

Government Schools Education Council Report Annual 2010-2011

The Government Schools Education Council (the Council) is established in accordance with section 54 of the *Education Act 2004* (the Act).

The Council's functions are to advise the Minister on any aspect of the ACT public school system; and when asked by the Minister, to inquire into and give advice to the Minister on any aspect of the ACT public school system. Under section 66 (1) of the Act the Minister must present a copy of the advice to the Legislative Assembly.

The Council also meets with the Non-government Schools Education Council to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Achievements 2010-11

The Council provided ongoing advice on education matters including those on the national education agenda, and issues and direction in ACT public education. The Council:

- considered and provided comment on the *Improving ACT Public High Schools and Colleges* consultation paper, with their submission focusing on programs of early intervention, transition programs for Aboriginal students moving from primary to secondary school and primary school education for boys. The Council continued its interest in the high school and college sector with a follow up presentation by the School Improvement Division on progress made on the implementation of the *Excellence and Enterprise: Advancing Public Schools of Distinction*.
- provided the ACT Government with suggestions regarding the level of investment in public education for 2011-12 so that the public education system once again becomes the system of choice for the majority of Canberra families. Council's recommendations also focused on the education of students with disabilities, the recommendations of the Tertiary Taskforce, support for disengaged students and students with mental health issues and the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
- continued its interest in disability education by inviting Dr Mark Collis, Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support to give a presentation on the *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools: Strategic Plan 2010-2013*.
- joined with the Non-government Schools Education Council in discussing the National Professional Standards for Teachers following a presentation from Mr Michael Bateman, Director of Human Resources.
- supported public education and celebrated the success of high school students attending public schools by the attendance of a Council member at the Recognition of Excellence ceremony in December 2010. The Council continued this demonstration of solidarity with public education by holding its May 2011 meeting at Gungahlin College and undertaking an inspection of the new college.

2011-12 goals

The Council identified the following items as goals to be achieved in the next reporting period:

- monitor and provide advice to the Minister on the national agenda as it relates to public education, especially in regard to curriculum, assessment, reporting, teacher quality and eLearning
- continue discussions with the ACT Education and Training Directorate (the Directorate) around the implementation of major Directorate initiatives including the *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010-13*, the *Excellence and Enterprise: Advancing Public Schools of Distinction*, the *Learning Capital: an integrated tertiary education system for the ACT* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters Strategic Plan 2010-2013*
- continue to monitor the achievements of students in public education in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)
- maintain a close interest in early childhood schools
- continue to seek input from Council membership constituencies concerning all matters pertaining to public schooling
- continue to meet with the Non-government Schools Education Council.

Council composition

The Council consists of the Chairperson, the Director-General of the Directorate, six community and 10 education members appointed by the Minister.

Criteria for membership

Sections 56 and 57 of the Act state that the Council must consist of the Director-General and the Minister must appoint the following members of the Council:

- a chairperson
- six people who, in the Minister's opinion, have experience in one or more of the areas of business and commerce, public policy, early childhood care, education, the special needs of young people and teacher education (the community members)
- 10 people who, in the Minister's opinion, represent the views of public school education (the education members), including:
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the peak organisation representing principals
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the government teacher union
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the peak organisation representing parent associations of public schools
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the peak organisation representing students
 - one education member chosen from nominations of organisations representing school boards

- one education member chosen from nominations of organisations representing preschool parents.

Council members

Ms Di Kerr (Chair)

Ms Kerr is the Chair of the Council. She has 20 years of teaching experience in ACT public schools, and 12 years at senior management level in ACT and Western Australian education departments. She also has extensive experience in curriculum development at the national, state and school level. Ms Kerr holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education. She is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators and the ACT Minister's nominee on the Board of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

Ms Jill Burgess

Ms Burgess is a community member on the Council and a lecturer at the Australian Catholic University (Canberra Campus). Ms Burgess is a committee member of the ACT Chapter and a National Councillor of the Australian Association of Special Education Inc. and a committee member on the Coalition of ACT Education Associations. She has extensive experience in a variety of educational settings from early childhood to tertiary level, including teaching, consulting, researching and lecturing in special needs education. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Diploma of Education, Graduate Diploma in Reading and Language Education and a Master of Education (special needs education).

Ms Wendy Cave

Ms Cave is an education member on the Council representing the Australian Education Union. She is currently the principal at Macquarie Primary School and has worked in the Directorate for over 20 years as a teacher and in various executive positions. Ms Cave holds a Bachelor of Education.

Ms Marrwah Ahmadzai

Ms Ahmadzai is a student representative on the Council and is currently attending Melba Copland Secondary School. Ms Ahmadzai has represented her peers on the School Representative Council for the last four years and was President in 2009.

Ms Karen Dial

Ms Dial is an experienced board member with stints at Bonython Primary School which included three years as Board Chair. Ms Dial is an education member on the Council representing school boards. She is the director of a childcare centre and also the operator of a small business. Ms Dial holds an Associate Diploma of Education (Child Care).

Ms Carolyn Harkness

Ms Harkness is a life member and councillor of the Canberra Preschool Society. She represents preschools as an education member on the Council. Ms Harkness is currently lecturing in early childhood education and is the early childhood course coordinator at the Australian Catholic University in Canberra.

