under section 191 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* for:
  1. Kingsford Smith School
  2. Calwell High School
  3. Dickson College, and
  4. Hawker College.

### *Kingsford Smith School*

- The Directorate has responded to the improvement notice issued to Kingsford Smith School.
- WorkSafe has confirmed it is satisfied the notice has been complied with and no further action is required.

### *Calwell High School*

- The Directorate has responded to all improvement and prohibition notices issued to Calwell High School.
- WorkSafe has confirmed it is satisfied the notices have been complied with and no further action is required.
- The Prohibition Notice issued to Calwell High School was closed on 12 May 2022.

### *Dickson College*

- The Directorate has responded to the improvement and prohibition notices issued to Dickson College.
- The Prohibition Notice for Dickson College was closed on 1 August 2022.
- There is still one notice outstanding for Dickson College, which relates to ventilation monitoring.



# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- The Directorate is working with the school and contractors to finalise any outstanding work and respond to WorkSafe in the coming weeks, when this notice is due.

## *Hawker College*

- The Directorate has also responded to notices issued to Hawker College.
- One notice is still outstanding for Hawker College.
- The Directorate is working with schools to finalise the works relating to the outstanding notice that relates to lift registration.
- The remaining notice for Hawker College will be responded to by the end of September, when it is due.

## Key Information

- The Education Directorate continues to work collaboratively with key stakeholders including the Australian Education Union, CPSU, principals and the P&C Council to produce the best possible outcomes for our school communities.
- Recent notices issued by WorkSafe to the Education Directorate relate to a range of work health and safety issues including:
  - staff induction processes
  - first aid kits
  - evacuation processes
  - records of staff training
  - mould and animal excrement
  - ceiling damage
  - lift repair
  - carbon dioxide monitoring
  - classroom heating; and
  - protocols around chemical handling.
- Notices received by the Directorate are outlined in the table below.

## Background Information

- On 28 April 2022, WorkSafe also visited **Maribyrnong Primary School**. During that visit it is understood WorkSafe suggested contacting the equipment manufacturer to work with them to request a set of steps be constructed to improve access to the flying fox  
[REDACTED]
- On 25 July 2022, Worksafe visited **Birrigai Outdoor School**. During this visit it is understood Worksafe inspected flying fox equipment following an incident that occurred in QLD. The workplace visit report is pending.
- WorkSafe also visited an additional three ACT public schools in Term 2 2022 but no further action was required:

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/08/2022  
Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General  
Contact Officer name: Kate McMahon  
Lead Directorate: Education  
TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- **Amaroo School**
  - **Namadgi School**
  - **Wanniassa School**
- Not all WorkSafe visits to schools have led to a notice being issued or further action being required by the Directorate or the school.
  - The Directorate continues to deliver audit and assurance programs in order to identify improvements to our workplace health and safety management system.
  - All new employees participate in both workplace health and safety and occupational violence induction programs.
  - All staff complete biannual mandatory training programs including work health and safety and Occupational Violence programs.
  - The Directorate will look to strengthen its processes, supports and training in relation to safe systems of work following reviews of current processes and guidance from Worksafe.

## WorkSafe Notices Summary (as of 11 August 2022)

- Closed by WorkSafe
- Open
- Response provided and waiting on WorkSafe to review

Notice Number	Notice Type	Date Issued	Date Due	Content	Status
<b>Hawker College</b>					
4713 (former 4589)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Register chemicals	EDU response submitted to WorkSafe on 27/7. Inspector requested further work on the school's chemical register. S@S is working with the school to progress this updated register as a priority. Support is being provided by the WHS team.
4715 (former 4592)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Safety data sheets	Response submitted to WorkSafe on 27/7. No response received yet from WorkSafe.
4665	PIN	12/07/2022	29/09/2022	Lift registration	Response is in progress. Response is not yet due.
4714 (former 4591)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Label chemicals	Closed.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/08/2022  
 Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General  
 Contact Officer name: Kate McMahon  
 Lead Directorate: Education  
 TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

**BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF**

Notice Number	Notice Type	Date Issued	Date Due	Content	Status
4716 (former 4593)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Systems to address chemical spills	Closed
4717 (former 4596)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Repair ceiling	Closed
4718 (former 4599)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Chemical Storage	Closed
4719 (former 4600)	PIN	6/07/2022	28/07/2022	Signage for chemical storage	Closed
4668	PIN	8/07/2022	21/07/2022	Safety and first aid equipment in room 111	Closed
4662	PIN	8/07/2022	21/07/2022	Trip response testing	Closed
4666	PIN	8/07/2022	21/07/2022	Emergency egress signs	Closed
<b>Dickson College</b>					
4773 (former 4598/4526)	PIN	8/07/2022	31/08/2022	Ventilation	Response is in progress. Response is not yet due.
4437	Prohibition Notice	17/06/2022	No date specified	Mould and excrement, repairs, cleaning, building condition & training	Closed
4774 (former 4524)	PIN	4/07/2022	26/07/2022	Repairs, building condition, cleaning & training	Closed
<b>Education Support Office</b>					
4523	PIN	24/06/2022	29/07/2022	Staffing shortage matrix consultation	Response transmitted to WorkSafe on 29/07/2022. Waiting on WorkSafe reply.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/08/2022  
 Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General  
 Contact Officer name: Kate McMahon  
 Lead Directorate: Education  
 TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs**WORKSAFE RESPONSE - DICKSON COLLEGE****Talking points**

- The Education Directorate continues to work with WorkSafe ACT to progress remaining work health and safety improvements at Dickson College.
- The Directorate responded to the Prohibition Notice issued by WorkSafe ACT on 17 June 2022.
- On 1 August 2022, WorkSafe advised that the notice was closed.
- The Directorate has implemented several strategies to address the findings in independent inspection reports including safer heating solutions in classrooms for improved thermal comfort, mould removal, animal excrement removal and cleaning, and ceiling repair.
- Ceiling replacement will also be undertaken in the Anthill Theatre following the completion of a formal tender process, which closed on 1 August 2022. The Tender process is in its final stages.
- There is one outstanding Improvement Notice for Dickson College. This relates to ventilation.
  - The Directorate is working with an occupational hygienist to test ventilation capabilities at the school and will make any necessary repairs and adjustments recommended within the report.
  - The response is not due to WorkSafe until 31 August 2022.