Ms Diane Joseph

Ms Joseph commenced with the Directorate in January 2010 as Deputy Director-General. Ms Joseph represents the Director-General on the Council.

Ms Joseph was previously the General Manager, Innovations and Next Practice, in the Office for Policy Research and Innovation at the Victorian Department for Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). Other previous positions include Assistant Regional Director Barwon-South Western Region and Assistant General Manager Office for Learning and Teaching in the DEECD.

Her leadership experience in policy, strategy and program development, and implementation spans all levels of the education system. Ms Joseph holds a Bachelor of Science (Education) from the University of Melbourne.

Ms Christine Kallir Preece

Ms Kallir Preece is an education member representing the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations (ACT Council of P&C Associations). Ms Kallir Preece has many years of community volunteering experience including terms with Kaleen School Board, Macquarie Primary School Board, ACT Council of P&C Associations and Early Childhood Intervention Australia. Ms Kallir Preece holds a Bachelor of Science and a Graduate Certificate in Management.

Ms Christine Pilgrim

Ms Pilgrim is Principal of North Ainslie Primary School and is an education member representing principals on the Council. She has extensive teaching and executive experience in the ACT and Indonesia. Ms Pilgrim holds a Bachelor of Education.

Dr Kaye Price

Dr Price was a community member who has been involved with public education over many years. She has extensive experience in the area of Indigenous education in Australia and has worked as a primary teacher and in curriculum development. Dr Price holds a Bachelor of Education, Masters of Education and a Doctorate of Philosophy. Ms Price resigned from the Council on 5 January 2011.

Ms Meegan Stuart

Ms Stuart is a community member on the Council and is an educational consultant. Ms Stuart has worked in education in the ACT, Western Australia and South Australia and has a Bachelor of Education (Junior Primary/Primary).

Ms Gillian Styles

Ms Styles has over 30 years experience in a range of preschool services in Tasmania and the ACT and was a community member on the Council. Her experience includes teaching, administration, policy and curriculum development, staffing and professional learning. Ms Styles is an executive member of World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, Australia and holds a Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Teaching. Ms Styles' appointment expired on 21 June 2011.

Ms Paula Thompson

Ms Thompson has over 40 years education experience having taught across a range of settings from early childhood to university, both in Australia and overseas. She is a community member on the Council. Ms Thompson holds a Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education, majoring in literary studies and a Masters in Education (General).

Ms Jane Tullis

Ms Tullis is an education member representing the ACT Council of P&C Association. Ms Tullis has many years of community volunteering experience including terms with Holt Primary School P&C Association, Ginninderra District High School Board and Copland College P&C Association. Ms Tullis currently holds the position of President, ACT Council of P&C Association.

Dr Tiemin Wu

Dr Wu is a community member on the Council and is President of the Federation of Chinese Community of Canberra Inc. Dr Wu is currently working with the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, managing Education Services Overseas Schools compliance issues relating to Australian institutions. Dr Wu represented the then Department of Education, Employment and Training at the national roundtable on school policies in 1995. In 2003-2004, he was in charge of teaching skills assessments under the General Skilled Migration Programme. Dr Wu holds a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Education Studies, Doctorate of Philosophy, and Master of Business Administration.

Mr Roger Amey

Mr Amey has extensive experience in education in the ACT. He is currently the Coordinator of Science programs at University of Canberra Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra (UCSSC) and is a Vice-President of the ACT Branch of the Australian Education Union.

Mr Remy Chadwick

Mr Chadwick is a student representative on the Council and currently attends UCSSC. Mr Chadwick has been accepted into the Excellence Program of UCSSC and was part of the leadership team that attended the Global Leadership conference. Mr Chadwick previously lived in France for 12 years with his family.

Ms Trish Keller OAM

Ms Keller has extensive experience in education in the ACT, particularly in teaching and at an executive level. Ms Keller is the principal of Giralang Primary School and is an education member representing principals on the Council. In 2006 Ms Keller was awarded the Order of Australia Medal and holds a Bachelor of Education.

Ms Alexandra Tolmie

Ms Tolmie is a community member who has experience in the areas of public policy, primary school education and curriculum development. Ms Tolmie completed her Year 12 Certificate at Narrabundah College.

Ms Jayne Johnston

Ms Johnston is the Executive Director, School Improvement Division. Ms Johnston represented the Director-General on the Council. Ms Johnston was previously the Director at the Professional Learning Institute, West Australian Department of Education and Training, and has previously held positions as Director of Schools and District Director within this state. Ms Johnston holds a Bachelor of Science, Masters of Education and a Diploma in Education. Ms Johnston was replaced by Ms Diane Joseph, Deputy Director-General following the council's meeting in July 2010.

Mr Bob Ross

Mr Ross is the Manager of Leadership Strategy in the Learning and Teaching Branch of the Directorate and was an education member on the Council representing principals. Prior to this he was the principal of the Melba Copland Secondary School. He has over 26 years teaching experience in New South Wales and the ACT and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Diploma of Education. Mr Ross resigned from the Council on 24 October 2010.