**Key Information**

- On 15 June 2022, WorkSafe ACT inspectors attended Dickson College in response to work health and safety complaints. During the inspection, WorkSafe detected the presence of animal faeces and urine, black mould, and water damage in some ceiling tiles.
- As a result, the SOSE/Humanities Block F and the Anthill Theatre were closed to staff and students until remediation was completed and the Prohibition Notice was closed.
- Independent inspections by an occupational hygienist have been conducted at the school to identify the locations of any hazardous mould and animal excrement. These inspections have also reviewed any environmental risk factors for mould growth.
- The repair to the Anthill Theatre ceiling will be undertaken following a tender process which opened on 22 July 2022 and closed on 1 August 2022.
- The timeline for the repairs will be developed once the tender process is finalised.

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## **MANAGING VIOLENCE IN ACT SCHOOLS**

### **Talking points**

- The last two years have been challenging for everybody, and school communities have not been immune from the pressures of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and a nationwide teacher shortage.
- I offer my thanks to all teachers, staff, students and families across all ACT Public Schools for their resilience and support throughout 2022 as we continue to face and respond to these challenges together.
- Serious incidents of violence are rare in ACT public schools and are responded to where they occur with appropriate school-based measures guided by the Safe and Supportive School Policy. When incidents occur, the Government's priority is the wellbeing of everyone involved, including those who may have witnessed a distressing event.
- Every school worker, leader and student should be safe at school, free from bullying, harassment and violence. Any instance of violence or harassment in a school is unacceptable and every incident is of concern and is treated seriously. The ACT Government is committed to providing safe learning and work environments for all ACT public school students and staff.
- The ACT Government is working to create safe and supportive school environments for all students, teacher and staff through the Safe and Supportive Schools policy and the implementation of the Positive Behaviours for Learning framework in all ACT public schools.
- Schools also adopt an approach to teaching Social and Emotional Literacy skills which provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach prosocial skills at an age appropriate level.
- ACT public schools are well resourced to deal with matters relating to bullying and violence. Each school has a student wellbeing team who consists of school leadership staff, teachers, allied health professionals including school psychologists. They also have access to a team of senior psychologists, behaviour support experts, and a range of allied health professionals to support when a targeted or case management response is required.
- The Directorate provides training and resources to all school-based staff about how to prevent incidents from occurring, what types of incidents should be reported and what to do if a staff members experiences occupational violence in the workplace.
- Schools are required to report to the Directorate any incident, whether critical or non-critical in nature, that results in serious harm or injury or puts the safety of students, staff or visitors at significant risk, or poses a real threat to property or the school environment.

### Safe at School Taskforce

- To ensure our public schools remain safe and supportive places, the ACT Government has established the Safe at School Taskforce.
- The Taskforce will lead a system wide reform program of work to support the Directorate's commitment to improve the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.
- The Systems of Safety Improvement Strategy will focus on the development of new systems, process, policy documentation and training to create greater consistency in both understanding and implementation of safety systems in schools.
- The Taskforce will aim to create a positive change towards a stronger safety culture in our schools and improve the management of incidents with a shift in focus from response to prevention.
- The Taskforce is currently coordinating a series of reviews across our public school system to provide a snapshot of how safety processes are operating, with the findings of these reviews being used to inform improved safety across all ACT public schools and ensure the ACT Education Directorate continues to meet its ongoing legislative obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.
- The Taskforce is supported by an Advisory Group, comprising of representatives from the relevant Unions (AEU, CPSU and UWU), ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations, ACT Principals' Association, ACT Policing, and work health and safety experts from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.
- The Advisory Group met for its inaugural meeting on 11 August 2022 to discuss the role and function of the Advisory Group and agreed to the Terms of Reference.
- The Calwell High School Special Purpose Review was published on 28 July 2022. The Directorate and school are currently working together to develop a phased implementation plan in response to the recommendations. This will involve significant work from the school with support from the Education Support Office through the remainder of the 2022 and the 2023 school years.
- A System Wide Rapid Review conducted by external consultants has been conducted and the delivery of formal review recommendations to address how the Education Directorate may transform safety culture in ACT public schools to achieve escalated regulatory compliance is due at the beginning of September 2022.

### **Key Information**

- ACT public schools adopt a whole school Positive Behaviour for Learning framework to identify and teach expected behaviours and build a culture of respect.
- Reports of bullying or violence are managed by schools in accordance with Education Directorate policies and procedures, and the school's processes and procedures.
- It is important to note that the term 'occupational violence' encompasses a broad range of incidents and includes issues such as intimidation, threats and harassment via electronic media. Types of incidents can range from offensive language through to physical violence.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- Over 2,100 incidents have been reported at public schools in 2022. The number of reported incidents is a positive reflection of the work we are doing to encourage a stronger reporting culture across all of our schools.
- It is also important to note that every staff member who is impacted by an incident, either directly or indirectly, is required to report the incident. As such, the same incident can be recorded multiple times. Each of these is considered an individual record.
- ACT Policing are called when serious incidents occur in our schools that may require police intervention, action or further investigation.
- The Education Directorate and ACT Policing are committed to ensuring schools in the ACT are safe for our students, their parents, staff, and the community.
- The senior executives from ACT Policing and the Education Directorate are working together to enhance existing relationships and measures. This collaboration is in addition to the on the ground relationships between schools and the police in their regional areas.
- ACT Policing has always been connected with our schools and the Directorate but as we continue to take stock of the effect the pandemic has had on our community, both agencies are looking to how they can strengthen these activities.
- This work will include assessing the arrangements and training in place for responding to incidents in schools; how to improve information sharing between schools and police and whether the relationship needs to be formalised through a memorandum of understanding.

## Background Information

- The ACT Government is committed to ensuring the safety of students and staff in public schools, and ensuring an equitable, inclusive, and accessible education system, reinforced by the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy.
- The Safe and Supportive Schools Policy requires each ACT public school to:
  - develop processes and procedures to address and prevent bullying, harassment and violence.
  - identify Safe and Supportive School Contact Officers (SASSCOs). SASSCOs are trained to provide support to students who may be experiencing or involved in bullying of any sort. Each school has at least one female-identified and one male-identified teacher or executive teacher in the role of SASSCO. Larger schools identify additional SASSCOs.
- The Education Directorate continues to work on embedding a comprehensive and robust safety management system framework.
- The Directorate continues to focus on developing and sustaining safe and supportive teaching and learning environments for everyone in ACT public schools.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## CALWELL HIGH SCHOOL

### Talking points

- WorkSafe ACT attended Calwell High School following an incident at the school on 24 March 2022. The visit took place on 31 March 2022 and following the visit, the Directorate responded to notices from WorkSafe ACT regarding a number of matters at the school. The Education Directorate is continuing to work with all WorkSafe ACT requirements and is committed to ensuring safe systems are in place to ensure safe learning environments at ACT schools.
- Our priority at Calwell High School is to ensure it continues to be a safe, productive and enjoyable learning and work environment for the school community. The health and wellbeing of our staff and students have always been the Government's main priority.
- I acknowledge the dedication of the public education workforce and the important contribution they make each and every day to the learning of young people.
- Calwell High School is committed to improving student engagement and learning and implementing its Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) framework to support consistency in behavioural expectations across the school community.
- Calwell High School, like so many schools, has also experienced the impacts of COVID-19 on its workforce. The presence of COVID-19 in the community, and the impact this has had on the school staff has exacerbated the challenges faced by the school.
- As with all schools, the Directorate and school leadership have been closely monitoring teacher absences and responding on a daily basis.
- Where needed, the school has made local adjustments, and accessed priority relief staff.
- I care deeply about all of our public school communities, and I am committed to working with our stakeholders, staff, students and families to ensure every school provides safe learning and working environments, where everyone can flourish.

### Special Purpose Review

- The Director-General approved the commissioning of a Special Purpose Review at Calwell High School to support the school to identify and respond to areas requiring both immediate and long-term improvements.
- The Special Purpose Review was conducted in consultation with Calwell High School staff, students and the school community with the review panel working in the school from 31 May to 3 June 2022.
- The Calwell High School Special Purpose Review Report was published on the school website on Thursday 28 July 2022 and a link provided to the school community.



# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- The review team has made a number of recommendations for improvement across wellbeing and teaching programs at Calwell High School.
- The Directorate and school are currently working together to develop a phased implementation plan in response to the recommendations. This will involve significant work from the school with support from the Education Support Office through the remainder of the 2022 and the 2023 school years.
- The review also highlighted a number of great things about Calwell High School – that staff are supportive and welcoming, that they are proactive in ensuring student wellbeing and safety and that there are strong and positive relationships between staff and students. The school will build on these positives and celebrate them with their community.
- The full report is available on the Calwell High School website.

## Key Information

- Key stakeholders – including the Australian Education Union, CPSU, Principals and the P&C Council – continue to work collaboratively with the Education Directorate to produce the best possible outcomes for our school communities.

## Background Information

- On 31 March 2022 WorkSafe ACT attended Calwell High School to undertake a workplace inspection in response to information received by the AEU regarding issues at the school relating to student incidents and staffing shortages.
- During this visit WorkSafe also identified concerns regarding access to fire suppression equipment. This has since been satisfied, with confirmation received from WorkSafe ACT on 22 April 2022.
- Improvement Notices were issued to the Directorate on the three issues raised.
  - Workforce shortages
  - Occupational Violence
  - Fire suppression equipment.
- Additional Improvements notices were issued to the school following a site visit by WorkSafe on 12 May 2022. Three issues were raised including:
  - First aid kits
  - Emergency Management Plan
  - Training for staff absent in week 1
- All year levels at Calwell HS used remote learning for the first week of term 2 2022 with:
  - years 9 and 10 returning to onsite learning for week 2 and
  - years 7 and 8 returning for week 4.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- The decision to commence term 2 with remote learning was made to enable the school to focus on staff training and consultation and to ensure additional supports and systems were in place for the safe return of all students.
- Staff spent the first week of term 2 reorienting themselves with Education Directorate policies and work health and safety processes. Directorate staff worked with the team at Calwell High School to review local processes and support a best practice approach to teaching and safety.
- The Education Directorate has been providing additional supports to assist them whilst they implement new measures. These supports include:
  - An additional school leader to support the school Principal
  - An additional deputy principal
  - An additional School Leader Flex Ed
  - A senior teacher
  - Two additional teaching staff to assist with relief cover
  - A Youth Worker
  - Reorientation and ongoing training for staff
  - Increased wellbeing, psychology and social supports – for staff, students and families – including telehealth and EAP
- All requests for information and improvement notices for Calwell High School have been responded to.
- Worksafe is satisfied with responses to prohibition and improvement notices.

**Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs**EDU COVID-19 RESPONSE AND EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT****Talking points**

- The Education Directorate has been preparing for a rise in COVID-19 transmissions based on current ACT Health modelling.
- The Directorate's priority in term 3 continues to be ensuring that schools are supported to deliver high-quality learning for students, regardless of the public health situation.
- The Directorate's decisions and guidelines to support ACT public schools are founded on the following principles are:
  - Minimising adverse health impacts from COVID-19.
  - Maximising learning and development, including through on-site delivery, where possible.
  - Prioritising resources to areas of greatest need.
  - Ensuring clarity of information for staff, students, families and the community about how schools and ECEC are operating.
- In addition, the Directorate is committed to:
  - Ensuring that staff and student safety and wellbeing are paramount.
  - Providing quality and continued learning regardless of delivery mode.
  - Preventing and minimising off-site delivery by:
    - Implementing system-wide approaches for prevention of off-site learning for all schools;
    - Identifying risks early and act proactively (using data and operational knowledge); and
    - Implementing differentiated measures for those schools most impacted or at-risk.
  - Ensuring communication is rapid, simple, person-focused and specialised for different staff, student, family and community audiences.

**Key Information**

- The Directorate has put in place workstreams to support the sustainable operations of school in term 3. This work includes:
  - Updating the Schools Staffing Matrix.
  - Updating the COVID-19 Safety Assurance Plan (CSAP) to reflect current risks and controls.
  - Establishing the Schools Operational Plan to support schools in their decision-making to address staff absences.
  - Information on timetable adjustments by schooling sector is being assessed and finalised following required stakeholder consultation.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- Additional targeted advice, support and direction is being provided to the 13 schools most impacted in term 2 to assist those principals to make operational adjustments to minimise the impact of staff absences.
- Development of a system-wide approach on planning for delivery of learning including the establishment of the Hedley Beare Virtual School as an additional offering from Education Support Office to enable continuity of learning for students across schools.
- ACT Public Schools will still strongly encourage the use of masks for students (12 years and over), staff and visitors in addition to existing Directorate protocols. The ACT CHO has confirmed that current measures are sufficient and appropriate.
- The Directorate is continuing to promote a narrative that encourages personal decision making in relation to wearing masks, emphasising that:
  - Masks remain an important measure to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community and in our schools;
  - Students in years 7-12 continue to be encouraged to wear a mask at school when in crowded indoors environments and where physical distancing can't be maintained.
  - Staff and visitors to schools must also wear a mask indoors when physical distancing can't be maintained.
  - All students, staff and visitors are encouraged to wear masks above and beyond what is mandated in order to protect themselves and those around them.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## REMOTE LEARNING