Procedures for appointment of members

The Act outlines the conditions under which the Minister may appoint or terminate the appointment of a Council member. As a statutory appointment the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young Affairs is consulted on proposed appointments.

Number of meetings

The Council met eight times between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011.

Table GSEC 1: Membership of the Council for 2010-11

Members	Position/representation	Number of meetings eligible to attend	Number of meetings attended
Ms Di Kerr	Chairperson	8	7
Ms Jill Burgess	Community member	8	7
Ms Wendy Cave	Education member Australian Education Union	8	6
Ms Marrawah Ahmadsai	Education member ACT Public Schools Student Network	6	3
Ms Karen Dial	Education member School Board Chairs Network	8	4
Ms Jane Tullis	Education member ACT Council of P&C Associations	7	6
Ms Carolyn Harkness	Education member Canberra Preschool Society	8	2
Ms Jayne Johnston	Proxy for Director-General	1	1

Members	Position/representation	Number of meetings eligible to attend	Number of meetings attended
Ms Christine Kallir Preece	Education member ACT Council of P&C Associations	8	3
Mr Remy Chadwick	Education member ACT Public Schools Student Network	6	3
Dr Kaye Price	Community member	4	3
Ms Christine Pilgrim	Deputy Chair Education member Secondary Principals' Association	8	8
Mr Roger Amey	Education member Australian Education Union	8	4
Mr Bob Ross	Education member ACT Primary Principals' Association	3	2
Ms Meegan Stuart	Community member	8	1
Ms Gillian Styles	Community member	8	5
Ms Paula Thompson	Community member	8	6
Dr Tiemin Wu	Community member	8	5
Ms Diane Joseph	Proxy for Director-General	7	6
Ms Trish Keller OAM	Education member ACT Principals' Association	1	1
Ms Alexandra Tolmie	Community member	1	1

Source: Government Schools Education Council

Remuneration arrangements

Remuneration for the chairperson is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal in accordance with the provisions of section 10 (1) of the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*. The current determination took effect on 23 December 2009. The chairperson is the only member to receive remuneration.

Financial controls

The Council has no funds for which it is responsible, and therefore does not receive or expend funds.

Internal audit and risk management

Council operations are regarded as low risk and the Chair has put processes in place to monitor identified risks. No risk mitigation activities have been required.

Ethical standards

The ACT Government Boards and Committees Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour and ethical conduct expected of all people serving on ACT boards and committees. All members are required to declare (in writing) that they will abide by this code before they are appointed. In addition, at each meeting members are given the opportunity to disclose any conflicts of interest that may arise.

Resources

The Directorate provides secretariat and advisory assistance to the Council. The Council may call on directorate staff to address Council meetings or meet with members to discuss particular issues or programs relevant to the work of the Council. If required, the Council would have access to legal advice through the ACT Government Solicitor's Office.

Council operations

Budget 2011-12 recommendations

The Government Schools Education Council identified four main areas where budget commitments need to be made or sustained.

The education of students with disabilities

The Council identified these students as one of its major focuses in 2011-12 and is aware of the potential impact of future efficiency dividends on the learning and wellbeing of these students. In the light of the ACT Government and the Directorate's response to the Review of Special Education in the ACT, the Council recommend two areas of targeted investment.

The first was the area of assistive technologies where the Council recommended an audit of the most effective technologies available for students with specific abilities and disabilities. Based on the audit, the Council requested that these technologies be made available immediately to all classrooms as necessary.

The second was the professional learning of teacher and student aides. Council members are convinced that aides can play a highly effective role in the learning and wellbeing of students with disabilities. Accordingly, the Council requested that targeted programs be developed or expanded, in negotiation with the aides themselves, to bring them to a paraprofessional level.

Recommendations of the ACT Tertiary Taskforce

With the recommendations of the Taskforce available to the ACT Government, the Council believes it is important that they be implemented, particularly those relating to connections with schools. The Council looked to major budgetary announcements being made about initiatives that will ensure that ACT public students receive the initial benefits of a connected ACT tertiary education environment while they are still at school.

Support for students disengaged from their learning or with mental health issues

The Council supported a case-managed inter-agency approach, particularly for those with mental health issues, but is of the view that more school-based personnel need to be part of the mix. Accordingly, the Council strongly recommended that funding be made available to increase the number of counsellors. Furthermore, the Council believed that, while forming part of the schools networks, the counsellors should be deployed on the ground in schools meeting identified needs on a full-time basis.

Implementation of the Australian Curriculum

The Council applauded the ACT Government's steadfast commitment to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, particularly the provision of a pupil-free day in 2011. Members believed, however, that there needs to be strategic programs of discipline-based professional learning for key teachers in primary science and in K-10 history and that these programs need to come on stream in 2011-12 as full implementation is phased in.

The Council also proposed the need for an out years program of professional learning in K-10 geography as this subject is made available for implementation.

Members believed that school libraries will play an important role in implementing the Australian Curriculum as the information and resource hubs of their schools. Accordingly, the Council indicated concern about the amount of professional school librarian support available to primary schools and called upon the Government to fund an increase in resources.

For more information contact:

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