### Talking points

- The health, wellbeing and safety of our staff and students is the top priority in our ACT public schools.
- During term 2, a total of 4,402 positive COVID-19 cases were reported in ACT public schools. Of those cases 485 were reported by teachers, 204 by admin staff and 3,713 by students.
- During the week ending Sunday 24 July, 271 cases of COVID-19 were reported to 63 ACT public schools (K-12).
- The Directorate continues to closely monitor staff and student attendance in ACT public schools.
- The Directorate works directly with schools to assess the impact of staff and student absences on the safe and sustainable operations of schools and support the move to remote learning where all alternatives and strategies have been explored.
- Parents can expect periods of remote learning to continue throughout the school year, and we anticipate further COVID-19 spikes will impact our workforce.
- COVID-19 is an ongoing and often unpredictable challenge that is impacting all parts of the community. Our schools are not immune, but it's a challenge we anticipated and are well prepared for.
- Children of essential workers and vulnerable students continue to be able to attend school during any remote learning periods.
- 34 ACT Public Schools utilised periods of remote learning for some students during term 2. (*see below for list*).

### Key Information

- At the start of the year, the Education Directorate worked in consultation with Principals and Unions to develop plans to support schools that might experience staffing pressures, particularly coming into the winter months.
- A centralised staff relief pool was utilised during the first semester of 2022. Due to limited administrative resources, the pool has been discontinued for term 3. Alternative approaches are being considered to place relief staff at identified schools for the duration of term 3.
- One of the scenarios planned for in all schools is a switch to temporary periods of remote learning for identified year levels where staff absences prevent normal face-to-face learning from being maintained.
- The decision to switch to temporary periods of remote learning is not taken lightly and considers the wellbeing and safety of students and staff, as well as capability to deliver teaching and learning effectively.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- The Education Directorate monitors data submitted by schools daily and trends over time and works with schools to support continuity of teaching and learning.
- ACT Public Schools are well-placed to utilise temporary periods of remote learning with a comprehensive suite of virtual continuity of learning supports. During term 3, this includes the The Hedley Beare Virtual School, as well the already-existing tailored online learning materials, access to Google Classrooms and Chromebooks as well as online resources, supports the Directorate's system-wide approach to enabling continuity of learning for students across schools.
- A number of key operational and planning documents have been updated for term 3. The School Staffing matrix, guidance for schools to update their COVID Safety Assurance Plans, Operational Plan outlining additional strategies to support schools and Continuity of Learning information.
- The School Staffing Matrix and the Operational Plan identify various strategies available to a school, including:
  - Stopping non essential activities when a school reaches level 2;
  - Timetabling changes; and/or
  - The use of the Hedley Beare Virtual School.
- School based RAT distribution will continue throughout term 3, enabling students and staff to access RATs as they need them.
- The Education Directorate has ongoing consultation with key stakeholders including:
  - CPSU
  - AEU
  - UWU
  - ACTPA
  - ACT P&C Council
  - AIS and CEO

### Australian jurisdictions use of remote learning

- Remote learning is continuing to be used nationally in response to COVID-related resourcing pressures. Currently, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria are all utilising remote learning to manage COVID-19 in schools and as a particular response to workforce shortages.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

## Remote Learning Term 2

- The following ACT Public Schools have utilised temporary periods of remote learning during term 2, 2022 (34 Schools for 54 periods)

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Years Learning remotely</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>	<i>Student return date</i>	<i>Duration(days)</i>
Amaroo School	Year 5/6/8	22-Jun	28-Jun	29-Jun	4
	Year 3	09-Jun	14-Jun	15-Jun	3
	4/5/9	16-May	20-May	23-May	5
	10	09-May	13-May	16-May	5
Black Mountain School	ALL	17-May	23-May	24-May	5
	Select classes	10-May	13-May	16-May	4
Caroline Chisholm School	Year 7/8	21-Jun	24-Jun	27-Jun	4
	9/10	18-May	24-May	25-May	5
	5/6	11-May	17-May	18-May	5
Charles Weston School	4/5/6	05-May	10-May	12-May	5
Charnwood Dunlop Primary School	3/4/5/6	17-May	23-May	24-May	5
Cranleigh School	Select classes	19-May	24-May	26-May	4
	Select classes	04-May	06-May	09-May	3
Duffy Primary School	Year 1/2	27-Jun	01-Jul	18-Jul	5
Florey Primary School	3/4/5/6	22-Jun	24-Jun	27-Jun	3
Franklin School	3/4/5/6	10-May	16-May	17-May	5
Fraser Primary School	Year 3/4/5/6	08-Jun	14-Jun	16-Jun	4
Giralang Primary School	Year 5/6	15-Jun	21-Jun	22-Jun	5
Gold Creek School	Years 9/10	10-Jun	15-Jun	16-Jun	3
Gowrie Primary School	5 and 6	25-May	01-Jun	02-Jun	5
Harrison School	Year 1/2/3/4/7/8	21-Jun	23-Jun	27-Jun	3
	Years 5/6	09-Jun	14-Jun	15-Jun	3
	9/10	17-May	23-May	24-May	5
Isabella Plains Early Childhood School	Year 1/2	20-Jun	24-Jun	27-Jun	5
Kingsford Smith School	Year 3/4/5	17-Jun	23-Jun	27-Jun	5
	Year 8	06-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	5
	Year 10	31-May	03-Jun	06-Jun	4
Lanyon High School	Year 7/8	28-Jun	01-Jul	18-Jul	4
	Year 9/10	06-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	5
Latham Primary School	3/4/5/6	12-May	20-May	23-May	7
	ALL	21-Jun	23-Jun	27-Jun	3

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 Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General  
 Contact Officer name: Katie Dunn  
 Lead Directorate: Education  
 TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

Macgregor Primary School	K-2	02-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	7
	3/4/5/6	10-May	16-May	17-May	5
Malkara School	Select classes	07-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	4
Margaret Hendry School	K-2	01-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	8
	3/4/5/6	05-May	10-May	12-May	5
Mount Rogers Primary School	Year K/1/2	20-Jun	24-Jun	27-Jun	5
	Years 3/4/5/6	27-May	03-Jun	06-Jun	5
Mount Stromlo High School	Years 9&10	26-May	03-Jun	06-Jun	6
Namadgi School	Year 9/10* and High School LSU	06-Jun	17-Jun	20-Jun	9
	7 and 8	25-May	03-Jun	06-Jun	7
	4/5/6	12-May	20-May	23-May	6
Ngunnawal Primary School	Preschool	17-Jun	22-Jun	23-Jun	4
North Ainslie Primary School	Year 3/4/5/6	08-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	3
Palmerston District PS	Year 1 & 2	27-May	03-Jun	06-Jun	5
	3/4/5/6	10-May	16-May	17-May	5
Red Hill Primary School(Griffith site)	Preschool	30-Jun	01-Jul	20-Jul	2
Red Hill Primary School	2/3	16-May	20-May	23-May	5
Southern Cross ECS	P and K	14-Jun	17-Jun	20-Jun	4
	1/2	17-May	23-May	24-May	5
The Woden School	Senior(11/12)	15-Jun	17-Jun	20-Jun	3
Turner School	Year 5/6	17-Jun	22-Jun	23-Jun	3
Wanniassa School	9/10	19-May	25-May	26-May	5
Weetangera Primary School	4/5/6	16-May	20-May	23-May	5

### Remote Learning Term 3

- As of 11 August 2022 (Thursday of week 4, term 3) six schools have utilised temporary periods of remote learning.

School	Years learning remotely	Start date	End date	Student return date	Durations (days)
Ainslie School	5, 6	3 August	4 August	8 August	2
Ainslie School	2, 4	4 August	4 August	8 August	2
Latham Primary School	3, 4, 5, 6	3 August	4 August	8 August	2
Black Mountain School	3 classes	9 August	12 August	15 August	4
Franklin School	P – 2	10 August	12 August	15 August	3

Cleared as complete and accurate: 29/07/2022  
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**BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF**

Margaret Hendry School	Learning communities 2 and 4	11 August	16 August	17 August	4
Amaroo School	7	11 August	16 August	17 August	4

Cleared as complete and accurate: 29/07/2022  
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# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## STAFF WELLBEING

### Talking points

- The Education Directorate continues to support employees in a challenging, changing environment particularly since the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown in the ACT in 2021. These challenges have persisted into 2022, with the high prevalence of COVID-19 in the ACT.
- Staff wellbeing is a central focus to the establishment of the Safe at Schools Taskforce. A comprehensive psychosocial risk assessment and development of an evidence-based and measurable strategy for staff wellbeing is identified as a critical deliverable for the Taskforce.

### Key Information

- The Directorate continues to ensure the wellbeing of the workforce is a priority. The Directorate continues to provide universal and targeted employee wellbeing supports through a range of channels. These include:
  - A bespoke triaging model to assess probable impact/consequence on employees relating to each incoming Riskman work incident report. Commensurate supports are then provided to the affected worker.
  - Opportunities for uptake of the Early Intervention Physiotherapy (EIP) program are identified on receipt of each Riskman work incident report.
  - Wellbeing education and check-in sessions have been held for leaders, managers and identified groups.
  - Information sessions for employees in schools are held following a significant incident or identification of pressure relating to a discrete issue.
  - Dedicated Wellbeing Officers provide guidance and advice to employees to access appropriate supports and/or treatment.
  - Facilitation of onsite Employee Assistance Program (EAP) support with Converge International.
  - Targeted support for school principals and leadership staff.
  - Debriefing sessions are held following a critical incident to provide a trusted environment for staff to debrief with parties outside of the school and student environment and build collegiality between colleagues.

### Background Information

- The Education Directorate is committed to supporting employees in a challenging, changing environment. Staff wellbeing initiatives are driven by the *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, with particular regard to 'Empowering teachers and other professionals to strengthen learning for all'.
- This plan is premised on the first phase of implementation of the *Future of Education Strategy*, specifically priority one; safety and confidence and three; best start in a

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

career of learning, thriving in a career of learning and supporting leaders in a career of learning.

- The Directorate is committed to providing ongoing reactive and proactive wellbeing support to all Directorate employees and will continue to deliver this service offering through available means and methods.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## WORKLOAD REDUCTION STRATEGY

### Talking points

- In March 2022, six workload reduction strategies were announced for schools to enact in term 2, these were:
  - Reduced student academic reporting requirements
  - School staff (pupil free) planning days
  - Revised timelines for performance development
  - Changes to 2022 school reviews
  - Rollover of Enterprise Agreement Implementation Plans
  - Central teacher relief pool.
- Feedback received from staff, principals and stakeholders in relation to the workload reduction strategies was overwhelmingly positive and supportive, particularly in relation to the additional staff planning days.

### Workload Reduction Strategies in Term 3

- Workload reduction strategies identified and implemented for term 2 were well received and where appropriate will continue for term 3. These strategies are:

Strategy		Term 3
a.	Reduced student academic reporting requirements	Undertaken in term 2 and being carried over into term 3
b.	2 x school staff planning days	Also in term 3
c.	Revised timelines for performance development	Ongoing and continue to be in place in term 3
d.	Changes to 2022 school reviews	Ongoing and continue to be in place in term 3
e.	Enterprise Agreement Implementation Plans	Agreed and completed in term 2
f.	Central Teacher Relief Pool	Ceased in term 2

### Key Information

#### School staff planning days

- ACT public schools will have School Staffing Planning days scheduled for Friday weeks 3 and 8 of term 3 2022. School Staff Planning Days are an opportunity for teachers and school leaders to complete student reporting and undertake planning.
- Schools with pre-planned activities or staffing requirements which are not compatible with the system scheduled days are encouraged to contact the ESO COVID Management Team to discuss alternative options. Those schools have communicated with their communities separately The list of schools are:

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

Schools with Alternate School Staff Planning Days		
School	Reason	Confirmed Change
Dickson College	Major excursions and AST	Friday 5 August changed to Monday 15 August Friday 9 September changed to Thursday 8 September
Palmerston District Primary School	School camp	Friday 9 September changed to Monday 12 September
Lyneham High School	Several camps	Friday 5 August changed to Friday 12 August
Florey Primary School	School camp	Friday 9 September changed to Friday 16 September
Hawker College	Part time and timetabling	Friday 5 August changed to Monday 8 August Second Pupil free day not confirmed.

- Student attendance on the designated School Staff Planning Days should only be for those who cannot be cared for at home and therefore will be able to attend (their) school with minimum supervision. Schools will need to ask parents/carers to notify them if their child will need to attend school.
- Schools notified their community about scheduled School Staff Planning Days in late term 2.

### Cessation of the Central Teacher Relief Pool

- At the time of commencement of the Pool, it was determined that the administrative viability of the Pool was to comprise no less than 50 casual relief teachers. In term 2, the pool commenced with 23 casual relief staff reducing to 17 with an average of 8 casual relief teachers available each day.
- An alternative approach is now proposed whereby members of the Central Relief Pool will be placed at identified schools for the duration of term 3.
- This will ensure that the schools with the greatest need for casuals can be prioritised for placement of temporary or casual staff. This updated approach is anticipated to provide some certainty and stability to both the candidates and the relevant schools.

### Additional Strategies

- During school standdown between terms 2 and 3 the Education Directorate undertook significant planning to identify additional strategies that could support schools experiencing COVID-related absences.
- These strategies include:

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- A review of the COVID-19 Safety Assurance Plan (CSAP) to update risks and controls as appropriate to the current COVID-19 context with guidance material provided to support the consultation and assurance process.
- A review of the School Staffing Matrix. Minimal changes were made during review and post consultation.
- An Operational Plan which supports the Staffing Matrix and identifies additional strategies which can be introduced on a site by site basis, relative to school level, such as:
  - Stopping non mandated activities when a school reaches level 2 to reduce them requiring to enact offsite learning;
  - Timetabling changes; and the
  - Use of the Hedley Beare Virtual school.
- The Hedley Beare Virtual School has been established within the Learning Wellbeing Policy and Design branch to provide primary schools with live and recorded online resources. This provides additional learning options when planned face-to-face learning is unable to be delivered. This program will support the development of a system-wide approach to continuity of learning planning.
- Extension of the familiarisation and professional learning processes for Australian Curriculum V9 implementation to 2024.
- ACT public schools will cease non essential activities on a case by case basis, determined at a school level

### Background information

- These strategies are critical in supporting schools and staff to reduce additional pressures as a result of increased absences due to COVID-19.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## MANAGING WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

### Talking points

- Reflecting the situation across the ACT community, all of our public schools continue to be impacted by COVID-19. Some schools are continuing to experience limited teacher availability moving into term 3 and it is anticipated that most, if not all, schools will experience these challenges at times during this term.
- Before the commencement of the 2022 school year the Education Directorate worked with principals and the Australian Education Union (AEU) to put in place structures and strategies that clarified how decisions would be made when shortages met specific thresholds.
- During the school holidays between term 2 and 3, the Directorate reviewed and updated its principles and positions relating to the management and anticipated impact on school operations of new waves of COVID-19 transmission in the coming months.
- The Directorate has put in place workstreams to support the sustainable operation of schools in term 3. This work includes:
  - Updating the Schools Staffing Matrix.
  - Updating the COVID-19 Safety Assurance Plan (CSAP) to reflect current risks and controls and the development of a guidance document on the review and assurance process.
  - Establishing the Schools Operational Plan to support schools in their decision-making to address staff absences. This plan will provide clarity on optional activities that will need to be ceased when schools are assessed as at Level 2 of the Schools Staffing Matrix.
- The staffing matrix, which stratifies COVID-19 operational responses into four tiers underwent a review and consultation during the first weeks of term 3.
  - During term 2, many schools met the threshold for level 3 (part-school remote learning) measures. Two additional schools met the threshold for level 4 (whole school remote learning) measures.
- These levels also identify various strategies available to a school, including
  - Stopping non-essential activities when a school reaches level 2
  - Timetabling changes
  - Use of Hedley Beare Virtual School
- Our schools monitor staff and student attendance daily and make workforce decisions in their best interests. This also includes Directorate visibility to ensure proactive interventions are in place where necessary.
- This term, we expect to continue to see temporary remote learning utilised in schools where there are significant short-term teacher shortages.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- Parents should expect these strategies to continue throughout the school year as the COVID-19 situation continues to develop.

### Background Information

- The COVID-19 Planning for staff shortages framework was agreed with the AEU before the commencement of term 1, 2022.
- Additional targeted advice, support and direction is planned to be provided to the 13 schools most impacted from term 2 to assist those principals to make operational adjustments to minimise the impact of staff absences.
- There are systems in place to help support the implementation of the framework, including centralised visibility over daily attendance data. The Education Directorate COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) closely monitors daily staffing submissions from schools including long-term trend data and is in close contact with schools experiencing staffing pressures and the Directors of School Improvement.



# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## MACGREGOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Talking points

- During Term 2 2022, Macgregor Primary School experienced high levels of staff absences due to illness and spent many days at a minimum of 20% overall teacher vacancies.
- The periods of remote learning were implemented as a control measure in managing these staff vacancies and resulted in the entire school having to move to a period of temporary remote learning.
- In response to concerns raised by the school community, a forum was held on Thursday, 21 July 2022. The Executive Group Manager of School Improvement and Director of School Improvement Belconnen attended to support Principal Belinda Andrews.
- EGMSI and the DSI presented the rationale for moving to remote learning, the Macgregor Primary School context, the system context and what was being put in place to support schools in keeping student learning on site and continuity of learning
- Questions from community focused on:
  - Strategies to stop the school moving to remote;
  - Ways to attract more staff to the school when required;
  - Strategies for students with disability when remote learning occurs; and
  - How to address the learning gaps due to missing on site learning.

### Key Information

- Macgregor Primary School had 4 periods of remote learning during term 2.

School	Years Learning remotely	Start Date	End Date	Student return date	Duration(days)
Macgregor Primary School	ALL	21-Jun	23-Jun	27-Jun	3
Macgregor Primary School	K-2	02-Jun	10-Jun	14-Jun	7
Macgregor Primary School	3/4/5/6	10-May	16-May	17-May	5
Macgregor Primary School	4/5/6	31 -Mar	7-Apr	8-Apr	5

Planning  
Day 24  
June

- A letter was provided to Macgregor Primary School parents and carers at the end of Term 2 outlining the additional strategies that were going to be put in place during term 3 to maximimise the availability of teaching staff. These include:

Cleared as complete and accurate: 29/07/2022  
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 TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- Prioritising Macgregor Primary School for new teaching staff and relief staff as needed;
- Focusing available resources on core teaching activities;
- Limiting extra-curricular activities where required; and
- Working with the school on timetabling adjustments to maximise on site teaching time.

## Background Information

- During term 2 2022, 54 periods of remote learning were initiated across 34 ACT Public Schools.
- Between term 2 and term 3 the Education Directorate has undertaken further planning to identify additional strategies to support schools facing staff shortage impacts from COVID-19.
- There is an expectation that COVID-19, combined with the flu will continue to impact more schools, including Macgregor Primary School, in term 3. Any move to remote learning will be used as a last resort.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

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

## VENTILATION IN SCHOOLS

Refer to **Brief 2.14 (COVID-19 Response – Improved Ventilation in Schools)** for further information

### Talking Points

- Improving air quality in ACT public schools is a priority to enable onsite learning and teaching in accordance with COVID-19 Health Advice.
- Ventilation is one component of a multilayered approach that has been implemented to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in schools.
- Every school has its own Indoor Air Quality Plan which lists actions undertaken by EDU (e.g. HVAC systems change) and actions for schools to undertake each day to improve air quality. These plans were first provided in October 2021 as part of the return to on campus learning and can be found on each schools' website.
- All Indoor Air Quality Plans have been updated in preparation for **winter** and provided to all schools in **May 2022**.
- Solutions for improving ventilation during winter include: supplementary mechanical ventilation such as Heat and Energy Recovery Ventilation units (HRV and ERV), and the use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors.
- Actions to improve indoor air quality are being prioritised at preschools due to the potential vulnerability of this cohort.
- EDU will continue to be guided by ACT Health and AHPPC advice and the evolving evidence on the specific benefit of these devices in addition to other public health measures in a school setting.
- The routine use of portable **HEPA filters** is not supported at this time, as the evidence for the additional public health benefit of these units over other public health measures and maximising fresh air is currently limited.

### Key Information

- The CHO, AHPPC, World Health Organisation and Safe Work Australia recommend ensuring fresh air ventilation is optimised in all settings, including through adjusting mechanical systems to increase fresh (external) air supply and reduce air recirculation, and use of natural ventilation such as opening windows and doors.
- EDU has developed an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) framework to assess the IAQ of all public schools commencing with ACT public colleges. All public school learning areas have been assessed under the IAQ framework, including around 3,500 learning spaces.
- Higher energy bills were experienced across sites with mechanical ventilation over the summer period. Gas bills are expected to increase over the winter period.
- EDU is monitoring air quality in learning spaces to achieve the best ventilation for ACT public schools while managing energy costs and thermal comfort.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

## Background Information

- To support schools to prepare for return to on campus learning following lockdown in 2021, the ACT Government allocated budget funding to support essential supplies such as masks and hand sanitiser, improved ventilation and additional relief teacher hours. **\$5.2 million of this funding was allocated to improve ventilation** in ACT public schools. This includes building works, CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring, and changes to outdoor air introduced by heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- ACT public schools are well placed as there has been an extensive program of work underway to improve school ventilation since the 2019-2020 bushfires.
- In early 2020, **400 Dyson air purifiers** were distributed to all public schools (88 at the time) for use in classrooms and other spaces to provide relief from smoke effects. These air purifiers have a HEPA filter contained within the unit.
- EDU has been progressively upgrading building controls in 81 schools to improve remote management of the Heating, Ventilation and Cooling (HVAC) systems.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

**Portfolio:** Education and Youth Affairs

## TEACHER SHORTAGE TASKFORCE

### Talking points

- The joint Education Directorate (EDU) and the Australian Education Union (AEU) Teacher Shortage Taskforce (the Taskforce) have concluded the agreed work program in July 2022 and progressed the drafting of the report on key findings and recommendations on identified challenges for the teaching workforce in ACT Public Schools.
- In August 2022, the Taskforce Report has been agreed and finalised with the AEU. The report highlights the outcomes delivered by the Taskforce and makes findings and recommendations on the identified workforce challenges based on workforce data and informed by the AEU Survey Report.
- The finalisation of the report is a significant achievement from the joint Taskforce showing the commitment between EDU and AEU to continue to work together closely and collaboratively to understand and respond to teacher workforce challenges across all schools.
- The Taskforce Report includes findings and analysis regarding current and future demand for teachers in ACT Public Schools, availability of relief staff to cover absences, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on teacher absences and consequent impacts on continuity of learning, the retention of current workforce, and consideration of incentives to attract teachers in the system. The report also outlines the immediate actions implemented from Term 4, 2021 to respond to current workforce challenges.
- Based on the Taskforce investigation, the Report makes 20 recommendations to immediately respond to these challenges and to promote a future-focused approach to workforce planning and to ensure that ACT Public Schools are the education system of choice for teachers, both graduate and experienced.

### Background Information

- The Teacher Shortage Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established in September 2021 in recognition of the need for ongoing dialogue between the ACT Education Directorate (EDU) and the Australian Education Union (AEU) regarding teacher recruitment and retention. Membership of the Taskforce includes senior executives from EDU, including the Director-General and Deputy Director-General, and five representatives from the AEU, including the Secretary and President of the ACT Branch.
- The focus of the Taskforce is to collaborate and co-design the development and implementation of strategic workforce initiatives and/or interventions in line with the *EDU Workforce Strategy 2021-23* which identifies national teacher shortages as a key risk to the achievement of the Directorate's Strategic Plan.
- The Taskforce was established to run from 2 September 2021 until the end of Semester 1, 2022.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

- The scope of the Taskforce includes issues such as:
  - Covering staff absences,
  - Continuity of education, including the practice of splitting and cancelling classes,
  - Teacher and school leader recruitment processes, and;
  - Attraction and retention, including:
    - Teacher and school leader workload reduction.
    - Effect of work safety on retention of staff.
    - New educator entitlements, including early career salaries.
    - Permit-to-teach staff entitlements, including salaries and supervision requirements.
    - Hard-to-staff positions and settings, including identifying the factors that make positions harder to fill.
    - System initiatives to attract and retain staff.

**BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF****Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs**SCHOOL MAINTENANCE****Talking points**

- The Education Directorate manages a large and growing asset portfolio that includes 90 schools across the city.
- The Education Directorate undertakes planned and unforeseen repairs and maintenance works at ACT public schools and preschools as well as compliance programs.
- Funds are also allocated each year directly to ACT public schools for physical infrastructure costs covering school managed repairs and maintenance works.
- Expenditure on centrally managed repairs and maintenance in 2021/22 was \$20.4 million with approximately \$6.0 million allocated to schools.
- A significant component of the annual repairs and maintenance program includes the management of hazardous materials in ACT Public Schools.
- The ACT Government, guided by expert advice and international best practice, is delivering hazardous materials management in the most transparent way and to the highest standards.
- During the 2021/22 financial year, 989 work orders were issued relating to the inspection, testing and remediation of hazardous materials.
- There has been an increase in reported mould issues throughout the year. Prevailing weather conditions have greatly contributed to this increase and schools in NSW have seen similar increases.
- Remediation of mould has occurred at a number of sites during 2022 with particular focus on Dickson College which was further complicated by possum management issues.

**Key Information**

- The Education Directorate has identified 76 schools that contain some amount of asbestos and/or lead paint.
- The ACT Government has committed \$114 million dollars over the next four years to upgrade school buildings to keep them comfortable and safe. This includes the 2021-22 budget allocation of \$15 million to accelerate the removal of hazardous materials.
- Issues identified by WorkSafe at Dickson College relating to mould and possum excrement have been remediated and restrictions have been lifted by WorkSafe.
- ACT Education have provided a response to the recent Inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure.

**Background Information**

- The centrally funded repairs and maintenance works included:
  - o specific works (for example electrical switchboard upgrades, external painting and other school maintenance priorities);
  - o heating, ventilation and air conditioning maintenance and repairs;
  - o stormwater and sewer line inspections and rectification works;
  - o roof access safety system upgrades and certification;
  - o lifts and auto doors inspections and maintenance;
  - o emergency lighting inspections and maintenance;
  - o fire alarm system monitoring;
  - o gutter cleaning and ember zone maintenance;
  - o hazardous materials surveys and removal;
  - o building condition assessments including drone technology to streamline and improve the assessment of roof and roof components;
  - o work health and safety related works;
  - o tree works;
  - o play equipment audits; and
  - o school security - including targeted patrols, static guarding where required and patrol response to security sensor alerts.
  
- All schools that have identified hazardous materials have a Hazardous Materials Register. The Register informs the school community, visitors and tradespeople of the location of hazardous materials, including asbestos and lead paint in the school. The register is located in the front office of the school.
  
- The Hazardous Materials Register is a living document – if there is a discovery of hazardous material(s) not previously identified (like in the ductwork of air vents) or the hazardous material is removed or managed, the Register is updated to accurately reflect any changes in the school environment.
  
- Any hazardous materials removal works are completed in accordance with WorkSafe ACT requirements by licensed removalists who are monitored by an independent licensed assessor. Asbestos is removed when there are no students in the school (e.g. at night, on weekends and during school holidays).



**Annual Portfolio: Education and Youth Affairs****SCHOOL CLEANING HOURS****Talking points**

- In 2019 the ACT Government made the decision to directly employ a cleaning workforce to clean government schools, supported by an independent review.
- From 2020, the School Cleaning Service has been at the front line in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has included:
  - up to an additional 140 full time equivalent staff delivering up to 1,064 hours of additional high frequency touch point cleaning per day,
  - the establishment and training of specialist teams to perform deep cleaning of schools where active cases presented; and,
  - supporting ACT Health in the operation of vaccination centres operating out of ACT Government schools.
- Throughout the COVID-19 response, the School Cleaning Service has continually adjusted cleaning models to ensure ongoing compliance with the latest advice from ACT Health.
- The ACT Government has invested an addition \$17.4M over the next 4 years to further support and enhance cleaning operations in government schools. This investment will allow the School Cleaning Service to further enhance night cleaning activities to meet the existing Health Orders while providing certainty beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that an enduring surge capacity and skillset are maintained.
- This funding will provide approximately 280 hours of additional cleaning activities each evening and addresses the change in use of schools, expansion of schools and the revised cleaning arrangements resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The continual improvement of the School Cleaning Service is supported by an ongoing audit program, with the latest internal audit recently finalised for Directorate consideration and action.

**Key Information**

- The Education Directorate has commissioned three significant reviews into school cleaning in the past five years:
  - FM Contract Solutions – 2018
  - KPMG – 2019
  - PWC – 2022
- The scope of these reviews has included cleaning quality and cleaning hours.
- The recently announced funding of \$17.4M over the next 4 years. This funding will provide an additional 280 hours of cleaning each night and addresses the findings of reviews to ensure that appropriate cleaning standards are maintained in government schools.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/08/2022  
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Lead Directorate: Education  
TRIM Ref: FOL22/1767

**BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF****Portfolio/s:** Education and Youth Affairs**SCHOOL FUNDING - COMMONWEALTH SCHOOLING RESOURCING STANDARD****Talking points**

- Suggestions that overall funding has been cut to education and students in the ACT is simply wrong.
- When talking about education funding in the ACT it is important to see the whole picture. A central part of that picture is understanding the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).
- In December 2018 the ACT Government signed a bilateral agreement around schools funding and reform principles with the Commonwealth.
- This agreement makes a commitment to transition government schools to their share of Commonwealth funding under the SRS by 2023.
- Under the SRS, the ACT is required to fund 80% of public school costs, while the Commonwealth is required to fund 20%.
- The Commonwealth was starting from a low position, so have had to make relatively significant increases in funding to get to that 20% level requirement.
- The ACT has continually funded well above our 80% share. For 2020, the most recent available data, ACT funding to public schools was 89.90 per cent of the SRS.
- Making statements about school funding in 2022 without acknowledging the SRS is omitting key context.
- Further to this, it is a fact that ACT Government funding for the public school system has grown year on year. The 2021-2022 ACT Budget includes total expenditure of \$1.5 billion to education – approximately 21% of the total budget expenditure.
- We've maintained this very high level of funding while also growing the number of students in ACT public schools by more than 30% since 2011 - by far the highest percentage increase of public school students in the nation.
- This student growth has been met with new schools and staff, but also many of our schools have had capacity and have taken these new students on. In short, more students has led to economies of scale for our system.
- None of these changes have resulted in students being worse off – rather, what the facts and figures show is a public school system that is both extremely well-funded and more efficient than ever before.
- Every ACT public school is a great school, and the ACT Government will always invest very strongly in public education.

# BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

## Key Information

### Public Schools

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

### Non-Government schools

- The Commonwealth is transitioning non-government schools that are funded below 80 percent of the SRS up to 80 percent by 2023. For non-government schools funded above 80 percent of the SRS, the Commonwealth will transition these schools down to 80 percent of the SRS by 2029.
- The ACT Government is transitioning all non-government schools to 20 per cent of the Commonwealth Schooling Resource Standard by 2023.
- The table below provides detail on the amount of ACT funding provided to the non-government sector between 2017 and 2021. Final 2022 funding amounts will be determined following the August 2022 Census.

School	2017	2021	Funding Growth
Catholic Systemic Schools	\$33,529,633	\$38,411,556	14.6%
Independent Schools	\$24,328,042	\$24,905,563	2.4%

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

### All Schools

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

### **Background Information**

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